



MAILING SCHEDULE *Recommendations*

Maximize Your Direct Mail Marketing Investments with Thoughtfully Planned Schedules

The time of year and month that dental direct mail hits homes can substantially affect its response rate. The time frames discussed in the following guide are when Practice Cafe recommends that direct mail pieces start arriving at, or “hitting,” homes. Standard Mail, sometimes referred to as “bulk mail” because of bulk pricing, typically arrives between 3-10 postal days after it gets dropped at the Post Office, with the most common arrival days being between the 5th and 7th postal days. Delivery times depend on the distance to the destination, and on the amount of mail the Post Office is handling at the time.

JANUARY - Almost the whole month of January is one of the best times of the year for dental direct mail, with the exception of only the first few days. The latter half of the first week (after the winter holidays and New Year’s festivities have passed) and the following weeks are ideal for dental mailers to be received. The holidays are over, kids are back in school, and most dental insurance plans have renewed (unless they’re on a school-year calendar). Additionally, after all the expenses associated with the holidays and winter vacations, families don’t usually have more big vacations or major family events planned for January. The beginning of the year is also a time when individuals and families customarily feel a sense of “renewal” and motivation to start the year off well with new health maintenance programs and plans to accomplish other goals. Whenever possible, aim to have your first drop of the year hit in January.

FEBRUARY - February follows January as an excellent time for dental mailings, and for many of the same reasons. Please note that some school districts have winter breaks during this month (commonly the weekend preceding Presidents’ Day), so mail drops should be scheduled around these breaks when possible.

MARCH - March is a great month for dental direct mail, more specifically the first couple of weeks. Mailings should be scheduled around the local Spring Break from school, which is regularly in March in warmer areas. It’s best to avoid the first few days directly after Spring Break, as well, because families with students are likely to be catching up after their week off. You don’t want to get buried in the stack of mail they come home to! The latter part of March is still a good time for dental mailings, just not as ideal as January to mid-March.

APRIL - April is a good month for dental mailings, particularly the last half of the month in areas where Spring Breaks are during the first half. After tax season is over, too, families know their financial situations better. Some people actually plan to use their tax returns for special expenses like a smile makeover. You might run a “Spring Special” on smile makeover treatments.

MAY - May is a mixed month for dental direct mail if school in the area ends during May. Mailings shouldn’t be scheduled to arrive during the last week and half or so of school because life gets very busy for families. There’s also the Memorial Day holiday weekend (and consequent advertising rush) to avoid. Due to these considerations, mail drops earlier in the month typically have better responses than drops that hit later in the month. In areas where school doesn’t end until early to mid-June, mailings in early and mid-May still do well because families aren’t yet focused on end-of-year school activities. Keep in mind that school calendars vary from area to area, with some schools getting out as late as the end of June and other areas having year-round school.

JUNE - June is a really mixed month for dental mailings. Families tend to be busy with graduation trips and summer vacations, and general summer activities such as sports and church camps have started. In areas where school doesn’t end until later in June, mailings in the beginning of the month can still perform okay. Like our recommendation for May, mail drops during the last week and a half of school should be avoided. Furthermore, the last week of June is less conducive to dental direct mail success because more families go on vacation, and July 4th is coming up. Note: Summer mailing seasons can differ for pediatric dentists.



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JULY - Because of the 4th of July holiday and surrounding surge of marketing that pushes for sales the first week of July, it's best to avoid it altogether and not risk getting lost in the shuffle. In addition, Independence Day is a popular time for family reunions and vacations. The second, third, and fourth weeks of July normally each get better for dental direct mail. Of course you could never schedule summer mail drops around the vacations of your entire potential patient base, but you can think about the seasonality that you've noticed in the area and in your practice. Speaking of vacations, mailings should also be scheduled around any time when your practice's whole team will be out of the office.

AUGUST - The first week of August can be a terrific time for dental mailings. Drops during this time can attract families who have moved over the summer as well as those looking to schedule healthcare appointments before school starts again. As August progresses, families become busier with back-to-school shopping, getting kids into their school routines, and seeing older kids off to college. The beginning of school in an area is a big determining factor in how well a dental mailer will do during the different weeks in August.

SEPTEMBER - The first days of September aren't good for dental direct mail. Families are preoccupied with the Labor Day holiday and, in many parts of the country, with back-to-school activities. Similar to the increase in advertising for Memorial Day and July 4th sales, Labor Day is also enwrapped in weekend promotions. School starts at differing times around the country, so local district calendars should be checked. The latter half of September is a great time for dental mailings, as families have settled back into their "regular" routines.

OCTOBER - October is generally an excellent month for dental direct mail. Families are in the swing of their routines, and some are hoping to use their dental insurance, or simply take care of nagging dental problems, before the holiday season. The last few days of the month aren't quite as favorable because of Halloween.

NOVEMBER - November is another mixed month for dental mailings. Drops should only be sent to arrive the first half of the month, with the first week being the best time of the month (especially right after kids have eaten plenty of Halloween candy to get their mothers thinking about their teeth). As the month goes on, families get busy with the Thanksgiving holiday and related travel. Many school districts have the full week of Thanksgiving off. The last half of November, particularly the week of Thanksgiving, should be completely avoided. This is when the promotional holiday marketing rush begins, and when holiday mail traffic starts getting heavier. Dental direct mail pieces will get lost in the mass of mail these weeks and, therefore, be totally ignored.

DECEMBER - In general, December is a terrible month for dental direct mail. On top of the heaviest mail traffic, families are extremely busy and distracted from "everyday life," getting ready for and enjoying the holidays. During this time, until after the New Year, people don't normally think about locating a dentist unless they have a dental emergency. In-house mailings to your current patient base are what we recommend for November and early December, but not mass mailings to potential new patients.

Are There Exceptions?

An exception to the guidelines of when we don't recommend dental mailings is a new office opening that needs to be announced during less than ideal times. This should be thoughtfully weighed and decided on an individual basis. There are several other considerations that can lead to a mailing schedule that varies from our general recommendations. Local school calendars are very important to consult, and there's also weather and other local events to consider. Practice Cafe's direct mail campaigns and their drop schedules are carefully customized to the area and marketing goals of our clients' individual practices. **Contact us to discuss a personalized marketing plan for your dental practice!**