

# Social Media Marketing

*"Media research shows more than 80% of the internet users go online for information about their health."*

Research polls involving the healthcare community show that social media has positive benefits for both doctor and patient. Are you using social media to connect with your patients? For health-care providers there are certainly ethical guidelines, and boundaries, so let's consider social media and which options work best for you.

For starters, if you are not using social media because you are "just not into it" or you say, "a professional clinic isn't compatible with social media", let me assure you that your patients follow social media. Actually, many chiropractors, dentists, medical clinics and hospitals have social media pages. Even the Mayo Clinic is on Facebook. Media research shows more than 80% of internet users go online for information about their health.

You've probably updated your office software, you've redecorated your office waiting area, and your clinic



is up to date; but if you don't have a web presence or use social media, it's time to accept that these are essential tools to keep your "practice" current and not "outdated". Depending on your strategy, social media can help grow your practice, but more importantly, consumer reports show that social media strengthens patient loyalty, encourages, educates and fosters patient dedication to you and your products. Also, social media is an effective way to reinforce a new therapy or program that you are promoting.

Have your patients ever asked you about a weight loss program or a green drink they saw on Facebook? A nutritional therapy practitioner friend of mine uses social media with her NutriClear program with great success. But she takes it to another level hosting a private Facebook group where patients can confidentially support each other.

Choose which options fit you and your clinic. Social media crosses all generations and interests. According the PEW Research Center, the demographic

breakdown of people with at least one social media profile is:

Ages	18-29...	88%
	30-49...	78%
	50-64...	64%
	65+...	37%

So how does it work? Remember, social media for business is different than social media for personal use. For healthcare providers there are HIPPA and FDA regulations, but there's so much you CAN do. Maintain a professional image in your comments, make it interesting but social media is public, so don't get too personal. Share articles, videos or light hearted photos, but never disclose personal health information. Encourage your patients not to comment about their personal health issues.

When patients go to your Facebook page, they will find something different than they find on your website. A post from your clinic can be seen by all your patients who follow you, and when they see something of interest they can share your post with their friends. Use the settings on your business page to secure the privacy of your patients. You can always find interesting things to post or create your own.

Just keep in mind that the best way to utilize social media is to tell your story. Rather than only posting about your services or your techniques, post comments that people can relate to, illustrate a point or describe an event. Avoid just blasting out information or ads. You can tell an interesting story or illustrate a case study without revealing personal information. If you share an article or video, your comments are what people find interesting. The personality of you and your staff can shine through while still maintaining a professional image. If there is a product or a new therapy you want to share,

your enthusiasm about helping people tells the best story.

By law, we can't make claims but we can post a comment how exciting the research is for a product or share the results of a clinical trial. The patient version of The Tuesday Minute, called The Wellness Minute, may appear in your patient's email each Wednesday, but it's very easy for you or your receptionist to share or paste the link to your social media with a brief comment. Patients access social media much differently than they do email. While they are enjoying interesting posts from their friends, watching movie trailers, or finding out about an event, your patients will see your Wellness Minute video along with your comments.

You may have a Facebook page, but maybe you need to rethink it. Is it boring, do you only post ads and services? Do you post video? If you've never been on Facebook or Instagram, there are many online tutorials and guidelines for healthcare professionals. You may want to assign your receptionist or a staff member the job of posting for you, sometimes it only takes a few minutes. A weekly post is easy to manage. As you tell the story of wellness, nutrition, relief from pain, looking and feeling younger, is it in a way that people can relate? Even if they haven't been in your office for weeks, do they feel connected? Monitor your page, keep it professional, be creative and you will be a hit. Social media is still evolving, with greater possibilities in the future. As clinicians we are a vital part of the community, so let's stay connected.

Thanks for reading this week's Tuesday Minute edition. I hope you'll join me again next Tuesday.