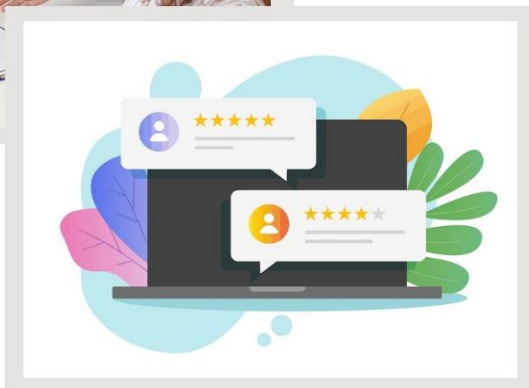



UNDERSTANDING GOOGLE REVIEWS *for Medical Practices*

2 September 2020

By Maz Hancock

Facilitated by  HotDoc





**In the spirit of reconciliation, HotDoc
acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of
country throughout Australia and their
connections to land, sea and community.**

**We pay our respect to their elders past and
present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.**

UNDERSTANDING GOOGLE REVIEWS

for Medical Practices

This session will cover:

- How Google reviews help your medical practice attract more patients
- Why focusing on Google reviews is one of your best marketing investments
- Examples of legitimate negative reviews vs inappropriate / prohibited reviews
- What you can do if you get a negative review (and what not to do)

5-STAR GOOGLE REVIEWS

This is part of our method for helping grow medical practices



DELIVER

A great patient experience for more positive reviews

Here's how...



5-star Google Reviews are the result of:

Delivering an excellent patient experience + a system for encouraging reviews

WHAT ARE GOOGLE REVIEWS?

Google reviews are the comments and star ratings (out of 5) that appear publicly on Google Search and on Google Maps on your business listing.

Who can leave a review?

Anyone with a Google account can write a review and it will usually show up publicly within 24 hours.

Who can reply to a review?

The owner of the listing can respond to reviews through their Google My Business dashboard if they have ownership of their listing.

Google

[All](#) [Images](#) [Maps](#) [Videos](#) [News](#) [More](#) [Settings](#) [Tools](#)

About 206,000,000 results (0.42 seconds)

Rating Hours

Geelong Orthopaedics
 3.4 (7) · Orthopedic surgeon
 2/83-85 Myers St
 Open · Closes 5PM · (03) 5221 3995

Mr Robert Wood - Geelong Orthopaedic
 4.4 (9) · Orthopedic surgeon
 3/73 Little Rylie St
 (03) 5222 4411

Dr Miller Ben
 5.0 (5) · Orthopedic surgeon
 2/83 Myers St · In St John of God Geelong Hospital
 (03) 5223 2047

[More places](#)

Google Search

Google

[Rating](#) [Hours](#)

Geelong Orthopaedics
 3.4 (7) · Orthopedic surgeon
 2/83-85 Myers St
 Open · Closes 5PM · (03) 5221 3995

Mr Robert Wood - Geelong Orthopaedic
 4.4 (9) · Orthopedic surgeon
 3/73 Little Rylie St
 (03) 5222 4411

Dr Miller Ben
 5.0 (5) · Orthopedic surgeon
 2/83 Myers St · In St John of God Geelong Hos...
 (03) 5223 2047

Mr Andrew Byrne
 5.0 (7) · Orthopedic surgeon
 Epworth Hospital Geelong, Suite ...
 Open · Closes 5PM · (03) 5271 7955

Prof Richard S Page
 5.0 (2) · Orthopedic surgeon
 St John of God Specialist Centre, level 2 suite ...
 Open · Closes 5PM · (03) 5222 5777

Mr Kevin Eng (at Geelong Orthopaedics)
 5.0 (3) · Orthopedic surgeon
 83 Myers St
 Open · Closes 5PM · (03) 5222 6602

Map data ©2020 2 km [Terms of Use](#)

