

## What Makes Digital Photos So Important?

Photos are a great way to communicate with patients and create “instant believability”. If the patient sees their problems, they can start the process that it takes to own the problems. We would like to create a **guilt-free** environment for treatment to be understood and accepted. The saying “A picture is worth a thousand words” well in the dental field “A picture is worth a thousand dollars.” Often photos are taken in the new patient appointment or consult but never maximized for “TOTAL VALUE.”



These are the “Minimal Suggested Photos” often times doctors take an entire orthodontic or academy series. If you’re not currently taking photos, let’s start here. If you are taking photos yet not reaching the “TOTAL VALUE” I wouldn’t suggest changing that series but I would suggest considering taking the bare essential photos at visit 1 and completing the series after treatment has been accepted –before dentistry is started. (Will prevent the patient from being overwhelmed, will also save time for the team.)

### Why Would We Want to Print Photos?

(Geez one more thing that the doctor wants, sounds like a waste of time.)

Printing photos creates a lasting concern for the patient’s problems. In the ‘Good Ole Days,” we gave patients 5 brochures to take home and read about their problem. Now we can send them home with their photos stapled to their treatment plan with marker all over them that describes their damage of their condition. We know that many times there are more than one person involved in the decision-making process. A brochure or a treatment plan alone is not going to carry much weight in the decision, but a picture will. We print photos that apply to the proposed dentistry needed so that the patient has evidence to take home with them about needed dentistry. Each visit that there is a treatment plan provided a photo of the problem is printed and stapled. The suggested method is:

1. Print photo on **copy paper** (not glossy photo paper) from clinical room (prior to appointment or at the time of appointment, depending on your office flow)
2. Bring a **photo into room** while discussing treatment and looking at the **photo on the screen** with the patient you will have it in front of you to circle the areas that you co- diagnose.

### Why Would We Want to Draw on Photos?

(This looks so sloppy and unprofessional.)

Taking the time to draw on the photo with a sharpie marker reminds the patient of key points of the conversation. We know that patients do not have a dental degree, so they do not understand dental technology the way that we do, but what we tend to do is explain things the way that we understand. As our day goes by and we get consumed in the task, and we become more dental focused and less “Laymen Term” focused. This is also a very personal decision for the patient (customer), and it takes thought and active listening.

1. Use **Sharpie Marker** to circle and point to concerns
2. Use “**Laymen Terms**” to describe the diagnosis (not the solution)
  - i. Example: Cavity, hole, broken, worn, notches, infection, leaking, failing

### What Happens When We Don’t Take Photos?

When we do not take photos, we lose the opportunity to get patient’s to accept their conditions of their mouth. Patients need to see the problems that you see in their mouth in order to own it. You lose **OPPORTUNITY** every time you miss taking photos of your patients. **You also:**

1. You lose chances to show examples of before and after to patients that are interested in treatment.
2. Photobooks, website photos, wall photos – bragging rights
3. And most importantly –Documentation. You want to document your treatment digitally just as if you were writing notes or taking x-rays.