

Patient Presentations for Podiatrists

Here's how to educate with PowerPoint.

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There is a very simple way to increase patients' understanding and acceptance of your treatments. Let's discuss the importance of consistent explanations for different foot conditions using patient presentations.

By creating a series of presentations for common foot pathologies, you can lay the groundwork for effective explanations. These slide decks should take about five minutes to explain. With a clear and concise presentation, your patients can be empowered to take part in their treatment plans.

An effective presentation has many benefits for both your practice and patients. As a podiatrist, your ability to explain foot conditions, treatment options, and the science behind the options will help patients better understand their diagnosis and build trust in your proposed treatment plans. This will help increase your practice revenue and help your patients become more receptive to future treatment methods.

What Are Patient Presentations? Make Your Patients More Receptive

A patient presentation is a short slide show that explains a specific foot condition. Ideally, you will have a different presentation for each pathology you treat. These presentations will help you be consistent with your explanations and messaging. In its most basic form, a patient presentation consists of the following parts:

- *Title slide.*
- *Question slide*

- *Anatomy slide*
- *Imaging slide*
- *Treatment slide.*

Keep the presentation within the 3-to-5-minute range.

Title Slide: Attention-grabber (Figure 1)

The first slide in the presentation should grab the patient's attention and interest right from the start. Have a title and add an image related to the condition to set the stage for the information. A good image may show the pain areas on a foot caused by the condition, as this will help patients relate to their pain.



Figure 1—Title Slide Example: If discussing Achilles tendinitis, the title slide could display an image of the foot and ankle highlighting the Achilles tendon, with the title simply “Achilles tendinitis.”

Question Slide: Ask the Patient Relevant Questions (Figure 2)

The question slide within a patient presentation helps you gather information. It is also a great opportunity for interactive discussion between the podiatrist and the patient.

Each slide should include one or two questions that gather specific

information about the patient's symptoms and pains. These questions will help you better understand how the condition has affected the patient's daily life and activities. It's also good to learn about previous treatments or medications the patient has already tried to treat their problem.

The questions on these slides should not be “yes or no.” Rather, they should engage the patient and encourage them to elaborate on their unique situation. The more they participate, the more invested they will be in their treatment journey. Be sure to actively listen to your patient's responses and make it a two-way dialogue. This is a great opportunity to build your patient-doctor relationship and increase their trust in you. Make sure you SLOW DOWN, especially for elderly patients, and don't speak too fast. This is the reason why a print version of the presentation or a short video reinforces what was presented.

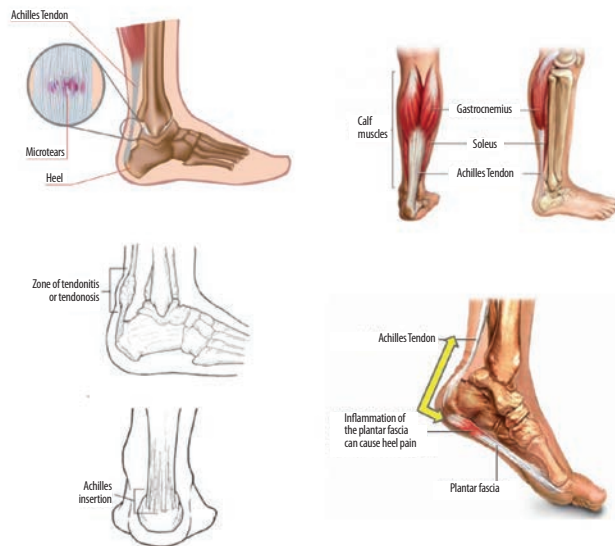


Figure 2—Sample Questions for Your Question Slide(s):

- How long have you had the symptoms?
- Can you describe the pain you feel? Is it sharp, dull, or aching?

Continued on page 75

What is Achilles Tendinitis?



Patient Presentations (from page 74)

- What treatments have you tried?
- How does this impact your life?
- Why do you want treatment now?

Anatomy Slide: Explain the Anatomy of the Condition (Figure 3)

The anatomy slide is where things can start to get technical. Here, you should show some anatomical diagrams of the patient's condition and highlight specific areas affected (e.g., muscles, bones, ligaments). Visually showing the patients what is happening behind the scenes of the condition is vital to educating them on why they feel what they feel.