Google Maps

1. HOW DO GOOGLE REVIEWS HELP YOUR PRACTICE ATTRACT MORE PATIENTS?

a) The Google Factor

Google uses reviews to help determine where to show your practice amongst your competitors as a component of your **Local SEO**

The things Google values:

- The total number of your reviews
- High star ratings - 5 star reviews
- The flow or 'velocity' of your reviews
- The recency of your reviews
- The content of your reviews

1. HOW DO GOOGLE REVIEWS HELP YOUR PRACTICE ATTRACT MORE PATIENTS?

b) Patient Behaviour

Let's look at some stats:

- 54% of Australians check Google Reviews before choosing a clinic
- 77% said they were more likely to book with a clinic that had a 4-5 star rating
- 68% said they were less likely to book with a clinic that had fewer than 3 stars.

Source: HotDoc

1. HOW DO GOOGLE REVIEWS HELP YOUR PRACTICE ATTRACT MORE PATIENTS?

b) Patient Behaviour

Let's consider some more stats:

Here's the percentage of patients from each age group that check a practice's Google reviews before making a booking with a new clinic:

18-34 year olds: 81%

35-55 year olds: 62%

55-64 year olds: 29%

65+ year olds: 22%

77% of all patients surveyed say they are more likely to book with a clinic that has a 4+ star rating on Google.

Which demographic do you want to attract to your clinic?

Are your reviews helping or hindering you?

1. HOW DO GOOGLE REVIEWS HELP YOUR PRACTICE ATTRACT MORE PATIENTS?

Of those who DO check reviews, here's an example of the decision making process.

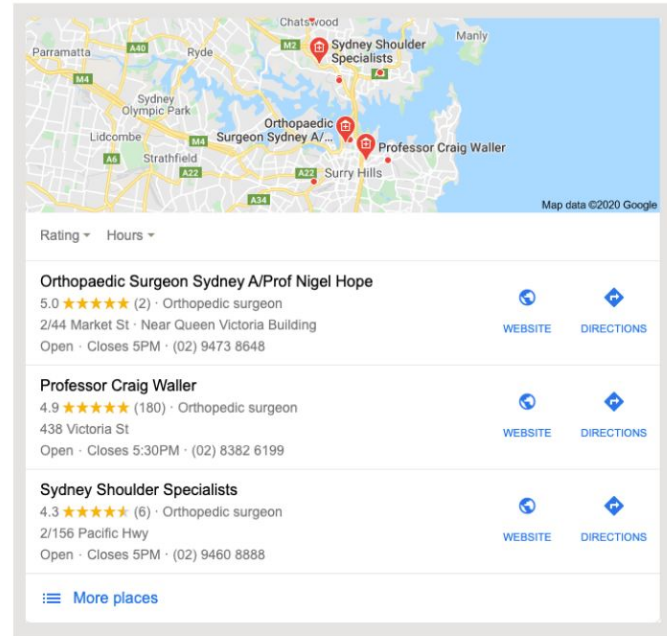
Which business would you choose?

Without knowing anything about the skills or experience of any of these surgeons, the most credible-looking "review profile" is more likely to be chosen.

4.9 stars (180 reviews)

is more credible than

5 stars (2 reviews) or 4.3 stars (6 reviews)



1. HOW DO GOOGLE REVIEWS HELP YOUR PRACTICE ATTRACT MORE PATIENTS?

Key Takeaways:

If your practice can get a steady flow of 4 and 5 star reviews with helpful comments, you'll become more prominent on Google.

Patients place recommendations from others above all else when looking for a new practice.

2. WHY FOCUSING ON GOOGLE REVIEWS IS ONE OF YOUR BEST MARKETING INVESTMENTS

- Increases brand trust
- Increases online visibility
- Improve click through rates to your website and online booking platform
- There are tangible benefits
- Provides an invaluable source of feedback

2. WHY FOCUSING ON GOOGLE REVIEWS IS ONE OF YOUR BEST MARKETING INVESTMENTS

There are tangible benefits

"Our books are pretty much full. We had previously been paying for Google Ads, but we've paused them because we don't need them."

