

Guidelines to Represent Your Dermatology Practice on Google My Business

Google My Business is a powerful tool to reach out to and engage with your target audience online.

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Google My Business is a free, convenient and highly user-friendly online resource for potential patients in your local area. Google has designed this local business network as a one-stop-shop to enable potential consumers to find relevant information about your dermatology practice. At the same time, it enables you to manage online information about your practice and monitor analytics. Billions of searches are performed via Google My Business every month, which makes it a powerful tool to reach out to and engage with your target audience online.

To help ensure that businesses are able to optimally utilize the benefits of Google My Business, the search engine has issued a list of official guidelines. Adhering to these guidelines will help your practice maintain high quality information on Google. It will also help you avoid common problems, such as unintended changes to your information, or in some cases, removal of your business information from Google.



TIPS FOR OPTIMAL RESULTS

To achieve best results using Google My Business, follow these simple tips:

- Make sure that the name, address, and phone number of your dermatology practice is accurate and precise.
- Represent your practice as it is consistently represented and recognized in the physical world across stationery, signage, and other forms of branding.
- Select the fewest number of business categories it takes to describe your overall core practice as succinctly as possible.
- Create a Local Business Page if your practice has a physical location. Businesses with only an online presence should create a Brand Page instead of a Business Page.

In order to qualify for a local Google+ page, your practice must make in-person contact with patients during the

stated work hours. A practice that is under construction or that has not yet opened to the public is not eligible for a Google+ page. Similarly, if you operate from a location that you do not own or have the authority to represent, you are required to coordinate with your host to have your information displayed on a local Google+ page.



OWNERSHIP GUIDELINES

Only business owners or their authorized representatives may verify and manage their business information on Google My Business. If you wish to share management access to your local dermatology practice page with others, you can add a manager. If an affiliate network provider or a third party search engine optimization (SEO) firm is managing your online marketing and promotion, you can make them your authorized representative to manage your Google My Business account.

Guidelines for Authorized Representatives

- Claim a business listing only after receiving express consent from the business owner.
- Never make false, misleading, or unrealistic claims.
- Never use harassing or untrustworthy tactics with potential or existing customers.
- Always work directly with the business owner to complete verification.
- Make sure that the business owner knows where Google My Business data is used.
- Keep the business owner informed about which actions the authorized representative will take on the business listing.
- Authorized representative must, whenever possible, encourage the business owner to create an account, own the listing, and add authorized representative as managers.

- The phone number and website for a listing should always be the single, authoritative phone number and website for the business and be verifiable by the business owner. Website content must be owned and managed by the business owner.



BUSINESS INFORMATION

Take care to include accurate and precise details about your dermatology practice on Google My Business. This will help you achieve higher search rankings and improve the search experience for your potential patients. Your goal should be to satisfy the information needs of potential patients in such a way that they will not need to go elsewhere to seek the information. The preferable items of information may include:

- Name of your dermatology practice
- Physical address
- Phone number
- Location on a map
- Driving and parking directions
- Neighborhood keywords
- Website URL
- Business Category
- Open hours of work
- Accurate and precise description of your practice
- Authentic, high resolution images of your practice
- Informative and engaging videos
- Special promotions and other information

Name. The name should reflect the real-world name of your dermatology practice as used consistently in your office, website, stationery, and as known to your patients. Adding unnecessary information to the name, such as marketing taglines, special characters, work hours, phone numbers, website URLs, service or production information, location, or address is not permitted.

Address. Use an accurate, precise, and consistent address to describe your practice location. PO Boxes and mailboxes located at remote locations are not acceptable.

Website & Phone. Provide a phone number that con-

nects to your individual business location as directly as possible, and provide one website that represents your individual business location. Use a local phone number instead of central, call center helpline number whenever possible. Do not provide URLs that redirect users to landing pages, including pages created on social media sites.

Categories. Categories help your patients find accurate, specific results for services that they may be interested in. In order to keep your business information accurate and live, make sure that you use as few categories as possible to describe your practice, and choose categories that are as specific as possible to represent your core practice. Do not use categories solely as keywords or to describe attributes of your business.



GUIDELINES FOR INDIVIDUAL PRACTITIONERS

A local Google+ Page for an individual practitioner may include title or degree certification, such as Dr. or MD. The page should belong to the practitioner, and not owned by support staff. A practitioner should not have multiple pages to cover all of their specializations.

If the practitioner is one of several public-facing practitioners at the given location, the organization should create a Google My Business page for the location, separate from that of the practitioner. The page for the practitioner should be titled with name of the practitioner only, excluding that of the organization. ■

Naren Arulrajah is President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, a complete Internet marketing company which focuses on SEO, social media, marketing education and the online reputations of dermatologists. With a team of 140+ 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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Susan Hutson and Jamie Edson of Ekwa Marketing discuss the basics of content curation. Learn how to use content curation to boost SEO.

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