How to update CDT codes in Open Dental

Updating CDT codes is an important part of preparing your dental practice for the new year. This guide shows you how to update CDT codes in Open Dental by importing the latest codes and changes with the **Procedure Code Tools** window. Keeping your CDT codes current is essential for accurate billing and compliance.



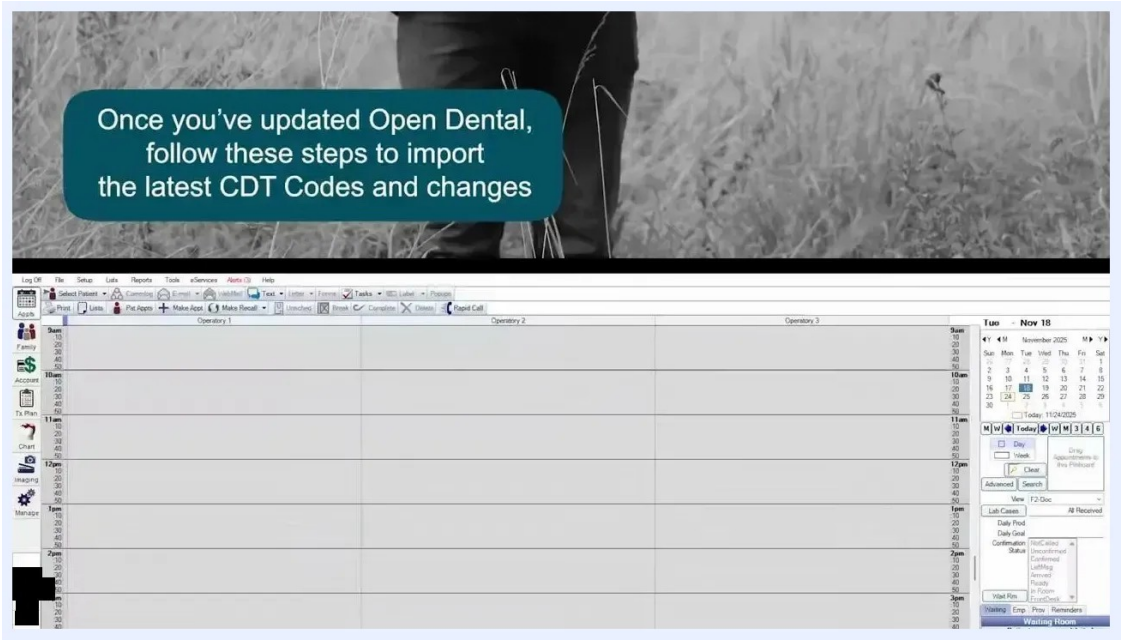
A digital globe with the message that updating CDT codes is an important part of preparing your dental practice for the new year

Prerequisites

Before you update CDT codes in Open Dental, confirm the following:

- You have seen your last patient for the year. Import the new CDT codes after this point so that all procedures for the current year are billed with the correct codes.
- Your Open Dental software is up to date. You may need to update Open Dental to have access to the latest codes.

- You have backed up your data before making changes to procedure codes.

