



7 Necessities for Your Podiatry Practice's Website

These key features are necessary for optimal Internet performance.

BY RACHAEL SAUCEMAN

There's no question practice websites are here to stay—the Internet is a major driver of consumerism in healthcare, and your website is a way to secure a piece of the pie. Healthcare websites are often a patient's first touch point with your practice. The site, including its layout, security, and content, has the ability to influence a patient's experience long before they walk in the door.

With more than 84% of patients using online and offline sources for research in finding a physician, a strong web presence can be a means to connect with prospective patients. Of patients who booked appointments with a healthcare provider, more than 80% say they used a healthcare provider's website, according to a Google study.

If you're looking for straightforward ways to connect and build trust with prospective patients, visit your practice website with fresh eyes. Consider these seven website features as must-haves for your practice:

1. Security. Any platform collecting patient information is subject to HIPAA regulations. That includes patient portals, online contact forms and chat tools, many of which offer the first opportunity for patients to share protected health information (PHI). Ensure that your practice website is compliant with an SSL certificate and encrypted, HIPAA-compli-

ant forms. Partner with web hosting companies that have built-in processes for protecting and managing PHI.

2. Mobile-Friendliness. Four in five patient encounters with a health system or practice start with a search from a mobile phone. Your practice website should look and

feel accessible when viewed on a mobile phone. That means ensuring the site design is responsive, or adjusts to

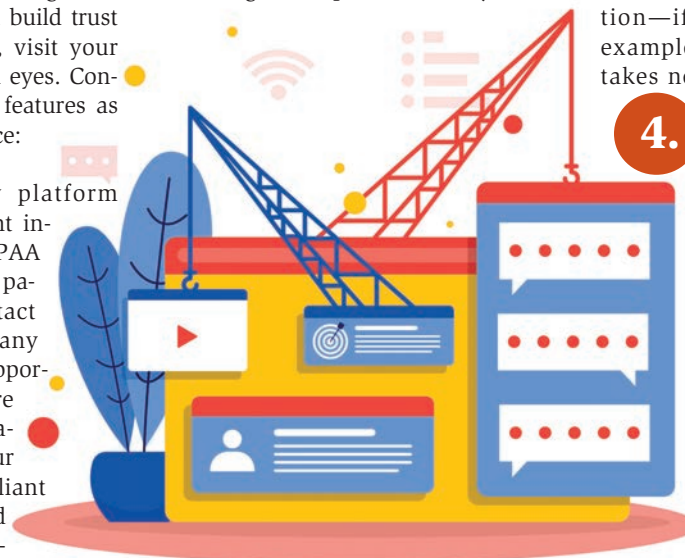
screen size. Key details, like locations and contact information, should be easy to find. Buttons should be bigger when viewed on a mobile device.

3. Contact and Scheduling Info. Patients want to connect. Is the phone number easy to find? Can patients request

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or schedule an appointment directly from the website? The site should include relevant information—if a referral is needed, for example, or how soon a provider takes new appointments.

4. Location, Location, Location. Location pages are among the most viewed pages on healthcare provider websites. These pages should be highlighted, not buried within the site, hidden in the website footer, or labeled with obscure names. Include appropriate details about each location, including directions, physicians and services available.



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5. Provider Details. Establish trust with patients before meeting them. Your site should in-

find and decipher. Pages that contain this information are among the most visited pages on a healthcare provider's site. Patients may not even attempt to connect with your

tion should be updated. Manage and respond to patient reviews—and ask your patients to leave reviews! Star ratings make it easy for prospective patients to determine value.

Patients may not even attempt to connect with your practice without first knowing if their insurance is accepted.

clude pages that highlight a practitioner's specialties and qualifications. More personable bios and videos enable prospective patients to connect and give them confidence in the level of expertise at your practice.

6. Insurance Information. For many patients, insurance coverage is the deciding factor when choosing a healthcare provider. Make this information easy to

practice without first knowing if their insurance is accepted.

7. Updated Listings. Ensure that Google, Bing, and Yahoo listings, and other industry-specific listings, are accurate. More than 50% of all searches are no-click—which means prospective patients may never make it to your site but may still access information about your practice from a search result. Contact informa-

These seven features are “musts” for any practice website. If your practice needs to address most, or all, of the items, simply tackle them one by one. Before you know it, you'll have a solid website foundation built. **PM**



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