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The healthcare website guide

The five moments a patient meets your website, and how to be ready for each

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Healthcare websites are not browsed, they are needed. The visitor is worried, hurried, or holding a phone in one hand and a child in the other. Instead of describing an ideal website, this guide walks through the five moments where real visitors actually meet yours, because a site that passes all five is doing its job whatever it looks like.

THE CLICKINGMAD TEST

If an anxious visitor on a phone cannot complete the task one-handed in under a minute, the page is not finished.

Moment one: the two in the morning search

Someone is worried about a symptom, an animal, or a parent, and they are searching at an hour when nobody answers phones. The site has to load instantly, answer plainly, and say clearly what to do now and what can wait until morning. Calm design and honest triage information earn more trust here than any award.

Moment two: the one-handed visit

Most healthcare visits happen on a phone, often in less than ideal circumstances. Numbers must be tappable, forms short, directions one touch away, and nothing critical hidden in a PDF that will not open. Test these journeys on a phone with real patients, not in a meeting room.

Moment three: finding a person to trust

Before anyone books, they look for the humans. Named clinicians with photographs, credentials and a sense of who they are convert anxiety into confidence. A practice that hides its people behind stock photography reads, unfairly or not, as having something to hide.

Moment four: the professional referral

Referrers are a different audience with no patience for patient-facing journeys. Give them their own clearly signposted route, with the forms, criteria and contact points their job requires, and they will send you more of exactly the work you want.

Moment five: before the appointment

Once booked, visitors return with practical questions: where to park, what to bring, what will happen. Answering these on the site reduces calls to your front desk and arrivals arrive calmer. Your existing patient leaflets are ready-made content for this moment.

The thread through all five: accessibility

The people who most need healthcare information are disproportionately the people that inaccessible websites lock out. WCAG 2.2 AA, tested rather than claimed, is not a compliance line in this sector. It is clinical communication working properly. State your regulatory context in the brief, decide who clinically signs off content, and review it on a schedule that survives busy diaries.

What to measure

Appointment requests, referral enquiries and task completion on the five moments above, measured with a short round of real patient testing. Not visits. And watch what your community searches for, because it is clinical intelligence as much as marketing data.

Ready when you are

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