

SOP Template: Handling Patient Rescheduling, Cancellations, and No-Shows

This SOP details the process for **handling patient rescheduling, cancellations, and no-shows**, including clear communication protocols, documentation requirements, follow-up procedures, and strategies to minimize disruption to the healthcare schedule. The goal is to ensure efficient management of appointment changes, maintain patient satisfaction, reduce appointment gaps, and optimize resource utilization within the healthcare facility.

1. Purpose

To provide standardized procedures for staff responding to patient requests to reschedule or cancel appointments, and for managing patient no-shows.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all front desk, scheduling, and administrative staff responsible for managing appointments at the healthcare facility.

3. Definitions

- **Rescheduling:** Changing the date or time of a previously booked appointment.
- **Cancellation:** Patient request to remove an existing appointment without intent to immediately reschedule.
- **No-Show:** Patient does not attend a scheduled appointment without prior notice.

4. Procedure

4.1 Receiving a Rescheduling or Cancellation Request

- Verify patient identity using at least two patient identifiers (e.g., name and date of birth).
- Confirm the specific appointment to be changed or cancelled.
- If rescheduling, offer the next available appointments and assist the patient with the selection.
- Communicate any fees or policy requirements related to late cancellations.

4.2 Documentation Requirements

- Log all changes in the appointment management system, recording time, date, reason, and staff member handling the request.
- Document attempts to contact the patient for rescheduling if they did not directly make the request.

4.3 No-Show Management

- Mark the appointment as a no-show in the system after a patient fails to arrive within the designated grace period (typically 15-30 minutes).
- Attempt to contact the patient via phone, email, or SMS to inquire if they wish to reschedule and to reinforce facility attendance policies.
- Record all contact attempts and outcomes in the patient's record.

4.4 Follow-Up Procedures

- For cancellations: Encourage patient to reschedule if medically appropriate.
- For no-shows: Implement a follow-up protocol (e.g., call within 24 hours) to assess the reason and offer alternative appointments.
- Notify the referring provider or care team when appropriate, especially if appointment is critical to patient care.

4.5 Communication Protocols

- Maintain a professional and empathetic tone when communicating changes to patients.
- Reinforce appointment policies and discuss the importance of timely attendance for care continuity.
- Use secure communication methods and maintain patient confidentiality at all times.

5. Strategies to Minimize Disruptions

- Confirm appointments via reminder calls, emails, or SMS 24-48 hours prior.
- Maintain a waitlist or on-call list to fill last-minute openings.
- Monitor no-show and cancellation rates routinely, adjusting policies as necessary.
- Educate patients on the impact of missed appointments during each visit.

6. Responsibilities

- **Front Desk/Scheduling Staff:** Implement procedures and document all patient interactions.
- **Clinic Managers:** Monitor compliance with SOP and provide training as needed.
- **Healthcare Providers:** Communicate with administrative staff regarding appointments that are critical to patient care.

7. References

- Clinic Policy Manual
- Patient Rights and Responsibilities
- [HIPAA Compliance Guidelines](#)

8. Revision History

Date	Change	Author
2024-06-01	Initial SOP draft	Admin