Though showing medical and anatomy diagrams is beneficial, try to avoid complicated and overly technical explanations. Even if the slide is complicated and filled with medical jargon, your explanation should be as simple as possible, using clear and concise descriptions. Using metaphors and comparing anatomical parts to familiar objects will help the patients understand more easily what is happening. For example, compare a ligament to a rubber band connecting bones or a muscle to a flexible rope that allows for movement.

Using simple terms and analogies will help patients with no medical background better understand what is going on with their feet.

Figure 3—Anatomy Slide Example: For Achilles tendinitis, the anatomy slide will show a labeled lower leg diagram with an X-ray view highlighting a posterior heel spur. You can also include a picture of how the Achilles connects the calf muscle to the heel bone. For more visual learners, a rubber band kept in your pocket helps show the concept.

Although the diagram on the slide has medical terminology like gastrocnemius and soleus, you should avoid using such complicated words in the explanation. Instead, emphasize the microtears in the

al X-rays or ultrasounds (depending on the condition), these images re-affirm what you taught them about in the anatomy slide. They may even prepare them for what they will see in their future diagnostic exams.

This slide's main purpose is to show the patient what abnormalities show up during diagnostic testing and what you will be looking for. Including this in the patient presentation is a great way to show your professional knowledge while also being transparent about what they should expect to see.

Even if the patient isn't having a specific diagnostic test (like an ultrasound or MRI) during that visit, this imaging slide will open them up to the possibility of getting these tests in future appointments.



Figure 4—Imaging Slide Example: For a patient with Achilles tendinitis, the imaging slide may have a picture of an ultrasound showing a

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Achilles tendon that are causing the pain or the inflammation where it connects to the plantar fascia. In this way you can educate the patient to understand the root of the condition and set him/her at ease.

Imaging Slide: X-rays and Ultrasounds (Figure 4)

Going a step further than anatomy slides, the imaging slide of a patient presentation shows real-life examples of the condition to the patient. It bridges the gap between anatomy and the patient's specific condition. When you show actu-

thickened Achilles tendon. Or you might also have an X-ray showing a bone spur forming from insertional Achilles tendinitis (explain what that means). Many patients will appreciate the visual demonstration and understand more clearly what is happening in their body.

Treatment Slide: Outline the Proposed Treatment Plan (Figure 5)

Also known as the treatment evaluator slide, this slide will be

Continued on page 76

Patient Presentations (from page 75)

the most vital in your patient presentations. It outlines the proposed treatment options, and shows the

tions and make recommendations based on what you learned previously during the information gathering of the questions slides. Referring to the information they

Patient presentations are invaluable tools that help podiatrists be consistent in their explanations of foot conditions.

choices tailored to the patient’s specific needs and the severity of the condition. This is the slide that will show patients a roadmap to recovery.
The key here is to briefly explain each of the treatment op-

gave you earlier in your appointment helps them feel heard, relates to how each treatment contributes to their overall recovery, and optimizes their compliance when it comes to following “at-home” treatments.

This slide lays out the different choices, the effectiveness of each treatment option, the level of invasiveness, and how each treatment will heal them. While you may make some recommendations and encourage them toward certain treatments, allowing the patient to decide empowers them to participate in their treatment. This slide allows patients to weigh the benefits and effectiveness against invasiveness and cost, and helps them to select the most suitable treatment approach.

Your patients will probably start with non-invasive and least effective treatments at first. During future visits, you can show the treatment evaluator slide again and rec-

Continued on page 77

Tech Tools for Your Presentation

After you have created your educational presentations, how will you share them with patients? What is the most effective tech tool?
Five devices offer benefits—as well as drawbacks—to consider. Here is a rundown of each device from smallest to largest.

- 1 Cell phone:** Cell phones are easy to carry from exam room to exam room. For most patients, however, the screen size will be too small to read text and view photo details. Elderly patients and those with visual impairment may find it impossible to follow your presentation on a phone. Note that some cell phones are larger than others (with a screen size range of less than 5 inches to over 7 inches), so test the device on your target patient group before deciding to use it.
- 2 Tablets:** Portable and lightweight, these devices offer a bigger screen than a cell phone with equally vibrant color. The touch screen makes it fast and easy to move from slide to slide.
- 3 Laptops:** While still portable, laptops generally are heavier and bulkier than tablets, and you run the risk of damaging your laptop as you move throughout the office. However, your laptop will likely have a larger screen than a tablet and can provide access to other programs you may need during the patient encounter.
- 4 Desktop Monitors:** Most desktop monitors can be moved or swiveled to face patients and to avoid glare. However, patients may not be able to get close enough to see your slides, or they may feel uncomfortable moving closer to the screen. Large desktop monitors are best if used for this purpose.
- 5 Mounted, Large-format Monitors:** These will be the most impressive and visually captivating tools to share your presentations. Projecting larger-than-life clinical photos may enhance the understanding of a patient’s condition and help emphasize the importance of compliance. Text will be large and legible. Note, however, that some patients may be sensitive to oversized photos of feet and/or wounds. Also, they may find it difficult to crane their necks to view a presentation on monitors mounted close to the ceiling.

