

A Practical Guide to Oral Health Communication



#sciencemakesmoresmiles

Oral Health Communication Online: Your Essentials Toolkit

Your expertise doesn't stop at the clinic. Every conversation, post, and video is an opportunity to build trust, fight misinformation, and help more people make confident decisions about their oral health.



1. Build trust before giving facts

People trust health guidance when it is empathetic, repeated consistently, and delivered in a non-judgmental tone. Patients don't need a debate. They need understanding.

Use the 4A Framework to address concerns

Acknowledge: recognise the concern with empathy.
E.g. «I can understand why you'd have questions about that, especially with so much information online.»

Affirm: reinforce shared goals for both you and patients.
E.g. «Everyone wants to make the best decision for their health.»

Answer: share simple, evidence-based information.
E.g. «Decades of research show that fluoride helps strengthen teeth and reduce decay when used as directed.»

Advise: provide personalised guidance.
E.g. «Let's look at what is most appropriate for your individual situation.»



2. Turn science into benefits

Patients care about outcomes (fewer cavities, less pain, healthy teeth). Lead with the benefit and WHY it matters to the patient, not the technical mechanism.

Ground conversations in evidence by using a patient-centric approach.

Quick examples:

- *Instead of:* "Fluoride promotes remineralization."
- *Say this:* "Fluoride repairs early damage before it becomes a bigger problem."
- *Instead of:* "Higher-fluoride products show a dose-response relationship."
- *Say this:* "It provides extra protection if your teeth are more vulnerable."



3. Create engaging social content

Start creating your content with real patient questions rather than cold scientific facts. Evidence-based communication directly addressing everyday concerns helps to create reliability and trust.

- **Proactive content:** turn routine clinical questions into hooks. E.g. «Can cavities be reversed?»
- **Reactive content:** when addressing myths, focus on the evidence rather than the misinformation. E.g., *instead of:* «This myth is wrong», try: «I've seen a lot of discussion about this topic recently. Here's what the evidence tells us.»

The perfect video structure (Reels, TikTok, Shorts)

The hook (3s): capture attention immediately.
E.g. "The biggest fluoride myth I hear in clinic..."

Key messages: communicate 2-3 simple, evidence-based points. E.g. "Fluoride strengthens enamel against daily acid attacks."

The takeaway: reinforce your main educational message.
E.g. "Preventing a cavity is always easier than treating one."

Call to action: foster deeper engagement.
E.g. "Speak to your dental professional if you're unsure what's right for you."



4. Make your content AI-friendly

Patients are increasingly asking AI tools for oral health advice, receiving a single summarized answer instead of a list of websites. AI engines prioritize content that demonstrates clear expert authority and straightforward formatting.

When creating content, use this AI visibility checklist:

- **Answer real patient questions:** align topics with natural language queries.
- **Use clear headings:** break information into short, scannable sections with bullet points.
- **Translate science into benefits:** connect the data directly to patient outcomes.
- **Add captions/subtitles to videos:** make multimedia easily discoverable and crawlable.
- **Clearly identify your professional expertise:** explicitly state your qualifications and role.

Now it's your turn!

Share your trusted voice online to help shape a safer digital environment.



Create: make your post or video using today's session tips.



Publish: share it on Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, or YouTube.



Hashtag: use #sciencemakesmoresmiles.



Tag: tag your local Colgate/elmex social page, for example @elmex_italia & @colgate.italia