



# Registered Dietitians & Social Media

## WHY SHOULD DIETITIANS USE SOCIAL MEDIA?

1. To educate the public and correct health and nutrition misinformation.
2. To promote the role and value of dietitians in medical nutrition therapy and behavior change.
3. To network and collaborate with dietitians and other health care professionals.

## SOCIAL MEDIA CHECK LIST

- Pick a social media application (or two) that fits your message and content as well as your online style.
- Don't mix your personal and professional online presence.
- Clearly state whether the message or comment is your personal opinion or whether you are blogging/tweeting/posting content on behalf of your organization or employer.
- Always maintain patient, client, and employee/ employer confidentiality.
- Check your online presence on a regular basis to ensure security settings allow you to reach your intended audience.
- Always disclose any material connections.
- Maintain your digital competence—new forms of social media and new technologies will require new skills.
- If you make a mistake, acknowledge it openly and honestly to maintain your professional credibility.
- Share your social media successes and lessons learned with colleagues.
- Be patient. It can take time to build a following.
- Let your personality shine through your content and marketing.
- Be consistent in posting/tweeting/contributing.
- Make offers and talk about your business.

Source: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. The Impact of Social Media on Business and Ethical Practices in Dietetics. 20013. 113 (11); 1539-1543.

## SOURCES & FURTHER READING

### Peer-Reviewed Articles

- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. The Impact of Social Media on Business and Ethical Practices in Dietetics. J Acad Nut Diet. 2013. 113 (11); 1539-1543.
- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. LinkedIn Profile Makeover: Optimizing your professional online profile. J Acad Nut Diet. 2012; 23-25.
- Fox M. Legal Risks of Social Media: What Dietetics Practitioners Need to Know. J Acad Nut Diet. 2012; 1718.

### Articles

- Healthy Information and Management Systems Society. "Healthcare Friending" Social Media: What Is It, How Is It Used, and What Should I Do? Available at: <http://www.himss.org/files/HIMSSorg/content/files/HealthcareFriendingSocialMediaavl5%284%29.pdf>

### Webinars & Presentations










- Becky Dorner, Barbara Dunn. FNCE 2013. E-Professionalism: Managing Ethical and Legal Aspects of Your Practice. Available at: <http://fnce.eatright.org/fnce/uploaded/635199605286173182-164.%20Both.pdf>

### Tools

- Hootsuite.com  
A website that allows you to manage several social media platforms in one location.

## HOW TO USE & BENEFIT FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

Choose the social media platform(s) that best suit your needs and professional objectives.

Platform	Description	Uses & Benefits	Tips
 LinkedIn	A site for the business community. Allows members to share contact information, work & educational experience, search for employment opportunities, and collaborate with others.  Over 200 million members. 14,000 RDN profiles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business to business or referral generated business.</li> <li>Endorse and recommend others and be endorsed for your skills.</li> <li>Job networking.</li> <li>Use groups to ask for professional opinions and share resources.</li> <li>Build your brand and professional reputation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make your profile brief but detailed; a summary of what sets you apart.</li> <li>Always include a picture.</li> <li>Develop guidelines for adding individuals to your network.</li> <li>Limit recommendations to people you trust.</li> <li>Join and engage in groups.</li> <li>Provide credible, research-based information when answering questions.</li> </ul>
 Pinterest	A pinboard-style photo sharing website with theme based boards.  70 million active users, mostly female, ages 35-44.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For bloggers (i.e. you pin what is blogged either on your own blog or others').</li> <li>Showcase your product.</li> <li>Describe your service through images.</li> <li>Share resources you like with clients, family, and friends.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a mix of business and personal boards to showcase your personality.</li> <li>Use keywords in your descriptions to help people find your pins in searches.</li> <li>Write unique descriptions and post unique pins instead of just "repining" what others have done.</li> <li>Organize and edit your boards.</li> </ul>
 Facebook	An account where you can share links, events, thoughts, and updates with "friends" or "followers." A feed of updates lets you know what's going on with your friends and pages you've "liked."  945 million active users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have genuine interactions with individuals by engaging and participating in online discussions.</li> <li>Can connect you to your community, local &amp; online.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a business page separate from personal page if you're trying to brand yourself or have a private practice</li> <li>Engage by interacting with your audience. Comment on interesting or controversial comments and follow-up on comments posted to your page.</li> </ul>
 Twitter	A microblogging platform that allows users to post and read text-based messages of up to 140 characters, known as "tweets."  232 million active users. Popular among millennials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can connect you to more of your community, local &amp; online.</li> <li>Gather industry information.</li> <li>Provide quick tips, updates, and links.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a business twitter account separate from personal.</li> <li>Retweet interesting content.</li> <li>Build followers through following.</li> <li>Be deliberate and intentional with the content you post to enhance your brand and establish credibility.</li> </ul>
 Instagram	An image sharing app and website. Allows you to edit pictures with filters before sharing.  150 million active users, mostly female.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect with your followers on a visual level (great with food!)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Network with others by following and commenting on photos.</li> <li>Integrate Instagram with Facebook and Twitter accounts to easily share images across platforms.</li> <li>Consider sharing "behind-the-scenes" images of your work to help followers connect on a personal level.</li> </ul>
 Google +	A platform that allows you to organize friends or contacts in circles like "family" or "dietitians." When sharing content you can specify which circles to share with. A feed of updates lets you know what's going on with people in your circles.  Over 200 million active users, the majority are tech-savvy young males.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tailor each piece of shared content to a specific audience (ie. "circle").</li> <li>Content shared that gets a "1+" on Google + ranks higher in search results—a good thing for your own content or content you think is worth sharing.</li> <li>Integrates all other Google services (YouTube, Google Hangouts, contacts).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be sure to have a complete business page profile.</li> <li>Share interesting and entertaining content.</li> </ul>
Blogs   	A personal web log of any type of material you choose to update regularly. You can use blogging platforms like Blogger, Tumblr, or Wordpress or a blog integrated into your site in another manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unlike a static website, with a blog you're always updating and adding content which helps your site attract more attention from search engines and people.</li> <li>Build an audience or following to attract customers, build trust, and establish yourself as an expert.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly identify your intended audience and niche market.</li> <li>Consider liability issues when providing health advice.</li> <li>Before beginning a blog, try writing regularly to practice. See if you can keep up with the demands of creating unique and consistent content.</li> </ul>

