

Cosmetic surgery on social media—Patients rate preferred social media sites and content

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Plastic surgeons using social media to attract patients should know their audience's preferred social media platforms and the types of posts of greatest interest, according to a survey study in the November issue of *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*, the official medical journal of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS).

"Plastic surgeons can utilize social media best by considering their target audience's perspective," said Heather Furnas, MD, of Plastic Surgery Associates of Santa Rosa, Calif. Dr. Furnas is a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons. The survey also suggests that patients rely on the plastic surgery practice's website over social media when seeking important information.

Plastic Surgeons on Social Media - The Patient's Perspective

Dr. Furnas and coauthors surveyed 100 patients making visits to their aesthetic plastic surgery practice regarding social media habits and preferences. The patients, average age 44 years, were nearly all women. Most were interested in facial plastic surgery; some were interested in breast, body, or other cosmetic procedures.

Among six social media platforms listed in the survey, Facebook was the clear winner in terms of use and engagement—about half of patients said they checked Facebook at least once daily. Instagram was second in

engagement, with 30 percent of patients reporting at least daily use.

Most patients used YouTube and Pinterest, but engagement was low. While only about one-fourth of patients were on Snapchat, most of them used it daily. Twitter was the least popular social media platform.

The plastic surgery practice's website beat out all [social media platforms](#) as the go-to source of online information. More than half of patients said they were influenced by the website when selecting a cosmetic surgery practice, compared to just eight percent for Facebook. More than 60 percent of patients checked the practice website on the day of their visit.

Out of 11 social media post categories, most patients chose before-and-after photos of cosmetic [surgery](#) procedures. More than one-fourth wanted to see information about the procedures; few selected didactic types of information.

Plastic surgeons can better reach and engage with their target population if they use the social media networks popular with their patients' demographic. For example, women prefer Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest, but Facebook in particular is most popular among the age group of women most likely to be interested in [plastic surgery](#). While Twitter is widely used by [plastic surgeons](#) to share and discuss research, the new survey suggests it's the least popular platform among [cosmetic surgery](#) patients.

The fleeting content on [social media](#) may be less important than the information provided by the plastic surgeon's practice website.

"These results suggest that the website should be considered the centerpiece of a practice's online content," Dr. Furnas and coauthors write. "Social media should be viewed as an adjunct to attract and engage users, enticing them to explore the practice [website](#)."

Provided by Wolters Kluwer Health

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