

How Long Do You Keep Dental Records?

The statutes listed above demonstrate that dentists may still need to produce records in defense of malpractice claims long after the ten-year statutory requirement has elapsed.

Our best recommendation is that dental records or copies of records should be retained indefinitely. However, if keeping records indefinitely is not a realistic option, at minimum, such records should be retained according to the following guidelines:

- Adult records - retain records at least 10 years from the last date of treatment
- Pediatric records - retain records until the minor reaches 21 years of age plus six months
- Deceased patient's records - retain records at least 10 years after date of death

One year should be added to all of these time periods to allow for actual service of the lawsuit to all parties.

Dentists may wish to explore additional record retention options which may include record storage facilities, microfilm, and/or scanning to CD-ROM, all of which can assist in record retention efforts.