



DENTAL CYBER SECURITY: THE ULTIMATE IN PREVENTATIVE CARE

by Darby TechForce

If your dental practice has moved its patient records from a physical chart to a digital management system, you know how efficient electronic charting systems can be. While going chartless is great for keeping important files organized and accessible, shifting your daily operations to a digital environment also makes your practice vulnerable to cyber security threats. A security breach that exposes patient names, health histories, social security numbers, and banking information can lead to legal issues and significant out-of-pocket costs – not to mention tarnish your sparkling reputation.

Why would a cyber criminal want to mess with your data?

When choosing between a huge corporation with a sophisticated security network and a small dental office with a basic level of protection, a cyber thief will surely take the easier route. Bummer, right? To protect your dental office from an attack and maintain your patients' privacy, it's critical to stay a few steps ahead of the bad guys. Here are some tips for enhancing your dental office's cyber security:

4 WAYS TO BOOST DENTAL CYBER SECURITY

1. Install virus protection

A virus can infect your computer or entire digital network, hijacking patient files and holding them hostage until you pay a “ransom” to get them back. These sophisticated “ransomware” viruses are sneaky because they disguise themselves as trusted email contacts. Downloading a suspicious email attachment that contains a virus puts your entire network at risk. To protect your dental practice from a virus, every computer in your office should have HIPAA compliant, enterprise-level anti-virus software installed and monitored.

2. Back up your files

Imagine if all of your electronic patient data, inventory lists, and payroll information disappeared. Your practice would go into full-on crisis mode! Having a copy of your files safely stored outside the walls of your office ensures you can always retrieve the important data you need if a cyber attack wipes out your network. Bonus: having a dedicated security team that can also monitor and manage your backups will give you peace of mind that everything is working as it should.



3. Educate your team

Boosting your office's cyber security measures is only effective if your whole team is on board. According to a press release by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Civil Rights, there has been a 10 percent increase in instances of security-related HIPAA violations, or cyber security attacks, in the past two years.

The release goes on to say that an informed workforce could have prevented many of these breaches. Train your staff on the importance of safeguarding patients' protected health information and how to properly respond to cyber threats. Make sure every team member has his or her own computer password, and enforce a strict Internet policy that prohibits staff from checking personal email accounts and visiting websites that aren't work related.

4. Encrypt your data

Encryption is an important part of keeping your dental practice's data secure. It involves changing sensitive information to an unreadable state, making it accessible only to those with a special "key." High-profile businesses use it to protect corporate secrets; even the government uses it to secure classified documents. Ask your software company if your system has built-in AES encryption for data at rest and data in motion. If it doesn't, enlist the help of your dental IT team to help you secure all of your computers and backup files. This way, even if information is stolen, it won't be readable by cyber criminals.

PROTECT YOUR PRACTICE & YOUR PATIENTS WITH DENTAL CYBER SECURITY

Transitioning to chartless dentistry can be a beautiful thing for file management and productivity. However, even the tiniest hole in your security network can put your practice and patients at risk for a cyber attack.

At TechForce, we understand the unique challenges dental offices face in the digital age and are fully equipped to tackle them. Our dental IT experts are always thinking one step ahead, proactively managing technology upgrades and software updates to minimize risk and disruption to your daily operations. In other words, we take the technical stuff off your plate so you can focus on what you do best – care for your patients.

Contact us at 1.800.886.2093 or connect@darbytechforce.com to learn how TechForce can help make your dental practice run smoothly and safely.

