

Social Media Best Practices for Promoting Clinical Trials

Get the most out of your social media promotion with the following tips.

Social Media Tips

Social media is a powerful tool to generate awareness among a broad population and can be a cost-effective recruiting method for clinical studies.

For the best results:

- Post on the social media platforms your target recruitment population uses.
- Use plain, everyday language and keep your post short.
- Incorporate relevant hashtags and words your audience uses to describe their health issues.
- Add an interesting or informative graphic or video with each post, if appropriate.
- Reserve basic study information for a graphic or link to your study website/online document.
- Join online chats and build a relationship with key influencers like patient organization leaders.
- Monitor online discussions about your specific research area to learn about the issues of interest and concern to your target population.

IRB Consideration

It is important to protect potential and actual study participants' privacy when using social media. Principal Investigators and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) should assure:

- Information provided through and on social media meet privacy and confidential practice (e.g. do not tag or mention potential and actual study participants, friend or follow participants, or message privately)
- Placement or presentation of posts, materials, or ads are appropriate
- Study information provided to potential participants can be provided in a locked format (i.e. refer participants to the study coordinator or study site)
- Contact information presented should bring an interested person behind a security wall (i.e. do not tag or link to study staff or provide study specifics in posts or private messages)

Researchers should include their strategy for social media use, privacy protection, and informed consent in their IRB proposal.

For full guidance and best practices, [view guidelines developed by the NIH Office of Intramural Research.](#)