

Frequently Asked Social Media Questions for Nursing

This resource and other social media resources for nurses can be found at socialmedia.mayoclinic.org/nursing.

1. What do I do if a visitor wants to take a picture of me while caring for her mother?

With approval of the patient, it is permissible to have photos taken. The patient may want to have the photo shared with family members who weren't able to attend the appointment, whether by text message attachment or even on a social networking site like Facebook. This type of sharing contributes to word-of-mouth discussion about Mayo Clinic and can be positive. If you are willing to be included in the picture, feel free to cooperate. If you are uncomfortable being photographed, you may request that the visitor wait to take the picture until you have stepped aside.

2. What do I do if I am surfing Facebook and I see a picture of me walking down the hall with a different patient than the person who took the picture?

If you don't recognize the person who uploaded the photo as being a family member of the patient in the photo, you may send a link to the post to the Mayo Clinic social media team for follow-up, at socialmediacenter@mayo.edu.

3. Can I be on social media while at work if it is done on my break and tag different Mayo Locations?

Concern about employee productivity is one reason other organizations block social networking sites. They believe allowing access would result in employees watching videos or chatting when they should be working. Instead of blocking access, Mayo has addressed this concern through one of its guidelines for Mayo Clinic employees and students participating in social media: *Ensure that your social media activity does not interfere with your work commitments*

Hourly or "non-exempt" employees are expected to limit personal social networking to break times. Some work units may create additional expectations. Medical personnel shouldn't be on Facebook in public areas of the hospital, for example, even while on break. Doing so could give patients' families a mistaken impression of inattentiveness. Check with your supervisor to see if your work unit has established guidelines for social media use on breaks.

If you are using social media at an appropriate time while at work, tagging your location is acceptable as long as you identify your affiliation, follow other guidelines for social media use, and do not post protected health information (PHI).

4. What do I do if a family member is taking a video of me doing cares and this makes me uncomfortable?

Mayo staff members who are uncomfortable in a situation like this have the right to ask the family member to stop recording. Patients and their family members may want an aid to help them remember what to do when they return home, however, so a video like this could have a legitimate educational purpose. Any recording should be done with the consent of everyone involved.

5. What are the appropriate actions or steps that one should take if they see that a colleague has posted something on social media that has violated HIPAA?

All suspected breaches of protected health information (PHI), including those that occur on social media, must be reported to the Integrity and Compliance Office. Take a screenshot of the social media post in order to document the incident. Then, follow the normal procedures for reporting a breach of PHI by filling out a privacy disclosure intake form or calling the compliance hotline. More information about procedures for reporting breaches of PHI is available on the [Mayo intranet](#).

6. How do you address or discourage colleagues from "blowing off steam about their work day" on Facebook when their profile states their employer as Mayo Clinic? What should you do if you are an employee and see a friend's comments airing frustrations about the clinic?

We encourage you to direct your colleagues to our guidelines for employees using social media. If you identify your affiliation to Mayo Clinic, your social media activities should be consistent with Mayo's high standards of professional conduct. Be professional, use good judgment and be accurate and honest in your communications; errors, omissions or unprofessional language or behavior reflect poorly on Mayo, and may result in liability for you or Mayo Clinic. Be respectful and professional to fellow employees, business partners, competitors and patients.

7. Is it best to not have Mayo Clinic listed as your employer on your social media platforms?

Mayo Clinic social media staff encourages employees to identify themselves with Mayo Clinic on social media platforms. If you choose to list Mayo Clinic as your employer, make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of Mayo Clinic. In those circumstances, you should include this disclaimer: "The views expressed on this [blog; website] are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer." Consider adding this language in an "About me" section of your blog or social media profile. If you identify your affiliation to Mayo Clinic, your social media activities should be consistent with Mayo's high standards of professional conduct.

8. When you share an official Mayo announcement on your personal page, are you required to monitor the comments more closely that others may make? Nursing staff is worried that a family member or friend would make a negative comment about the posting and that would be a direct negative reflection on the nurse as well as Mayo Clinic.

We encourage staff to share news about Mayo Clinic. We also encourage people to share their opinions on our social media posts, positive or negative. Content posted on Mayo Clinic's Facebook page is curated content that should have low risk of negative feedback and comments. Focusing on sharing patient stories and the pride employees have for working at Mayo Clinic should bring a low risk of negative comments.

9. Is there a guideline to help nursing leaders when an employee posts negative comments about care they received at Mayo as a patient?

If an employee posts about negative care they have received at Mayo Clinic on a personal profile, you can ask them to reach out to the Office of Patient Experience at Minnesota: 507-284-4988; Florida: 904-953-2019; Arizona: 480-301-4938.

10. Are you allowed to follow Caring Bridge sites of patients, Facebook funding or support sites of a patient, etc.? (I have seen the social media video on the NCSBN site in which the gentlemen was placed in corrective action for following and commenting on such a site.) What is and is not ok?

While staff members are discouraged from becoming Facebook friends with patients and family members, following a Caring Bridge site for a patient would be permissible. Staff should not comment on such a site, however, because any comment could easily include elements of protected health information.