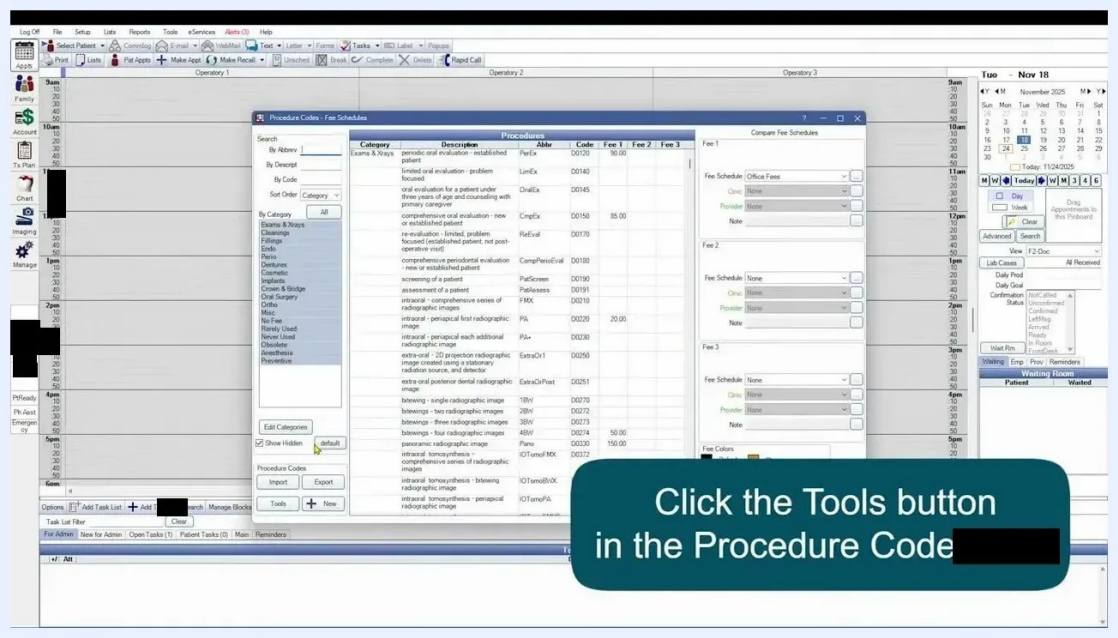


A gloved hand adjusting dental equipment on a patient, with a reminder to import the new year's CDT codes after your last patient of the year

Steps to update CDT codes in Open Dental

Step 1: Check for software updates

Make sure you are running the latest version of Open Dental. If necessary, perform a software update so that you can access the newest CDT codes.



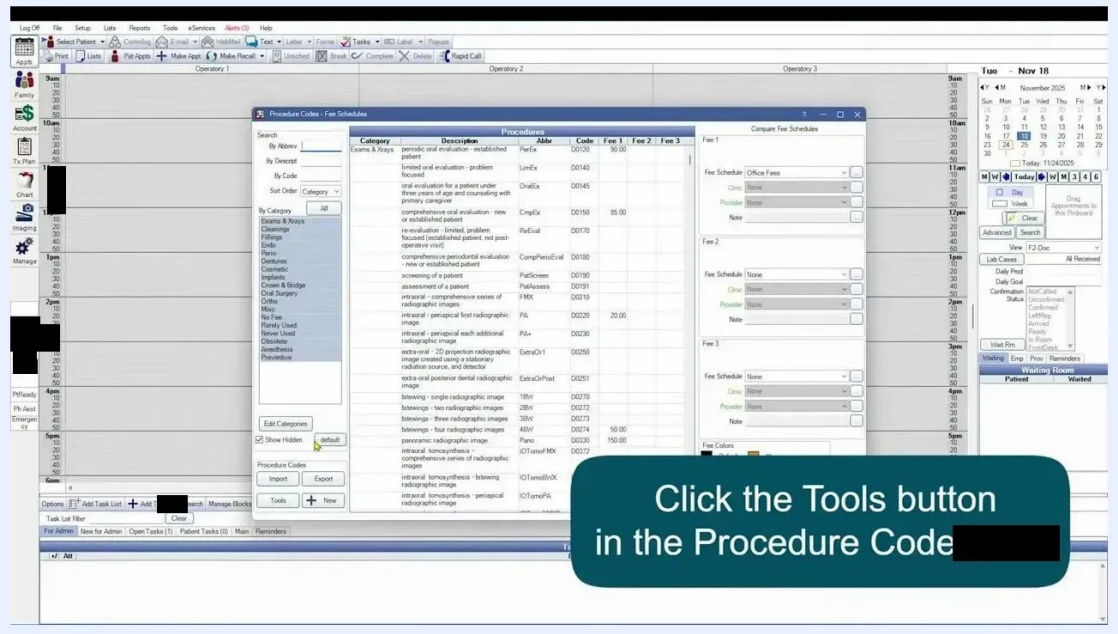
A person holding an old television outdoors, illustrating that you may need to update Open Dental to access the latest codes

Step 2: Open the Procedure Code Tools window

After you update Open Dental, start the import of the latest CDT codes and changes.

1. Open Open Dental and go to the main screen.
2. Locate the **Procedure Codes - Fee Schedules** window.
3. In the **Procedure Codes** area, click **Tools**.

The **Procedure Code Tools** window opens.