<https://practices.hotdoc.com.au/case-studies/case-study-north-brighton-medical/>

- Received positive patient feedback for Accreditation
- Turned on HotDoc Reviews
- Increased positive Google review count
- Increased Google rankings
- Were able to turn off Google Ads
- Saving \$\$\$

2. WHY FOCUSING ON GOOGLE REVIEWS IS ONE OF YOUR BEST MARKETING INVESTMENTS

There are tangible benefits:

Many of my customers tell me they chose me ahead of my competitors because of my great reviews. I was not aware of the significant impact they could have on my business.

- Started asking every customer for a review by email
- Increased positive Google review count
- This created an edge over their competitors
- Increased conversion rate - customers choose this business at the exclusion of all others
- Less cost to acquire a new customer

2. WHY FOCUSING ON GOOGLE REVIEWS IS ONE OF YOUR BEST MARKETING INVESTMENTS

Provides an invaluable source of feedback

- Offers insights into what patients really think
- Offers the business or practice an indication of things that may need to be improved
- Monitoring reviews has never been more essential
- A low star rating or negative feedback, especially negative feedback handled poorly, can mean the difference between a new patient booking into your clinic OR choosing your competitor

2. WHY FOCUSING ON GOOGLE REVIEWS IS ONE OF YOUR BEST MARKETING INVESTMENTS

What Patients Want

Here's what contributes to a positive experience, according to patients

- Patients feel 'listened to'
- Appointments run on time - or estimated waiting times are given
- Use of technology to make life easier (not more difficult)
- Convenient opening hours (perhaps offering early morning, weekend and/or evening options)
- Simple online booking process
- Clean, modern and welcoming clinic
- Easy access / parking
- More information about conditions and how to manage them

Sources:

<https://www.healthcareit.com.au/article/survey-reveals-what-patients-really-want-doctors>

<https://www.medicaleconomics.com/view/becoming-ideal-doctor-what-do-your-patients-really-want>

<https://practices.hotdoc.com.au/blog/consulting-room-patient-experience/improve-the-consulting-room-patient-experience>



HotDoc



LOCALLYCONNECTED

2. WHY FOCUSING ON GOOGLE REVIEWS IS ONE OF YOUR BEST MARKETING INVESTMENTS

What if you get a negative review?

Are Google reviews still a good investment if you don't have a perfect rating?

3. EXAMPLES OF LEGITIMATE NEGATIVE REVIEWS VS PROHIBITED REVIEWS

Google has review policies in place to help protect businesses.

Things that are against the guidelines:

- Business owners and employees reviewing the business
- Offering incentives or rewards for leaving a review
- Prohibited and Restricted Content

3. EXAMPLES OF LEGITIMATE NEGATIVE REVIEWS VS PROHIBITED REVIEWS

Prohibited and Restricted Content falls under these areas:

Spam and fake content	▼
Off-topic	▼
Restricted content	▼
Illegal content	▼
Terrorist content	▼
Sexually explicit content	▼
Offensive content	▼
Dangerous & Derogatory Content	▼
Impersonation	▼
Conflict of Interest	▼

From Google:

"We may take down reviews that are flagged in order to comply with Google policies or legal obligations."



HotDoc



LOCALLYCONNECTED

3. EXAMPLES OF LEGITIMATE NEGATIVE REVIEWS VS PROHIBITED REVIEWS

Legitimate Reviews - Venting

★☆☆☆☆ 3 years ago

I had to wait ten minutes for the receptionist to appear at her desk when I arrived.

The doctor was checking the texts on her mobile phone during the consultation.

I had to wait for another 10 minutes as it took this long for the doctor to enter her fee on the computer so the receptionist could tell me how much I had to pay.