While generic, educational patient presentations will work on any of the above devices, be sure that protected patient information is only visible to you, your staff, and the patient. **PM**

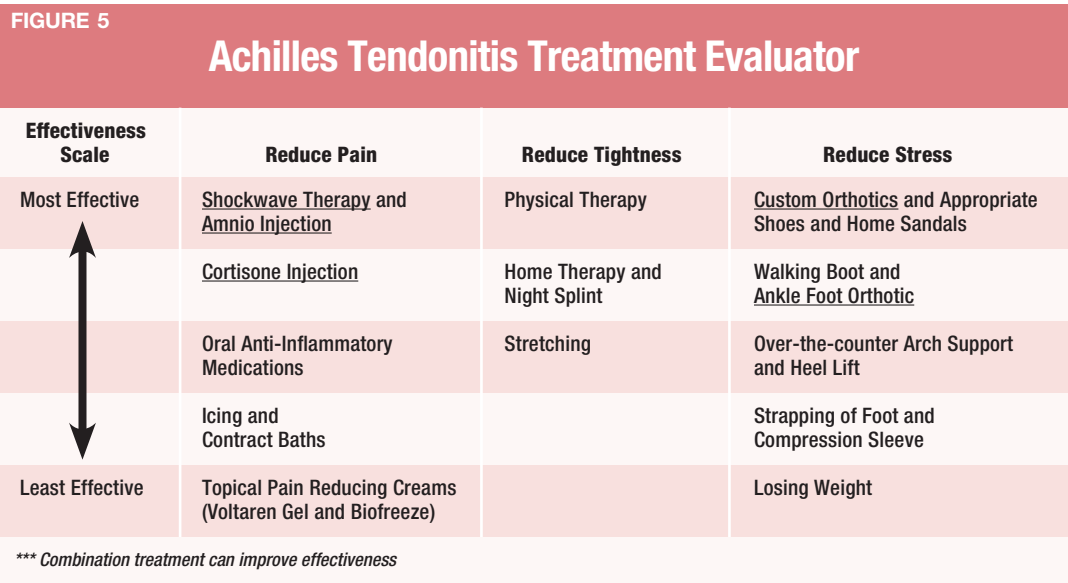


Figure 5—Treatment Slide Example: The example shows the different treatment options and their effectiveness for Achilles tendonitis. Patients may start with creams and icing before moving up the line toward medications, splints, orthotics, and more. Although the treatment slide already outlines the next steps, you may also consider including other slides that detail follow-up appointments, home-care instructions, or other resources that will be helpful to the patients.

Continued on page 78

Patient Presentations (from page 76)

ommend more advanced treatment options if the initial ones are ineffective. As you move up the effec-

tiveness scale, your patients will see the treatments that may become necessary, such as medications or injections, custom orthotics, or shockwave therapy.

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Continued on page 78

Patient Presentations (from page 77)

Conclusion

Patient presentations are invaluable tools that help podiatrists be consistent in their explanations of

patient presentation, you can create a standard operating procedure for each condition you treat. Other benefits of patient presentations include:

- **Improved Patient Educa-**

Potential Revenue Increase:
By showing the value and logic behind the treatment options, patients trust you and are more receptive to recommended care plans, even those with higher out-of-pocket expenses.

foot conditions. They are great for educating patients and increasing revenue by being transparent about treatment options.

By clearly explaining the condition and treatment plan with a

tion: Patients gain a better understanding of their condition.

- **Increased Treatment Acceptance:** Patients are more likely to return and be willing to take part in future treatments.

- **Potential Revenue Increase:** By showing the value and logic behind the treatment options, patients trust you and are more receptive to recommended care plans, even those with higher out-of-pocket expenses.

Start incorporating these patient presentation slideshows into your treatment process today! Not only will they be a more interactive and informative experience, but they will also help improve your doctor-patient communication skills and help your patients make the most informed choices. PM



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