

TREATMENT PLANNING SYSTEM

As a team, we all need to speak the same language. Too often the words we use when discussing treatment are too complex for patients to follow. To help more patients have clarity on the care they need, we use a system of discussing treatment needs using the same language. All recommended treatments should be broken down in Mandatory, Elective and Cosmetic categories. Each doctor decides on their own, what belongs in these categories and makes the final diagnosis.



MANDATORY

Mandatory is the category for the most urgent needs. These are obvious problems that usually involve something that is broken, infected or decayed. If there is a problem that is actively becoming worse, it is most likely placed in the Mandatory category. If the building is on fire, we must get the fire out first and foremost. These dental issues are the first to be addressed, they are like 'fires' that must be put out before extensive damage occurs. The word Mandatory conveys both urgency and immediacy. The mandatory treatment recommendations are usually included in the first phase of care.

ELECTIVE

Elective treatment is far more subjective than Mandatory treatment. We define elective as something that could pose a future problem if not addressed at some point. As Mandatory is the "fire",

Elective treatment would be considered the rebuilding phase. For some dentists elective treatment would include: Replacing older looking amalgams, replacing missing teeth, sealants or desensitizing treatments.

Would you mind sharing with us the benefits of waiting?

Many dentists will place treatment in the Elective category that they might have called watches at one time. Elective treatment is usually not the most urgent need a patient has, but are things that would improve the patient's oral health. Some elective treatment will stay elective for years if not addressed. Some elective treatment will change, and transition to the Mandatory category. Each dentist will need to determine what they consider Elective treatment. This will vary between providers. This is why we have the Treatment Planning for Predictability system in place. The most important component of this system is clear communication between doctors and their hygiene teams, so we can work together cohesively to help patients understand the care they need.

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COSMETIC

Cosmetic treatment is usually quite easy to categorize. Any service that would cosmetically enhance the appearance of the smile would fit in this category. Veneers, Invisalign, replacing unsightly fillings would all fit in this category.

Occasionally you might see cosmetic services that serve a functional purpose. Alignment of crowded teeth for periodontal healing is an example of this. Each doctor has the discretion to place care in the category they feel best suits each patient's individual needs. The system is designed for your benefit, to aid you in communicating with your patients. You have the discretion to place needed treatment in any category.

Some patients may want to address an unsightly cosmetic issue prior to a more urgent need. We need to be careful to listen to our patients and work to let them guide our treatment plan.

Each patient ultimately will decide what they would like to focus on, and how quickly they would like to address the treatment recommendations presented to them. Our goal is to communicate these needs in such a way that they understand what we are recommending and have clarity on what comes next.