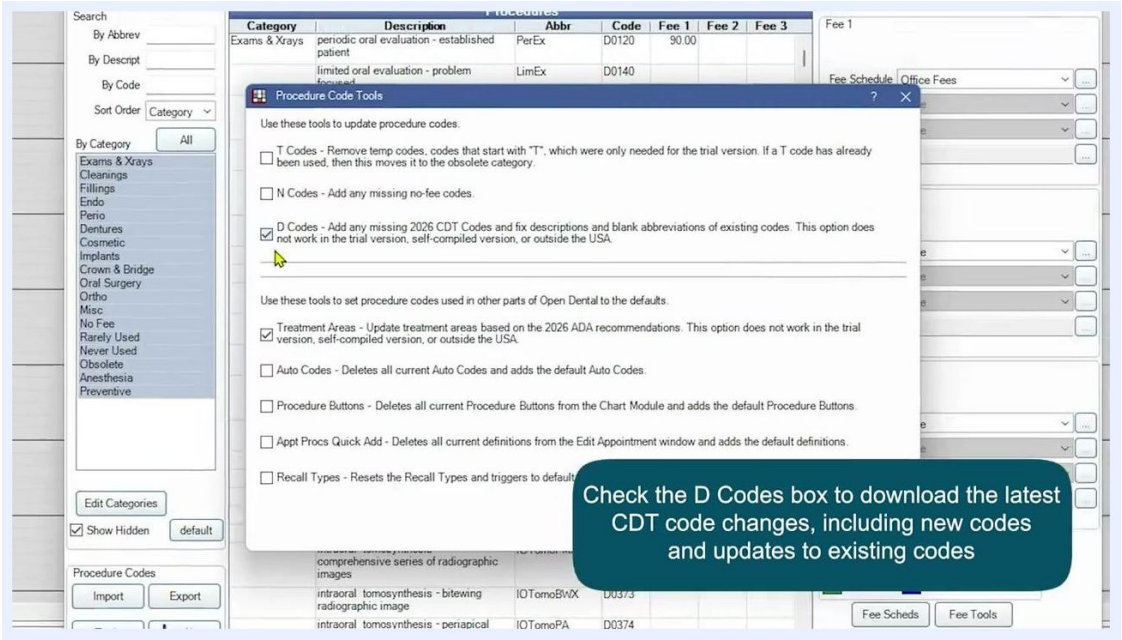


The Open Dental main screen, ready to begin importing the latest CDT codes and changes

Step 3: Download the latest CDT codes

In the **Procedure Code Tools** window, check the box labeled **D Codes – Add any missing 2026 CDT Codes and fix descriptions and blank abbreviations of existing codes**.

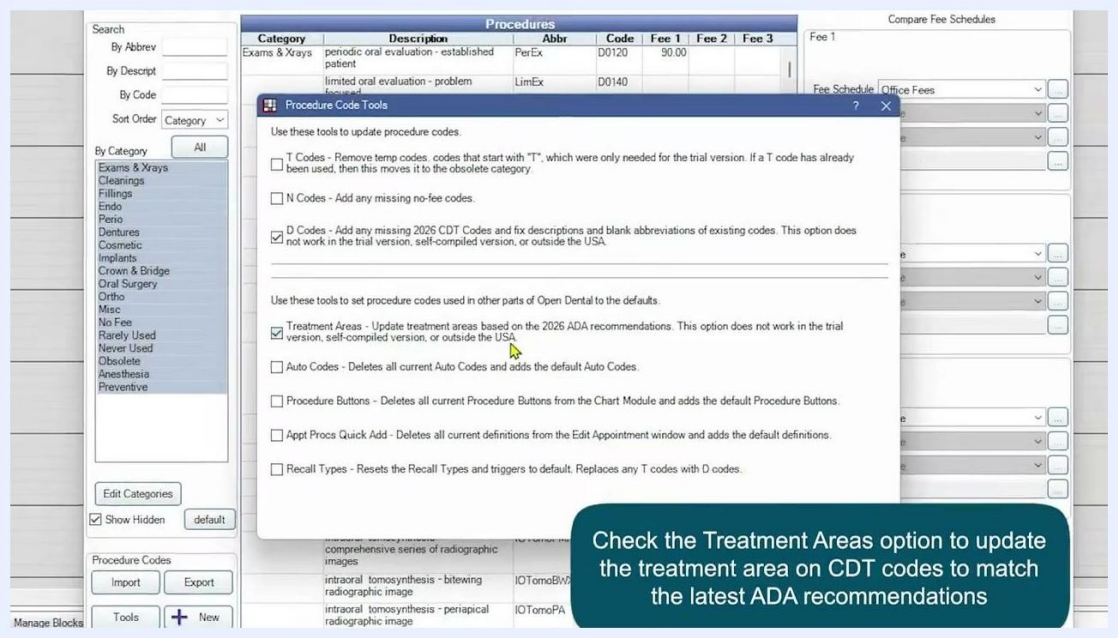
This downloads the latest CDT code changes, including new codes and updates to existing codes.