Then for this great service (and I'm being sarcastic) they charged me over 70 dollars



★☆☆☆☆ 7 months ago

Had a mole cut out told to ring back in one week for pathology results did that told a nurse will ring me back after one week still waiting. Take your money see you in twelve months. Not likely,!



3. EXAMPLES OF LEGITIMATE NEGATIVE REVIEWS VS PROHIBITED REVIEWS

Legitimate Reviews

★☆☆☆☆ a year ago

Had to visit this medical centre recently and will avoid in future. The floors and walls are dirty, the waiting areas are terrible and way overdue for a refurbish...and staff grumpy. Someone needs to take away their A4 laminators they have covered the walls in ridiculous signs. And they don't bulk bill. I feel sorry for the doctors working there.



2

3. EXAMPLES OF LEGITIMATE NEGATIVE REVIEWS VS PROHIBITED REVIEWS

Legitimate Reviews with a common theme

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ a year ago

Extremely rude arrogant receptionist. On a number of occasions they forget to "check you in" leaving you waiting for over an hour for a scheduled appointment. Don't waste your time going here.



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 3 years ago

Don't bother making an appointment. Just walk in, and go ahead of all the people who made appointments, and are waiting for the same doctor who's running late. Nice.



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ a month ago

Had to wait 70 minutes



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ a year ago

Nearly better off going to the hospital 1 hour and 15 minutes for a booked appointment



These are all from 1
medical practice

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ a year ago

come here if u want to wait for hours

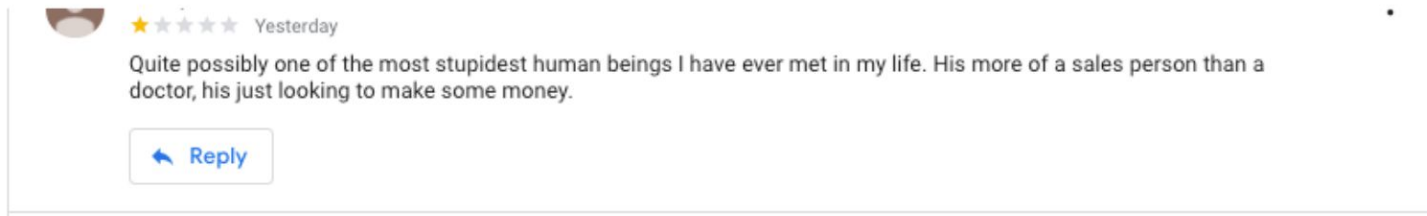


★ ★ ★ ★ ★ a year ago - [Profile Icon]

I made an appointment to see a doctor at 4:20. I arrived at 4:15, and when I approached the counter to 'check in' the receptionist was rude and abrupt and didn't even look up from her computer to talk to me. I then sat in the waiting room for 45 minutes until people who came in after me started getting called.

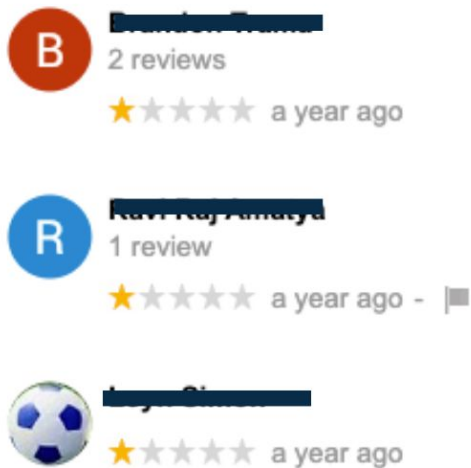
3. EXAMPLES OF LEGITIMATE NEGATIVE REVIEWS VS PROHIBITED REVIEWS

Prohibited review - Derogatory



3. EXAMPLES OF LEGITIMATE NEGATIVE REVIEWS VS PROHIBITED REVIEWS

Prohibited Review - Possibly a 1-star review attack



You can click on the Google User profiles to see what other reviews they have left

4. WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET A NEGATIVE REVIEW - AND WHAT NOT TO DO

The first thing to remember is to take a deep breath.

