

Optimize Google My Business for Local Patient Search



Increase the chances of being found in local patient searches by completing, verifying, and optimizing your GMB listing.

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>> Google My Business (GMB) is a free business listing tool that allows you to manage your online presence across Google, including maps and search. GMB listing is beneficial to every small business, including dermatology practices. You can increase the chances of being found in local patient searches by completing, verifying, and optimizing your GMB listing. You make it more likely for your targeted patient audience to find your practice rather than your competition.

You can edit your medical practice's information by claiming and verifying it. This helps patients find you easily by ensuring your healthcare business's information is accurate. Several key factors make GMB critical for every medical and dental practice.

KEY BENEFITS

1. Complete Control. One of the major benefits of managing your GMB listing is that you give Google information to decide if, when, and how you should appear in search results by having a complete and optimized listing. This gives you complete control over how your potential patients see you online. You can update information, add posts, add images, manage and respond to your reviews, and even advertise through GMB dashboard.

2. Improved Accuracy. Patients like to see consistent information. You can improve the accuracy of your practice's

information on all Google applications and other apps that use Google for data, by keeping your information updated in your GMB listing.

3. Search Result Information. You can't miss out on Google's feature where information about a practice or clinic is provided on the search results page. This makes it easier for potential patients to find your contact information, reviews, photos of your work, and a brief summary of your practice.

4. Better First Impression. You can gain the attention of your target patient audience quickly by adding photos and videos that highlight your work. They will be more likely to book a consultation if they like what they see.

5. Enhanced Patient Analytics. GMB listings have enhanced analytics that provide more patient insights. For instance, you can get information on popular queries used to find your practice. You can also get information on how potential patients searched for your business and where they viewed your listing.

CREATE YOUR GOOGLE MY BUSINESS LISTING

In most cases, a GMB listing will already be available. All you need to do is click on the link "Own this Business?" in the Knowledge Panel when you search for your practice online. You will need to create a business listing if you do not find one in the Knowledge Panel.

Make sure you complete all information once you have claimed and verified your listing. You increase the chances of your practice standing out when you provide more information. You must accurately provide the name of your practice or clinic with the correct address and local phone number.

Do not forget to add a link to your dermatology website homepage under the primary category and your contact page or appointment calendar under the appointment URL.

List a full description of the medical services you provide, making optimal use of the available 1,000 characters. Use this field to provide a searcher with quick insight to your practice, what medical services you offer, and why they should visit you for an appointment. Add multiple images of your clinic and area of practice. Do not forget to add logo and cover image as well.

STEPS TO OPTIMIZE

You can begin to optimize once you have completed all information. These are the common features that are used to optimize a GMB listing for a medical practice.

1. Respond to Questions. All medical practices are often asked routine questions by patients. These questions can make your healthcare business more visible if placed on your GMB listing. Properly manage this area and take control by answering the most

useful and relevant questions. You can post the FAQ on your website in GMB listings as well.

Always remember that anybody can ask and answer questions for your practice on the Knowledge Panel. You need to routinely monitor your profile to make sure that no legitimate questions go unanswered. At the same time, you must take care to flag negative and inappropriate posts about your practice to have them removed.

2. Make Use of GMB Posts. You can push dynamic content regarding your business through posts. These can be offers, events, or news regarding your area of practice. You can also publish updates and announcements to drive more organic traffic to your medical website. Posts show up on your business listings and attract more patients.

You can make use of analytics to check which posts perform better and are more appreciated by your target patient audience. What's New, Offers, Events, and Products are a few types of posts available. These have individual functions. For instance, you can pick "What's new" to link to a new blog post, announcement, or patient testimonial.

Posts can include text, videos, and photos. Even though you have 1,500 words available, only the first few lines will be visible in the Knowledge Panel results. Hence, you need to make sure the first few words describe exactly what the post is about.

Always post an image or a video with a text post. Do not forget to use a call to action, because this is your opportunity to drive patients to your website for more information and enhance your branded Knowledge Panel.

3. Add Quality Photos and Videos. You can give your

medical practice an edge with quality photos on your GMB listing. According to Google statistics, listings with photos receive 35 percent more clicks to their websites and 42 percent more requests for driving directions as compared to those that don't.

Do not be afraid to click photos of your work area and any technology that you have. Also, encourage your dermatology patients to upload photos.

You can humanize your dermatology practice by uploading videos. Keep them short (around 30 seconds) and make sure they communicate directly with potential patients. You can use longer videos to demonstrate your expertise.

4. Reviews Can Send a Positive Message. Reviews are critical to make your practice stand out. Patients have more confidence when they see those orange stars. A practice with no reviews might not be encouraging to a potential patient, even if your business is stellar.

Make sure you ask your patients to review you online. In fact, Google encourages you to ask for reviews from clients and customers. You can make it easier by sending them a direct link to your Google My Business listing in a follow-up email.

Having one or two negative reviews will not affect your practice if you have more quality reviews. However, do not let the negative reviews just sit there without a response.

Address the patient's concern in the review directly and personally, if possible. Respect HIPAA regulations! This will send out a message that you are committed to patient experience and care about them.

GMB LISTINGS REQUIRE COMMITMENT

Google My Business is one of the most powerful and effective tools for making your dermatology practice stand out from the competition. Google allows users to provide suggested edits that can modify your listing's accuracy.

Therefore, always monitor your listing regularly. It is important to keep your GMB listing optimized to ensure you are easily found by potential patients.

Google factors in the online interaction between a practice and patients. You will gain more visibility with more interaction. Plan on using the new features that are added by Google to make sure your listing is fully optimized. ■

Naren Arulrajah is President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, a complete internet marketing company that focuses on SEO, social media, marketing education, and the online reputations of dermatologists. With a team of 180+ full time marketers, www.ekwa.com helps dermatologists who know where they want to go, get there by dominating their market and growing their business significantly year after year. If you have questions about marketing your practice online, call 855-598-3320 to speak one-on-one with Naren.

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