The Procedure Code Tools window with the D Codes box checked to download the latest CDT code changes

Step 4: Update treatment areas

Check the **Treatment Areas** option. This updates the treatment area on CDT codes to match the latest ADA recommendations.

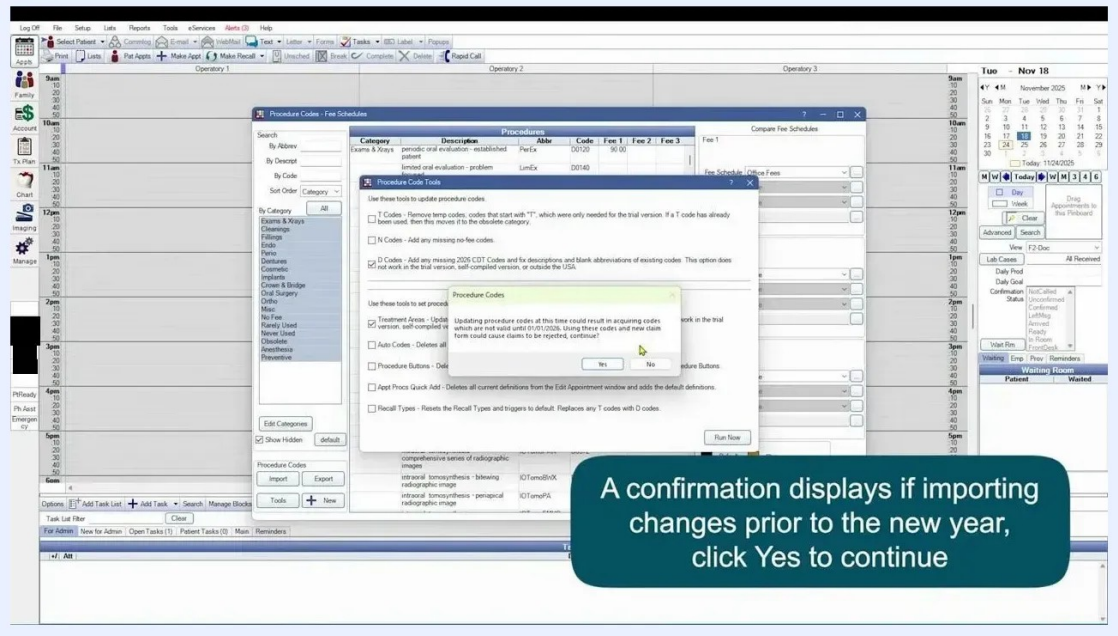


The Procedure Code Tools window with the Treatment Areas option checked

Step 5: Confirm the import

If you import changes before the new year, a confirmation dialog appears with this warning: "Updating procedure codes at this time could result in acquiring codes which are not valid until 01/01/2026. Using these codes and new claim form could cause claims to be rejected, continue?"

Click **Yes** to continue.

