

Increasing the Effectiveness of Your Clinical Website (DOs and DON'Ts)

DOs:

- Register your own domain name with a webhosting site. It doesn't have to be expensive; there are dozens of affordable (or even free) hosting platforms for businesses.
- Hire a professional who specializes in building websites for doctors, but with a bit of skill and practice, you can design the site yourself. Many freelance web designers advertise online, offering to build everything from a simple one-page form to a complex, multi-page website.
- Make sure your website will be responsive (adaptable to easy viewing on different devices like smartphones and tablets). If you are designing your own clinical website from a template, choose one that's the easiest for users (and you) to navigate. The fewer pages and tabs to click, the better.
- Use text, video and easy-to-understand informational graphics like charts and diagrams. Providing content in different formats helps keep users from getting bored or overwhelmed, and appeals to many different styles of learning. Include at least one or two bright, engaging images of people doing things — working, smiling, talking with patients, writing orders, etc.
- Add new content frequently — whether it's news and current events related to the field of plastic surgery, reports of professional events you've attended, or your own explanations of different procedures.

DON'Ts:

- Overwhelm the user with large blocks of text. Break up long content into smaller subsections for clearer organization and easier reading.
- Sound either too "medical" or too personal. Aim for a tone pitched for a lay audience, but which is still professional and authoritative. You can teach users a few key terms without overusing medical jargon.
- Mistakenly think that keywords are the secret to a successful website. Your content should be organic and natural-sounding, not "stuffed" full of frequently searched terms to the point where it's convoluted to read.
- Forget the basic principles of design on a self-built website. Your content needs to be more than interesting, informative or persuasive. It must also be laid out in a way that is pleasing to the eye. Use highly visible contrasting colors, and make sure that text and images are not crowded too close together or spread too far apart.
- Assume that your website will run itself. Things change quickly; information becomes outdated, new procedures and materials come along, and you advance in your own career. Keeping your website up-to-date by adding new content regularly is absolutely crucial to maintaining your professional credibility with patients and colleagues alike. What does it say about any business when you find its website has been languishing for weeks or months?

In a field that changes as rapidly as ours, your clinical website is the central command center of all your practice's online activity. Every social media post, YouTube video and subscriber mailing is meant

ultimately to lead to more views on your website. The more traffic your site gets, the higher you rank in search engine results. And the more you work at giving your clinical website the time and attention it deserves, the more you'll find that it pays off by strengthening your relationship with your existing patients, as well as attracting new ones.