

Text Messaging in Healthcare

A GUIDE FOR USING
TEXTS IN YOUR PRACTICE





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Introduction

With people's livelihood and wellbeing at its core, healthcare is arguably the most important industry in the world. There will never come a time where healthcare is not needed, which means the industry constantly needs to evolve and find new ways to treat and reach patients.



With the way that the COVID-19 pandemic shook the world in 2020, many medical practices have had to adapt to deal with the influx of patients. This means that now more than ever, the industry must find reliable and accessible communications tools to reach patients quickly and effectively. This is where text messaging comes into play.

From practitioner-to-patient notifications, to internal communication and telehealth, the use of texts in the healthcare sector is broad and, often, literally a lifesaver. When used correctly, texting a patient or practitioner can reduce risk by offering a quick, easy, and affordable solution for any busy facility.


In this e-book, we unpack how text messaging is used in the healthcare sector to streamline communication and keep patients and practices ahead of the curve.

1. Appointment reminders

Sending out a text to patients up to 24 hrs before their appointment, detailing the time and address, will help reduce last minute cancellations or no-shows.

Text messaging is accessible to anyone with a mobile phone, reaching almost all patients.

Communication between the practitioner and patient is made even quicker with text as clients can reply to either confirm, postpone, or cancel their appointment.



Hi Sarah. This is gentle reminder for your appointment tomorrow morning at 9:30am. Thank you.



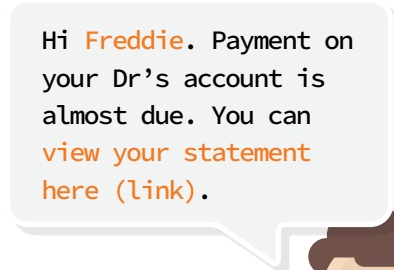
Hi John. The practice will be closed on Monday. In case of an emergency, contact your nearest ER.

2. Notifications about practice hours

Send a text message to all patients notifying them of the practice's operating hours, especially during the holiday season. The text should include information on when the practice is closed as well as who to contact in the case of an emergency.

3. Reminders to collect test results or scripts

With people leading busy lives, they are not always able to answer calls from the practice. Instead of calling, rather send a text message to a patient as soon as their test results come in, ensuring speed and ease of communication between the doctor and patient. Ask the patient to set up a follow up appointment, or to collect a script based on their results.



Hi **Freddie**. Payment on your Dr's account is almost due. You can [view your statement here \(Link\)](#).

4. Payment confirmations and reminders

Manage cashflow better — send a text message to remind the patient a few days before the payment is due. Not only will this give the patient time to action payment, it also gives them the opportunity to let you know when they can schedule the payment. After payment is made, send a follow up text thanking them.

5. Tips for condition management

With many patients suffering from chronic illnesses, taking medication becomes a vital part of their daily routine. Use text messages to remind your patients to take their daily meds, or send other tips that can help them to manage their condition. For example, if a patient is diabetic, remind them to regularly monitor their sugar intake, or send them a list of recommended foods to eat or avoid. Always make sure these texts are relevant to your patient's treatment plan, for instance, a physio may send out a list of strengthening exercises to a patient with a ligament injury.

Hi **Jesicca**. I have created a quick set of exercises that will help you regain strength after your injury. Follow this link to the PDF.





A text message a day keeps the doctor away

A BulkSMS Case Study

Elenktis develops medical software solutions for healthcare practices in Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina and Chile. They build the very best medical information and management tools through innovative ideas creating value for their clients. One of these innovative ideas includes the use of the [BulkSMS API](#).

How do they do it?

With the aim of helping hospitals, clinics and private practices to manage their patient communications, the team at Elenktis SMS-enabled their custom-built management system. This means that their customers can send bulk notifications and alerts as well as individual notifications to both patients and physicians.

“Our customers send reminders about medical consultations to their patients to decrease absenteeism. In other cases, our clients send daily notifications to their patients to remind them to collect their prescribed medication, or to tell them of new products or treatments that might be helpful to them,” says Fernando Bologna Boidi, Director of Technology.

Whenever a customer wants to send a text, they do so directly from the management system. All they need to do is select the patient’s name, type the message and click send. “These messages can be sent automatically or manually, making it easier for our customers to choose a schedule that suits them,” says Fernando.

Why choose text?

When asked why he chose to integrate text messaging with their system, Fernando said that the **BulkSMS API** allowed for a simple integration with huge benefits. Not only are messages more likely to be read by the patients, but it’s also a simple way to manage communications with hundreds of patients from one central platform.





Dentists are using SMS to bridge the gap

A BulkSMS Case Study

Dental studios across the world are often faced with missed appointments and late payments. This is frustrating for the practice as it wastes time and valuable resources when following up with patients.

Many healthcare practitioners have turned to text messages to reduce these frustrations; this not only bridges the communications gap, but also ensures patients are reminded in due time of their appointments and of any fees owing. One such healthcare provider, Kinderdental, a dental practice based in North London, has SMS-enabled their bespoke customer management system, which means that SMS messages are sent automatically to patients as and when necessary.

Michael Ward, Co-owner of Kindandental, did the integration himself using our SMS API. Ward tells us that, “The integration with the [BulkSMS API](#) was extremely simple and it means that appointment reminders are automatically sent from our system two days before and on the day of every appointment.”



When any of the dentists or receptionists need to communicate directly with the patients, they can do so from the patient management system. Once the message has been entered, text messages are sent automatically to the patient, or group of patients. Ward notes that, “This is a powerful tool to communicate quickly and efficiently with a large number of patients”.

Additionally, any patients can be added to a predetermined list in the patient management system. This system then automatically sends monthly payment reminders via text until the amounts owed have been paid. “This has proven effective in making sure that we receive the necessary payments from our patients in a timely manner,” says Ward.

When asked why texting is used as a primary form of communication with the patients, Ward says that they’ve found that text messages tend to be better received by the patients. “We do use email to communicate with out-patients, but we have found that emails can easily get lost in junk folders or patients simply don’t read them. Texting is simple, effective and affordable,” says Ward.

In these times, where accessible healthcare is more important than ever, why not use text messaging to quickly and easily communicate with your patients?

To get started, [email us here](#) or visit us at www.bulksms.com

