

Healthcare sector: setting up the waiting area

How can you arrange good and safe patient care in the waiting area?

- Use plexiglass screens: place screens in places where maintaining a distance of 1.5 metres is more difficult. For example, the reception desk, in the consultation room, and in the waiting area. These screens are light and generally easy to assemble. This ensures all contact is safe.
- Apply stickers at counters, waiting areas and workplaces. You can use these to show walking routes, for example, as well as clearly marking the mandatory 1.5 metres social distance. This will protect both you and your employees and visitors. Use high-quality tape that is durable and easy to clean. Make sure the surface they are to be applied to is clean and free of grease before application.
- Remove magazines, toys and folders from the waiting area.
- Remove unnecessary utensils such as a table, umbrella stand, magazine holder, etc.
- Offer patients the opportunity to wash their hands before entering the waiting room. If this is not possible, provide rubbing alcohol gel in the waiting area.
- Limit the number of patients in the waiting room by working by appointment only so the waiting time is also limited. Schedule meetings with a larger time gap between them to separate the inflow and outflow of patients.
- Ensure the waiting room and consultation room are well ventilated, by opening the window or door of the waiting area for example. Inform patients so they dress warmly enough.
- If it is not possible to avoid a few patients being seated in a waiting room at the same time (e.g. for a group practice), set the chairs 1.5 metres apart. If necessary, remove a number of chairs.
- Hang an information sign on the door requesting patients to only arrive at the agreed time. Ask the patient to wait in the car or outside (weather permitting) if adequate changes to the waiting area are not possible.
- Have paper tissues and a bin with a lid and foot pedal in the waiting area.
- Leave waiting room doors open (if possible) so the handles are used less.
- Provide information via a waiting room screen or **posters** on the door and/or wall regarding the guidelines in practice (waiting area), social distancing and hygiene measures.
- Clean the waiting area (and accessories) at regular intervals.

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