

On Touch-Ups and Follow-Ups

Pricing your cosmetic services in such a way that allows patients to return for follow-ups or touch-ups without charge can help retain patients.

By Joel Schlessinger, MD

If you have a patient who is dissatisfied after a cosmetic procedure, do you perform 'touch-ups' for free?

This question is very broad, but in general I base the decision on whether I personally feel a touch-up is warranted. For example, if I have a person who was administered botulinum toxin and now is still able to frown, I will frequently redo the treatment without any added expense. Often, I will use a competing form of neurotoxin to see if the initial one was simply ineffective for that patient. Pictures play a key role in determining the need for a touch-up and overall results, as well.

It is important to price your services to allow for the occasional touch-up. While it is rare in my practice, it does happen, and I want to be willing and happy to do these touch-ups. For example, I recently had a patient who had three syringes of filler injected two weeks earlier and wasn't pleased. We added on one syringe for free of a different brand and she left quite happy. This may result in a lifelong patient instead of a very unhappy (and talkative) ex-patient!

When do you offer follow-up visits for cosmetic procedures and are they free?

We offer free follow-up visits for cosmetic procedures two weeks after the initial procedure or after any 'new' type of cosmetic procedure, such as neurotoxins or fillers. These visits are the best form of public relations that we can offer since they frequently allow us to show the results to a doubting patient on the Canfield computer image analysis. Without these visits, our patients would have simply assumed nothing was done and either remained unimpressed or actively negative.

If a patient ever calls (even months after a procedure) and has doubts about efficacy, we gladly fit



them in to be seen. These sorts of visits are great PR tools as well.

Do you give the manufacturer coupons for various promotions to patients and promote them to the patients?

While some dermatologists and cosmetic surgeons are concerned about giving the names of patients (and possibly with good reason, based on activities that happened in the non-HIPAA compliant past), I believe that coupons and rewards systems for "cosmetic dermatology frequent flyers" are well worth submitting. I always submit a "dummy" patient in order to see what is being sent to my patients. Usually, I have been happy with the types of opportunities my patients are receiving, but in one instance I was concerned about ancillary services and other cosmetic surgeons being encouraged to my patient. For this reason, I think it is important to keep track of what your patients are doing and seeing courtesy of cosmetic manufacturers! ■

Send your questions to tpigeon@bmcctoday.com. Dr. Schlessinger will answer your query or find an expert who can.