

# Docs need to follow patients' lead, embrace social media

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(HealthDay)—As more patients discuss and manage their health care online, doctors need to keep up and use social media, according to a report published by the American Medical Association (AMA).

In 2012, nearly a quarter of patients reported using [social media](#) to manage their health care. As more patients use technology to discuss and manage their [health care](#), health systems and physicians should have a social media presence.

According to the report, to meet patients' increasing digital demands, doctors need not spend a lot of time online, but a minimal presence will

protect themselves from unfair criticism and enhance their practices. Doctors who do not use social media are unlikely to be aware of negative reviews, and have difficulty responding to these reviews. Building a positive online relationship can offset negative comments. In addition, having a social media presence allows physicians to respond in a timely manner to patient comments. Physicians should monitor their digital footprint to see what patients are saying about them. Furthermore, a practice website with a blog is suggested, and using Twitter to post updates and general health reminders is also recommended. LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook accounts can be used, and creating a website with information for prospective patients can be beneficial.

"[Doctors] should have a social media plan," said Frances Dare, managing director of connected health services for the consulting firm Accenture, according to the AMA. "If they don't do social media, social media will do them."

**More information:** [More Information](#)

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