

## Patient Education: Not Just Pamphlets Anymore

By Kevin Rach

Effective patient education has always been one of the most important supporting pillars of a successful healthcare practice, and it's easy to see why. It delivers the information your patients need, it manages expectations, and it can even help to prevent problems in the first place. Every practice should have a patient education option at-the-ready, and odds are good that your practice already distributes some form of it. The question is whether your patient education is living up to the standards of the modern, technology-driven world.

Thanks to smartphones, 68% of American adults have the answer to almost any question in their pockets. Tech-savvy practices take advantage of this by putting patient education materials directly on their websites. Why? Accessibility is the biggest benefit, but it's far from the only one. Online patient education has a few perks that you might not expect.

### 1) It can raise your Google ranking.

Putting your patient education materials online generates more content for your website, which in turn creates new opportunities for search optimization. With a greater supply of properly curated content, search engines are more likely to direct patients searching for podiatric information to your practice's website.

### 2) It caters to more learning styles.

Some people prefer reading, some prefer pictures, some prefer video. Paper education materials can't take those preferences into account, whereas online education opens the door to a wide variety of content delivery methods. The best online libraries include high definition videos, artistic illustrations, and anatomically correct diagrams, all of which are optimized for traditional and mobile use. Thus, your patients can learn in the styles they find most comfortable.

### 3) Space is virtually unlimited.

Online materials don't take up physical space, which means you can provide as much information as you want. You probably can't fit a display of 1,000 different pamphlets in your practice, but you can do exactly that online.

### 4) It's easier to update than print.

Online patient education is gaining the edge over print for the same reason that online news sites are overtaking newspapers. The internet is faster than paper, especially when it comes



to updating information. Online education can help stay on the cutting edge of podiatry, giving your patients the up-to-date information they deserve. When managed properly, a good online education library will stand the test of time and stay current much more easily than a print library ever could.

### 5) It makes your website more engaging.

This is perhaps online education's greatest strength. When a new patient visits your website, it's because they need your help. They probably have questions. When they find an educational section which includes

the answers to those questions, they're more likely to schedule an appointment with you than with another practice. It proves to them that you are knowledgeable on the subject. Once they decide they need to see a doctor, your contact information will be very easy for them to find.

The world has moved beyond the confines of physical, paper-and-ink educational materials. Card catalogs have become databases, the yellow pages have become search engines, and nearly every piece of information on the planet

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is available for immediate download from anywhere, at any time. Your patients expect all the information they need to be accessible on demand, both from at home on their computers and abroad on their smart devices. The stack of pamphlets in your office is nowhere near as enticing anymore.

Of course, those pamphlets aren't altogether useless. Some patients will always feel more comfortable with a printed pamphlet than anything digital. But online patient education is one of the best ways to cater to the modern patient. Use it alongside printed materials in order to get the best results—both for your patients and your practice.

For more information on online patient education, practice websites, and complete online marketing solutions, visit [officite.com/podiatry](http://officite.com/podiatry), call a Web Presence Advisor at 866-747-5261, or [click here](#).