



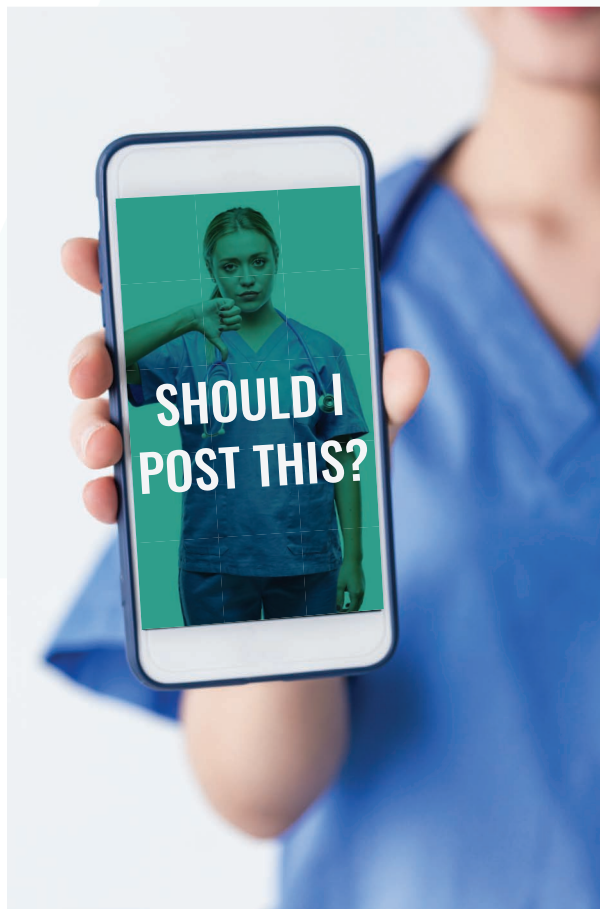
COMPLETE GUIDE TO SOCIAL MEDIA AS AN RN (OR NURSING STUDENT)

As a nurse, it's important to find a balance between personal expression and professional obligations when using social media. First and foremost, you should always prioritize your patients' privacy and avoid posting anything that could compromise their confidentiality or trust in you.

Your online behavior should reflect the same standards you would adhere to at work, since your professional reputation and credibility can be impacted by your online presence. It's crucial to avoid hate speech of any kind, speak respectfully about your colleagues and your workplace, and refrain from posting photos that depict excessive drinking or recreational drug use.

If you do want to share content related to your work as a nurse, such as educational tips or stories, it's important to ensure that you are not giving medical advice or disclosing any sensitive patient information. It's also important to consider the potential impact of your posts on others and the image they may project of the nursing profession.

Ultimately, as a healthcare professional, it is your responsibility to ensure that your social media presence aligns with your professional obligations and ethical standards. By maintaining a thoughtful and professional online presence, you can protect your reputation and avoid potential disciplinary action or loss of licensure.



FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH HIPAA

Any post on social media, or anywhere public for that matter, the information we outline in this guide can also be considered for personal, websites and blogs, discussion boards and general content shared online, including text, photographs, images, video and audio files that includes information about a patient is a HIPAA violation. Of course, as a nurse, you should already be well-versed in HIPAA, but let's do a quick refresher.

According to the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#), "The HIPAA Privacy Rule establishes national standards to protect individuals' medical records and other individually identifiable health information (collectively defined as "protected health information") and applies to health plans, health care clearinghouses, and those health care providers that conduct certain health care transactions electronically." As a nurse, you, too, are required to protect the identity of your patients and respect their right to keep their personal health information private.

If you're accused of violating HIPAA regulations, the [Board of Registered Nurses](#) will open an investigation against you. If you are found guilty, you could have your [nursing license suspended](#) or revoked.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND HIPAA

While it's common in many professions to post pictures from inside the workplace, it can be a different story for those working in healthcare settings where patient information is abundant.

It's essential to take extra caution to ensure none of your social media posts identify any patients within your facility. Including photos of patients or patient files. You may want to post a picture of you and a coworker and talk about your day, but if there is a patient in the background and you can see their face, this is one example of a HIPAA violation, and you could risk losing your license.

Even if a patient verbally permits you to share something on your social media channel, you still have to have it in writing. And it doesn't just end there. Even if you think you are communicating your message, the patient could become upset, uncomfortable, or angry about what you post [if they don't think it represents them how they believed it would](#).

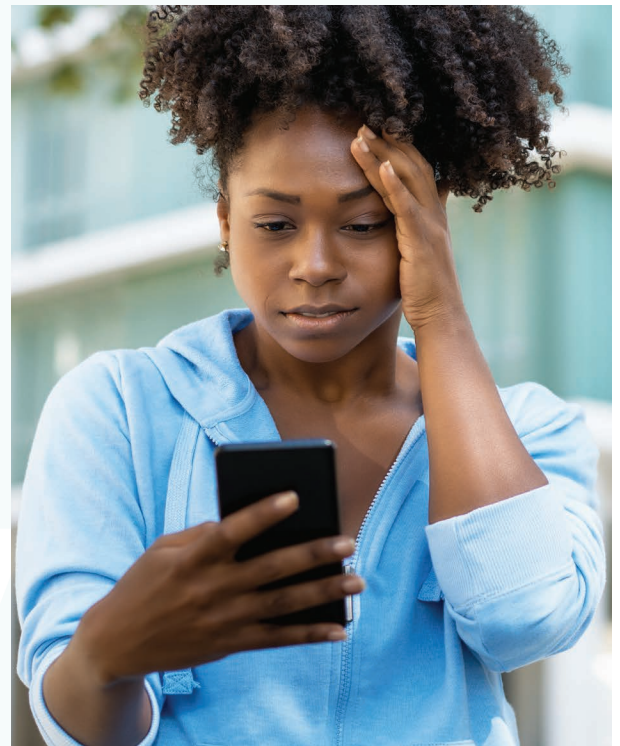
When it comes to social media, the most important thing to remember is when in doubt, don't. Better safe than out of a job.

