



Oral Health America's 2011 *Fall for Smiles*® Social Networking Guide

The Social Media Explosion: Why should I Facebook & Tweet?

It's an exciting time for dental care professionals. Many innovative products and technologies are constantly introduced into the industry that dramatically improve the ability to diagnose and prevent dental, and in some cases, systemic diseases. Dental professionals now have the ability to market and promote their practices efficiently and cost effectively online. An incredible amount of marketing activity occurs on social media sites and online programs—tens of thousands of dental professionals, companies, organizations, and groups actively communicate with one another and with current patients and potential new patients.

Dental practices that develop social media strategies have an advantage. It is free or very inexpensive to get started, and it allows for a dynamic you can't find in traditional marketing—the ability to interact and communicate easily with colleagues and patients. You can also revise content and information instantaneously!

There are so many ways for a dental professional to benefit from being active on social media sites.

Some ideas for your practice to be more involved in social media:

1. Promote products, services or price specials
2. Provide oral health information and links to current and potential new patients (you can simply "re-tweet" these from other Tweeters)
3. Thank patients and provide excellent customer service support
4. Read about breaking industry news and new products by following dental companies and publications
5. Conduct surveys
6. Create trivia contests
7. Find new employees to join the office team
8. Share cases with colleagues to learn from each other
9. Ask for advice from colleagues when presented with a challenge

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Eventually, after you've gotten comfortable with the media, there are a range of options to consider. How about uploading a video of your practice to YouTube or having your own YouTube channel? Be sure to open a LinkedIn practice profile, and then look into sites like Foursquare, YP.com, Groupon, and Living Social to promote the practice. For example, a dentist can make an offer on Groupon for a potential new patient to come in for a consultation, or a price special on an exam and cleaning. Offices have seen many new patients come in with Groupon offers.

Integrate social media opportunities into your patient encounters. Dental offices can have an iPad or laptop readily accessible in their operatories or waiting areas so their patients can "like" their Facebook page. As we know, once someone "likes" a page, all of their Facebook friends see it and may check out the practice. Similarly, offices can ask patients that use Foursquare to "check in" when they arrive for an appointment, telling online friends where they now are, and again, providing another method of promoting the practice easily and free of charge.

Take a look at QR (Quick Response) codes, which are the square boxes you see popping up everywhere that have a specific design or code that links to a person or company. QR codes can be displayed in many places, enabling potential and current patients with smartphones to simply "read" the code and go right to your website, promotional page/offer, etc. An example of using a QR code would be to include it in any print advertising or flyers, or have it in the ground floor window of your office. Even if the office is closed, a potential patient can read the QR code and find out more about the office.

We've just scratched the surface here. It will be very exciting to see what happens in the next year or two, but using social and new media to help grow practices and learn about new dental developments is not going away. Many practices are now investing in continuing education courses on social media to learn how to put their game plans together and also better understand how they measure their results.

In the meantime, be sure to visit www.oralhealthamerica.org to sign up for our monthly eNewsletter, become an Oral Health America fan on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/Smile4Health), and follow our Tweets [@Smile4Health!](https://twitter.com/Smile4Health)

--Tony Stefanou, DMD, Associate Director of External Relations, Oral Health America

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We Fall for Smiles®
Do you?

Fall for Smiles® is a public messaging promotion conducted by Oral Health America in collaboration with Oral Healthcare Can't Wait®, an initiative of the Dental Trade Alliance. *Fall for Smiles* is intended to bring the oral health community together to promote common messaging about what Americans can do to keep their mouths healthy.

Oral Health America is a national nonprofit organization with a mission to change lives by connecting communities with resources to increase access to oral health care, education and advocacy for all Americans, especially those most vulnerable. Oral Healthcare Can't Wait® is an initiative of the Dental Trade Alliance, promoting patient awareness of oral health.

The goal of the promotion is to increase awareness about the importance of oral health and oral health care and to ensure that people of all ages make having a healthy mouth a priority. In particular, *Fall for Smiles* messages underscore the importance of: 1) brushing and flossing as part of a daily routine, 2) visiting a dental care professional regularly, 3) making healthy food choices, and 4) no tobacco use. Beginning each September, we *Fall for Smiles*—and hope you will join us! There are many ways that you can participate in *Fall for Smiles*. By supporting the promotion, you will encourage families to include oral health in their back-to-school and fall routines, leading to a lifetime of healthy smiles.

We have many suggestions for how you can participate using the web and social media.

Interested in learning more? Read on!

Whether you are a social networking veteran or you're just starting to explore Facebook and Twitter, we have simple ways for you to incorporate *Fall for Smiles* messages into your online activities.

Facebook and Status Updates

A large number of dental care professionals, dental programs, dental students, advocacy organizations and dental industry-related companies use Facebook (www.facebook.com) for personal and business networking. During the *Fall for Smiles* public messaging campaign, oral health supporters can help spread the word of oral health's importance to overall health by:

1. Frequently posting "status updates" relevant to *Fall for Smiles*; and
2. Posting comments on the "walls" of *Fall for Smiles* friends and partners

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Sample Status Updates and Wall Posts

On page five of this social networking guide, you'll find several examples of status updates and wall posts for you to consider placing on your wall or on the walls of friends and colleagues. Feel free to edit them to suit your own style and message!