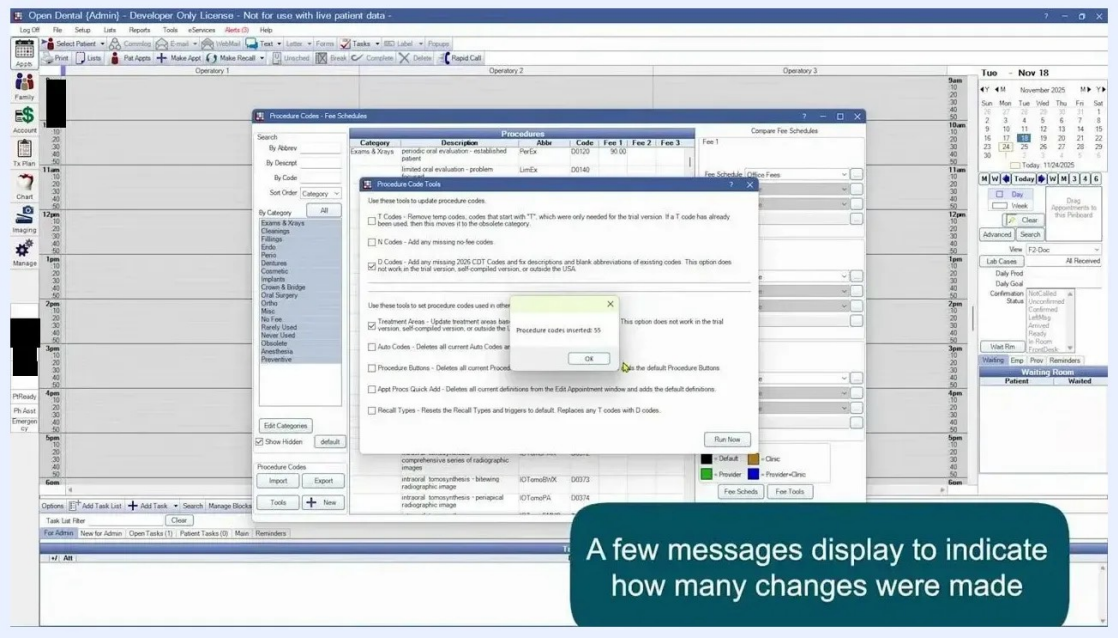


The Open Dental confirmation dialog shown when importing changes before the new year, with Yes as the option to continue

Step 6: Review the import results

After the import, Open Dental displays messages that show how many changes were made. For example, a message may read "Procedure codes inserted: 55."

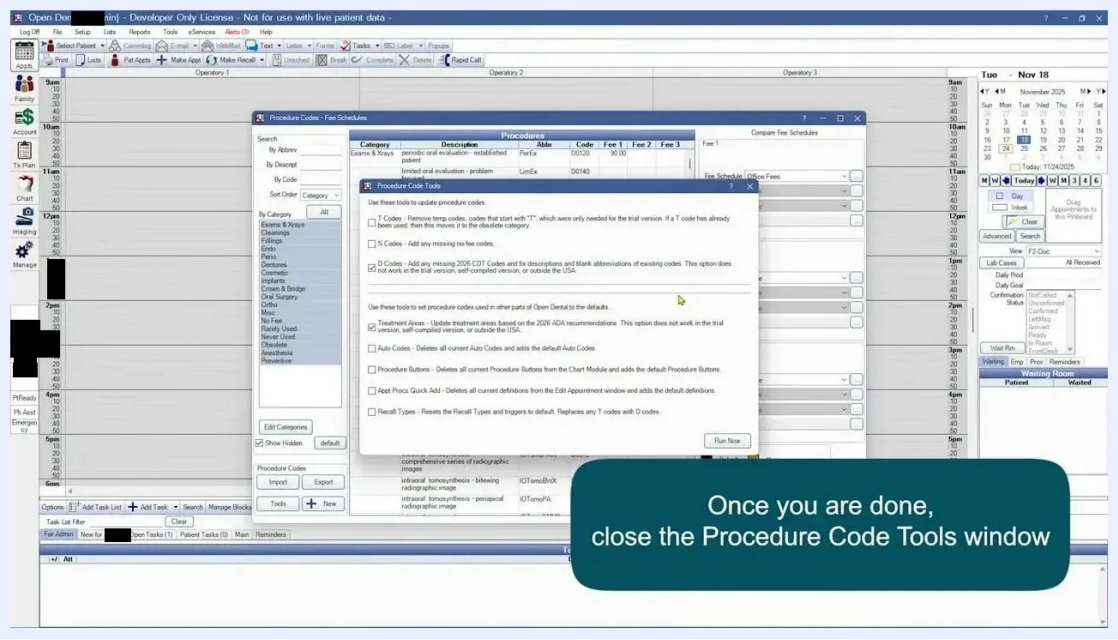
Click **OK** to acknowledge each message.



An Open Dental message showing how many procedure codes were inserted during the import

Step 7: Close the Procedure Code Tools window

When you are done, close the **Procedure Code Tools** window. The update process is now complete.



Open Dental with the Procedure Code Tools window open, ready to be closed to finish the update

Summary

To update CDT codes in Open Dental, you update the software, open **Procedure Code Tools**, and select **D Codes** and **Treatment Areas**. You then confirm the import and review the results. Always run the latest version of Open Dental and back up your data before you change procedure codes.

After you finish, Open Dental presents information on how to access further support and stay connected with Open Dental Software.