BE CAREFUL POSTING ABOUT YOURSELF TOO

In addition to staying HIPAA compliant, you must be careful about how much information you post about yourself online.

Remember:

- Once it's posted, it's on the internet forever.
- Be careful about what you post or say about other RNs, especially if it's negative or disparaging. It's important to work collaboratively with your colleagues, which also entails using social media appropriately and respectfully. Communication on social media should align with the same standards expected in the workplace.
- As nurses, we're known to be the life of the party, and at RN Guardian, we think that's awesome! But here's the deal: while we might have some wild stories to share, we need to keep our online presence PG-rated. Let's face it, we're held to a higher standard than most, even outside of the hospital. So, if you're thinking of posting a pic of that epic keg stand at your last bash, it might be time to rethink your social media strategy. Remember, your boss might be watching!
- It's critical to remember that anything that could be perceived as racist or derogatory, yes even song lyrics, should not be posted on social media. As healthcare professionals, we must treat everyone with respect and uphold the values of diversity and inclusion in our work and online presence.



- It's important to refrain from posting anything negative about patients on social media, even if you don't name or identify them. Posting derogatory comments about patients could compromise professional integrity and patient trust, and may even result in disciplinary action or legal repercussions. Remember, patient-centered care is at the heart of our profession, and we must uphold the highest ethical and professional standards.

When you're on the hunt for a new job in the future, you need to think about your online persona so your past doesn't come back to haunt you! Potential employers are watching, and trust us, they've got eagle eyes.

Remember, anything you share online is out there for the world to see, and even if you've moved on, that photo may still be lurking, waiting to pounce. So, when in doubt, keep your social media presence clean and professional!

COMMON MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA

There are many myths and misconceptions about social media, so it's best to keep your posts positive and patient-free. According to [Ohio University](#):

Myth # 1: If you share a post privately about a patient, it will remain private.

Fact: Information shared on social media still be disseminated. All it takes is someone taking a screenshot of your post and then posting it to a public website.

Myth # 2: If the content is deleted, it can no longer be viewed.

Fact: Even if the post or comment is deleted, it will continue to exist on a server somewhere and can still be discovered by a court of law.

Myth # 3: Only the intended recipient will access a private PHI message.

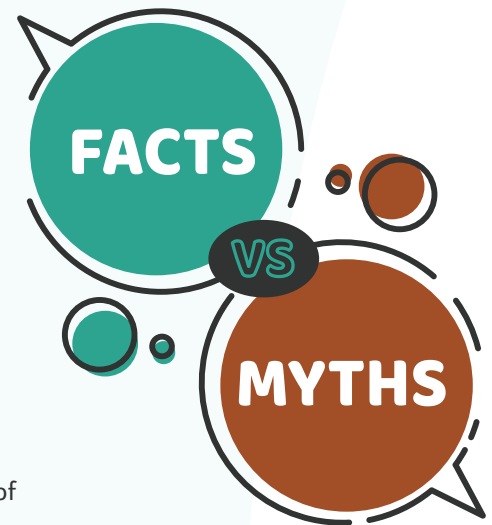
Fact: Accidents happen. Disclosing PHI to the wrong person is a breach of confidentiality.

Myth # 4: It's OK to discuss or refer to patients using their room number, diagnoses, or nickname.

Truth: Patients can easily be identified with this information, especially when using their room number.

Myth # 5: If patients disclose specific personal information about themselves, nurses can also reveal that information.

Fact: Nurses must obtain written consent before sharing patients' PHI with anyone outside the care team. [NCSBN]



Another critical myth to dispel is that you have to be on social media. This is not true at all. Professionals like teachers, who also have to be cautious of what they post, avoid social media because they don't want their students trying to connect with them.

BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR NURSES

Social media has countless benefits. It allows us to stay connected with family and friends, get the latest news, interact with our favorite artists and brands, and enjoy endless entertainment. We also recognize that it's a great way to stay connected for those who live far from family and friends, especially if you're all living in different time zones. It's easy to enjoy sharing funny memes, catching up with loved ones, or getting lost in the latest trends. Plus, it's a great way to stay informed and connected with the world around us.

There are some benefits specifically for nurses on social media. For starters, it's a great way to build professional connections, especially on LinkedIn. Conferences will often share highlights and healthcare news on social media for those unable to attend. And, of course, it's a great way to connect to medical organizations related to your field. For instance, if you work in an allergy and asthma clinic, you'll likely follow the Allergy and Asthma Foundation of America or the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND YOURSELF AT RISK OF AN INVESTIGATION

HIPAA violations are no joke, and if you post anything on social media that compromises patient privacy, the Board of Registered Nurses will come knocking. The same can be said for other questionable social media posts. The best thing you can do is to protect yourself and seek



KNOW A NURSE THAT NEEDS HELP? WE'RE HERE!

CONTACT US 

Don't wait. Investigations will likely lead to temporary, permanent job loss or worse - license suspension or revocation. Get ahead with our monthly membership plan or contact us at the first signs of trouble. You've dedicated your whole life to helping others. Let us help you.

Please give me a call at 1-800- 506-9766 or fill out the online submission form, and we will get right back to you.