Twitter and Tweets

Twitter (www.twitter.com) is a social networking tool that keeps individuals and companies/organizations attuned to the location and activities of their online friends (called their "followers"). Individuals, companies, and organizations with Twitter profiles can post short (140 character maximum) updates ("tweets") on their whereabouts and what currently interests them.

Twitter is a fast-growing social networking tool, and many dental-related organizations and practices are using Twitter to stay in touch with their patients, donors, and interested individuals.

During *Fall for Smiles*, tweets will let the social networking world know that you are constantly thinking about and working diligently to communicate oral health messages to all your followers, and in turn, their followers.

Sample Tweets

On page six of this social networking guide, you'll find examples of *Fall for Smiles* tweets. Each example tweet has been limited to 140 characters, so it should copy and paste easily into your Twitter feed.

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Connecting With *Fall for Smiles* Through Facebook

Who Are You?

Individual

Company/Organization

Sample Status Updates

I support Oral Health America and Oral Healthcare Can't Wait's *Fall for Smiles* campaign because healthy mouths lead to healthy bodies. Want to know more? Join the *Fall for Smiles* campaign at www.oralhealthamerica.org/fallforsmiles

This season, I'm sharing the importance of good oral health habits with my family and friends. Why? Because a disease-free body starts with a disease-free mouth. Join me in the *Fall for Smiles* campaign at www.oralhealthamerica.org/fallforsmiles

Did you know? In a recent survey 68% of parents say teaching children to brush and floss twice a day is among the most important health care concerns for their children. Join the *Fall for Smiles* campaign and learn more about making brushing and flossing a part of your family's daily routine at www.oralhealthamerica.org/fallforsmiles

What do eating smart, avoiding all tobacco products, and visiting one special person twice a year have in common? They all improve the health of your mouth and body. And that special person is your dental professional. Join us in supporting the *Fall for Smiles* campaign at www.oralhealthamerica.org/fallforsmiles

Visited your dentist this year? In a recent survey, more than one-third (35%) of those who regularly visit the dentist have cut back on their visits. Learn more about the benefits of regular dental visits with *Fall for Smiles* at www.oralhealthamerica.org/fallforsmiles

We know that mouth health is critical to overall health. In a recent survey among parents with school aged children, 17% say that their child missed at least one day of school due to dental related pain or illness. Learn how to spread positive oral health messages to children with the *Fall for Smiles* campaign at www.oralhealthamerica.org/fallforsmiles

Sample Status Updates



Connecting With *Fall for Smiles* Through Twitter

Who Are You?

Individual

Company/Organization

Sample Tweets

- The #health of my mouth affects the health of my body, so I keep it clean and in check. How do you treat your mouth? #FallforSmiles
- Brush, rinse, and retweet! Oral Health America's #FallforSmiles campaign is in season at www.oralhealthamerica.org/fallforsmiles
- Beginning the #school year = perfect time to focus on your family's #health. Have you visited the dentist this year? #FallforSmiles
- At www.oralhealthamerica.org/fallforsmiles, I learned how my family can be that much healthier. How will you #FallforSmiles ?
- Survey: 1/3 of Americans have cut back on dental visits. Help spread the word with #FallforSmiles at www.oralhealthamerica.org/fallforsmiles
- A #healthy mouth is important to me, so I went to www.oralhealthamerica.org/fallforsmiles for #tips. How do you #FallforSmiles ?

Sample Tweets

- What's the #1 chronic childhood disease in the US? Tooth decay. Join us as we #FallforSmiles at www.oralhealthamerica.org/fallforsmiles
- We support #FallforSmiles because #dental visits shouldn't go overlooked. Join us at www.oralhealthamerica.org/fallforsmiles
- This season, we're serious about making oral hygiene a habit for all Americans. How will your family #FallforSmiles ?
- We know that a #healthy mouth is a great start to a healthy body. What will you do to #FallforSmiles ?
- Survey: 68% of parents say teaching children to brush & floss 2x daily is an important concern. Spread the word with #FallforSmiles

Fall for Smiles on Your Website



Post our web button on your website and link it to www.oralhealthamerica.org/fallforsmiles. (E-mail melissa@oralhealthamerica.org for a copy of the web button.)

Fall for Smiles in your E-Mail Messages

If you have e-mail addresses for your patients, send out a message about *Fall for Smiles* with your next e-newsletter or appointment reminder. Feel free to use this text for your e-mails:

Join us as we celebrate healthy smiles with Oral Health America and Oral Healthcare Can't Wait®. During September, the *Fall for Smiles* messaging campaign is reminding Americans to maintain regular dental visits, eat nutritious food, avoid all tobacco, and brush and floss daily as a part of a healthy oral hygiene routine.

Learn More

To learn more about *Fall for Smiles* and how you can help spread healthy smiles to your family and friends, visit www.oralhealthamerica.org/fallforsmiles

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