According to a 2014 JAMA article\(^1\), nearly 20\% of surveyed patients said that physicians’ ratings on websites are very important, and 40\% said the websites are somewhat important, when looking for a primary care physician. Of those who used the web to search for physicians, 35\% say they picked a doctor based on good ratings, while 27\% reported avoiding those with bad ratings.

**A JANUARY 2016 MEDSCAPE ARTICLE\(^2\) TITLED, “TRASHED ON THE INTERNET: WHAT TO DO NOW” OFFERED THIS ADVICE REGARDING PHYSICIAN REVIEW SITES:**

- Recognize that negative reviews can happen to any physician.
- Most review sites allow you to submit a complaint if you believe a comment is fraudulent; they may be able to track down the IP address of the reviewer and, if the post is illegitimate, remove it.
- Reviews that sound irrational to you are likely to sound irrational to others.
- If you respond, keep it polite, general, and only respond once; be sure any response is HIPAA-compliant—some providers who have responded to negative reviews have inadvertently made the mistake of revealing protected health information.
- Many reviews focus on a provider’s indifference, bedside manner, or customer service rather than his or her medical skills. Consider these types of comments as opportunities to improve your practice.

**OTHER ACTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN MONITORING YOUR ONLINE REPUTATION:**

- On a regular basis, do a search on your name and/or the name of your practice to see what comes up.
- Set up Google Alerts (www.google.com/alerts) for your practice name and the names of your physicians.
- If you are listed on a physician review site, review your profile to make sure the information is up-to-date and accurate.
- Some review sites provide resources to help encourage your patients to post reviews. For example, Healthgrades offers postcards to give to patients that include a personalized link they can use to complete a survey about you.

\(^1\) JAMA. 2014;311(7):734-735. doi:10.1001/jama.2013.283194
\(^2\) http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/851005

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**Some Popular Online Physician Review Sites**

- www.healthgrades.com
- www.vitals.com
- www.ratemd.com
- www.yelp.com
- www.angieslist.com