

10 Steps to a Successful in-Home NIR Therapy Program (Pt. 2)

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If you decide to put your chronic condition patients on an in-home near-infrared (NIR) / red light therapy program, the following 10 steps are absolutely essential for success:

1. Sell NIR Therapy Systems

Make it easy and affordable for the patient to acquire their own NIR therapy system for in-home use by selling systems in your clinic. Offer several different shapes and sizes of therapy pads and boots so each patient can have a system with pads that effectively cover the area(s) where treatment is needed most. And if possible, offer a payment plan that will allow lower-income patients and seniors on fixed incomes to afford their own system. Having their own system at their disposal will help the patient, especially in regard to long-term maintenance therapy.

Selling systems in your clinic will not only be helpful and convenient for patients, but also provide additional revenue for your clinic, as manufacturers allow health practitioners to purchase systems at wholesale to resell at a profit.

2. Explain NIR Therapy

In addition to teaching the patient how to use their system, explain what NIR therapy does and how it works. Make sure that the patient understands how it provides immediate as well as long-term benefits to their body; that it triggers the release of nitric oxide, ATP and other helpful chemicals at the cellular level that work to increase circulation, relieve pain and support their body's healing processes; and that the regeneration of nerves and tissues may indeed be possible over time.

If the patient has been educated to have a basic understanding of how NIR therapy is benefiting their body, then they will be more inclined to keep going with their in-home treatment sessions for the duration of the time it takes to generate substantial improvements.

3. Schedule Regular Office Visits

Schedule the patient for office visits on a regular basis to accelerate progress for their presenting condition. Explain to the patient that what you do for them in-clinic augments the benefits of their in-home program.

If they understand that NIR therapy is a passive treatment, while acupuncture is an active treatment –

and that both treatment sessions are equally important to achieving results — then the patient should be happy to maintain their regular in-office visits.

4. Assign Monthly Self-Assessments

Ask the patient to complete a detailed self-assessment at the beginning of each month for the first 3-4 months of their in-home treatment program. Have the patient answer questions pertaining to where they feel pain; the level of this pain; and what activities they have difficulties with and why.

As time passes and their pain decreases, the patient can easily forget how they previously felt and what their daily life was like before NIR therapy brought pain relief and other improvements. By reviewing previous self-assessments, the patient will be able to remember their former state and become more aware of the benefits they have received, including pain reduction and, especially with neuropathy patients, improvements in sensation, mobility and flexibility — and know that their in-home program is working.

5. Set a Realistic Time Frame

Give the patient a realistic time frame of when they may begin to experience results. Make sure the patient fully comprehends that the repair and rebuilding of damaged nerves and tissues is a slow and gradual process. A good rule of thumb is that the longer the patient has had their condition, the longer it will take to improve.

The patient should also understand that even after results are realized, regular maintenance treatments will be required in most cases to keep these improvements in place. If their expectations are realistic, then the patient will be less prone to become discouraged and dissatisfied while awaiting results.

6. Make Therapy Sessions Easy

Have the patient keep their NIR therapy system in an easy to-get-to and frequently used location – perhaps near their bed, couch or favorite chair. This positioning will make their therapy pads easy to pick up, plug in and place on their body while they rest, recline or sit watching television, reading, listening to music, or talking on the phone.

Some patients who work at home even do therapy sessions while on the job, finding this decreases stress. If NIR therapy can be associated with relaxation, it will make the therapy session much easier to remember to do each day.

7. Give Diet and Nutrition Advice

Provide the patient with handouts on which foods to eat and which foods to avoid, tailoring your diet guidelines to their specific health condition(s). For example, if the patient is diabetic or prediabetic, give them diet suggestions that will help keep their blood sugar levels stabilized. In particular, give the patient a list of foods that help increase their body's nitric oxide production: beets and beet greens, arugula, spinach, Swiss chard, celery, watermelon, pomegranate, parsley, citrus, and walnuts.

8. Make Supplements Part of Your Treatment Protocol

Along with acupuncture and NIR therapy, recommend vitamin, mineral and herbal supplements as an

integral part of your in-home treatment program. Educate the patient regarding beneficial vitamins, minerals and herbs that will help alleviate their specific condition. Develop different handouts that pertain to supplements for common chronic conditions that you may treat, such as back pain, arthritis and neuropathy. Selling supplements in-clinic will make it convenient for the patient to obtain them, plus provide an additional revenue stream for your clinic.

9. Advocate Exercise

Educate the patient on the importance of regular exercise. Provide a handout containing diagrams of simple exercises with instructions that are appropriate for their age range and health issue(s).

10. Show Interest and Give Encouragement

Last, but not least, always ask the patient how their in-home therapy is coming along and what improvements they are experiencing. If you inquire about their therapy, encourage them and show you are interested in their progress; this will give the patient the emotional support they need to help them stick with their in-home program. What's more, they will be excited to share their treatment results with you during office visits.

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