Keep in mind your response will be public and will appear below the original review.

4. WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET A NEGATIVE REVIEW - AND WHAT NOT TO DO

Is it a legitimate review?

Read the review.

Is it a legitimate opinion or experience of the practice?

You may not agree with it, but it could still be legitimate.

OR

Is it a prohibited review?

Make note of any phrases that could be considered prohibited or restricted content (or perhaps the entire review is prohibited content).



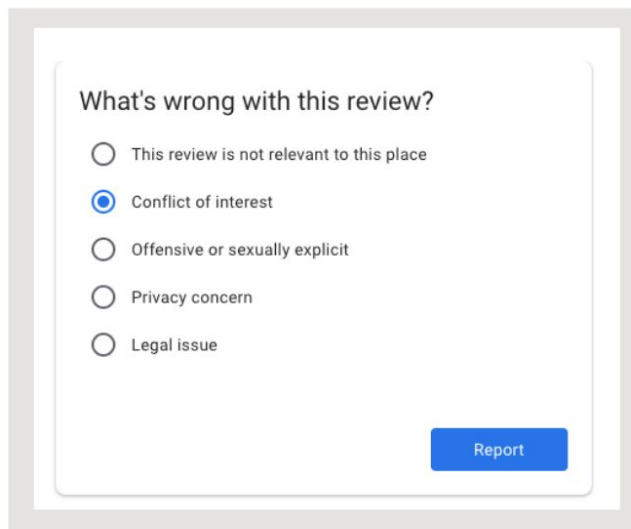
4. WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET A NEGATIVE REVIEW - AND WHAT NOT TO DO

For a review that you believe falls under Prohibited and Restricted Content

You flag the review. Click on the flag icon next to the review



This screen will come up:

A screenshot of a web form titled "What's wrong with this review?". The form contains five radio button options: "This review is not relevant to this place", "Conflict of interest" (which is selected), "Offensive or sexually explicit", "Privacy concern", and "Legal issue". A blue "Report" button is located at the bottom right of the form.

What's wrong with this review?

- ☐ This review is not relevant to this place
- ☒ Conflict of interest
- ☐ Offensive or sexually explicit
- ☐ Privacy concern
- ☐ Legal issue

Report



HotDoc



LOCALLYCONNECTED

4. WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET A NEGATIVE REVIEW - AND WHAT NOT TO DO

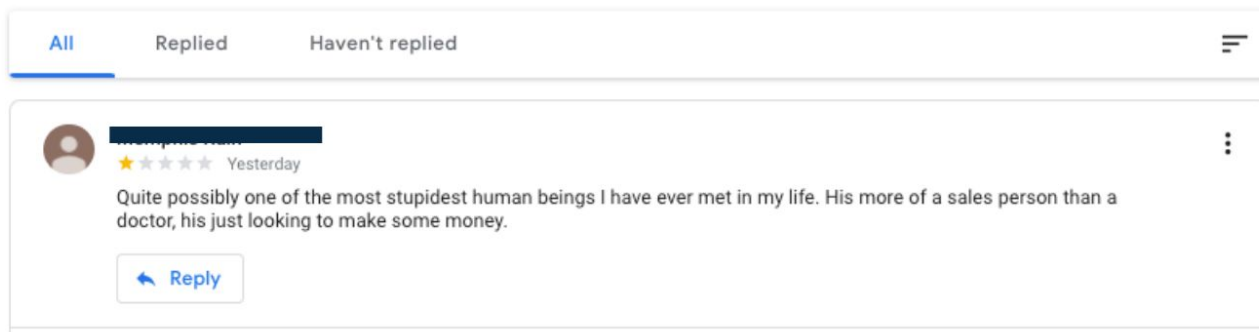
What you click on, determines what happens next

You may get a thank you screen, or be asked to fill out a form to provide more information.

