

How Will They Ever Find You?

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A new study has been released that shows 80 percent of U.S. adult Internet users have searched for health information on the Web.¹ This is almost a 30 percent increase from two years ago and translates into 93 million people, or about half of all American adults. This means every other person in your town has searched the Web for health information. This also means 50 percent of your patients have, too.

Of those 93 million Internet health seekers:

- almost 41 million (44%) sought information on diet, nutrition, vitamins and nutritional supplements;
- more than 33 million (36%) sought information on exercise and fitness;
- more than 26 million (28%) sought information on "alternative" care; and
- more than 19 million (21%) tried to find information on a particular doctor or hospital.

That's all well and good, but the question is: Did they find out about the benefits of chiropractic? And, perhaps more importantly: Did they find out about you and your practice?

Among the information consumers wanted, but couldn't get, was "more information on the doctor's background" and "doctor-patient e-mail." Today's health care consumers want to be able to find you, learn about you and talk to you on the Web, and they want to be able to access this information "at any time of the day or night."

The above data relate to the general population. When you talk to younger consumers, you learn that as far as they are concerned, if it isn't on the Web, it doesn't exist!

You may not have known it, but according to this survey, your own patients would like to communicate with you via e-mail. They would like to be able to make and/or change appointments, ask questions and receive information the same way they do with many other services - online.

The point is, like it or not, the Internet has become the reference of choice for most of the country. It is the first place most people look to find something and learn more about it. It is the starting point in making decisions about what to buy and where to buy it.

If your practice is not yet "on the Web," you should make this a priority. Your Web site should look professional and have information that is easy to read and access. Be certain to place your site on chiropractic and local directories, such as Chiroweb's ChiroLocator. Give visitors the information they want and need to better understand chiropractic and what your practice has to offer.

Finally, consider an e-mail patient newsletter. In addition to providing valuable information, an e-mail newsletter reminds your patients about the benefits of chiropractic and is easy to forward to family, friends and co-workers who ask them about chiropractic. It also reminds them that you care about their health, and continue to be concerned after they leave your office.

If you are not up to doing this yourself, a number of companies provide these services. (For more information on ChiroWeb's services, please call 1-877-493-2047.) Whatever company you use, you shouldn't be paying more than \$10-\$15 per month for your own practice Web site, a directory listing on a major Web site and an e-mail newsletter program.

ChiroWeb is now receiving hundreds of thousands of visits by consumers each month. As the most visited chiropractic Web site in the world, we have accepted the responsibility of educating interested potential patients with almost 38,000 pages of information.

Chiropractic doesn't yet have a viable PR or advertising campaign, but we do have over 60,000 doctors and an estimated 12 million patients.

What we can do is provide information on the Internet and in various other forms. We can communicate with our patients regularly, arming them with reliable information regarding chiropractic and good health. We can show the world how different chiropractic is and why going to a doctor of chiropractic is better than taking a pain pill.

Each of us needs to do his or her part to educate and inform every person about chiropractic.

References

1. *Internet Health Issues*. Pew Internet & American Life Project. July 16, 2003.

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