Thank you!

The review has been reported. If we need further clarification, we might follow-up with you via email.

4. WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET A NEGATIVE REVIEW - AND WHAT NOT TO DO

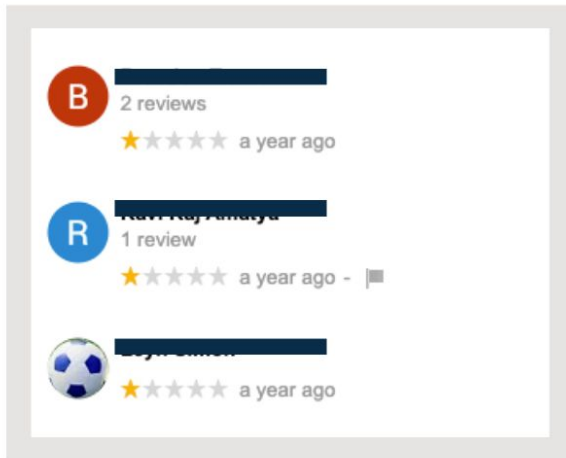


For this example, I flagged it under the reason: **Legal**

In the form, I stated that the review contained **Derogatory Content** referring to the first sentence.

I received a response from Google within an hour, and it was removed within a couple of hours.

4. WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET A NEGATIVE REVIEW - AND WHAT NOT TO DO



If you are the victim of a 1-star review attack by fake customers, you can flag it, choosing

This review is not relevant to this place

If you're asked to provide more information, you can state that the reviews appear to be a 1-star review attack and they are not legitimate customers.

4. WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET A NEGATIVE REVIEW - AND WHAT NOT TO DO

Back to: Legitimate Negative Reviews

How you handle these is unique to your business and you may wish to seek legal advice.

Here I'll share Google's advice and some examples of what to do vs what not to do.

4. WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET A NEGATIVE REVIEW - AND WHAT NOT TO DO

Google Says:

- Keep it short and sweet
- Be nice and don't get personal
- Do not share any personal data of the reviewer or attack them personally
- Invite them to contact you to resolve the issue
- Check your records and investigate the reasons behind their negative impression
- Show you're a real person by signing off with your name
- Respond in a timely manner
- Be honest and acknowledge mistakes
- Apologise when appropriate

Source: https://support.google.com/business/answer/3474050?hl=en&ref_topic=6001257

4. WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET A NEGATIVE REVIEW - AND WHAT NOT TO DO

What to do:

Here is a negative review response example that aligns with Google's recommendations:

Thank you for taking the time to leave feedback about our business. It helps us to look at where we can improve. While we would like to acknowledge any mistakes we may have made and apologise to any patient who has had a negative experience at our practice, due to Privacy Laws we cannot confirm you are a patient or discuss any specific aspects of your review in a public forum. Please contact our Practice Manager (insert name) on (insert phone number) and/or (insert email).

4. WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET A NEGATIVE REVIEW - AND WHAT NOT TO DO

If you receive a 1-star review without any text comment, you can still invite further feedback:

We would appreciate if you would contact our Practice Manager by calling [Phone Number] or emailing [insert email] to speak about your recent experience. Due to Privacy Laws we cannot confirm you are a patient or invite any discussion in a public forum.

4. WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET A NEGATIVE REVIEW - AND WHAT NOT TO DO

What NOT to do

Here is a real-life review response example of what not to do (paraphrased for privacy)

I note your scathing comments left about our clinic. In response to your complaint:

- 1. You were charged for a long appointment because you had 4 issues to discuss and you were with the doctor for 40 minutes.*
 - 2. Frankly, we were not comfortable prescribing the medication you requested without speaking to your usual GP.*
 - 3. Your abusive phonecalls to our reception team were a disgrace*
 - 4. Your appointment was only in fact 22 minutes late, not 1 hour like you state (your appointment was booked for 1.30pm and you were called in at 1:52pm)*
 - 5. You only paid \$80 (not \$155). I cannot understand how your numbers add up.*
- Good luck to you.*

4. WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET A NEGATIVE REVIEW - AND WHAT NOT TO DO

Remember who is reading your review reply - your prospective patients

Remember the legal restrictions around how you are allowed to reply

If you've only got 1 bad review in a sea of glowing reviews, patients tend to make up their own mind that it's a one-off and not pay too much attention.

Just for fun - here is an example of a customer defending a business:

beautifully. [REDACTED] OF [REDACTED] CES ! So sad to hear of the mixed up lady below (Elly) in the review - totally fake review from her!



Like

4. WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET A NEGATIVE REVIEW - AND WHAT NOT TO DO

Prospective patients will pay more attention to your response to the review, than the review itself.

4. WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET A NEGATIVE REVIEW - AND WHAT NOT TO DO

Replying to positive reviews

For all other industries, we recommend replying to positive Google reviews.

However in Healthcare, even with a positive review we can't breach privacy - and many positive reviews also include clinical information, so a reply would breach health practitioner regulations.

Our practice aims to deliver the highest level of patient care. Due to Privacy Laws we cannot confirm you are a patient or invite any discussion in a public forum however we appreciate receiving feedback about positive experiences.

THERE'S SOME ASPECTS OF REVIEWS I HAVEN'T COVERED:

1. How to get more reviews - HotDoc Reviews
2. The legal aspect.

The content I have presented today is from a marketing perspective not a legal perspective. I find the AHPRA Testimonial Tool to be really helpful.

HotDoc says:

"There is a lot of confusion about how practitioners can and can't use reviews to promote their practices.

The short answer is that encouraging and managing Google reviews is fine.

What's not fine is using Google reviews to promote your practice when the review mentions clinical aspects of your services.

Our best advice is to leave Google reviews on Google (eg. don't publish them on your website or elsewhere) and never respond to a review that mentions clinical services/processes."

<https://practices.hotdoc.com.au/blog/why-google-reviews/>

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

- Book a free 15 minute chat with me if you'd like to explore how we can help your practice connect with more new patients.
Book Here: <https://calendly.com/locally-connected/15min>
- A service we offer is monthly Google My Business Management, and part of that is monitoring and responding to reviews (and help flagging inappropriate Google Reviews)
- For more information on reviews, see the article on our website "3 Steps to Manage Google Reviews Better for Your Healthcare Clinic"



**LOCALLY
CONNECTED**



WEBINAR

1 CPD

SPECIAL GUEST SERIES

Business Planning for a Financially Healthy Medical Practice

Wednesday 16th September at 12:30pm AEST



Hosted by

Kelly Chard
Director and Founder

GROWTHMD+



WEBINAR

1 CPD

SPECIAL GUEST SERIES

Informed Consent – Confirming Permission Has Been Granted

Wednesday 30th September at 12:30pm AEST



Hosted by

Sarah Bartholomeusz
You Legal



An illustration featuring several diverse characters representing healthcare and community. On the left, a Black female nurse in a green uniform with a stethoscope stands behind a young man with orange hair in a white t-shirt, who is pointing towards the center. Below him is a young woman with blonde hair in a green sweater, also pointing. On the right, an elderly woman with white hair and glasses in a pink shirt stands behind a woman with dark hair in a green nursing uniform, who is reaching out. Below her is an elderly man in an orange sweater, also reaching out. In the center, there is a logo with two hands holding a green heart, followed by the text 'for the love of Healthcare' in a mix of script and bold sans-serif fonts.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION



Maz & Magali will be available to answer any further questions via the **Hot Topic** post in our communities feed.

Join here <https://www.facebook.com/groups/fortheloveofhealthcare>