



## Use of Social Media by Foot and Ankle Surgeons

*Approved by the ACFAS Board of Directors November 2025*

The American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS) recognizes the value of social media as a tool for healthcare communication, education, and professional engagement. Social media activity by ACFAS members should reflect professionalism, integrity, and respect. ACFAS members' use of social media should not undermine the reputation of the profession, the College, or of the patients we care for. When used responsibly, social media can serve as a powerful tool for patient education, peer collaboration, and promotion of foot and ankle health.

"Social media" includes but is not limited to: networking sites, media sharing platforms, messaging apps, online forums/communities, podcasts, blogs, and comment sections.

ACFAS encourages its members to maintain high standards of professionalism and ethical behavior when using social media by applying the following best practices:

- Protect patient privacy and comply with HIPAA and all other applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations.
- Avoid sharing identifiable patient information.
- Before engaging in social media, investigate whether there are employer-specific social media guidelines in place.
- Assume that all social media, including personal accounts are viewable by the public, regardless of privacy setting. Assume that all posted content is viewable by state medical boards, healthcare systems, and credentialing bodies. Treat personal accounts with the same integrity as a professional account.
- Clearly distinguish personal opinions from professional or institutional positions.
- Statements or education provided through social media should be based on peer-reviewed sources. When statements are not supported in scientific literature, they should be labeled appropriately (i.e. opinion, personal belief, anecdotal).
- Refrain from representing statements as ACFAS policy.
- Refrain from offering medical advice to individuals through social media.
- Represent the profession and the college accurately and professionally. Avoid misleading or unverified claims.
- Engage respectfully and professionally with colleagues, patients, and the public.

ACFAS supports the use of social media as a means to advance public awareness, foster professional collaboration, and promote evidence-based practices in foot and ankle surgery. Members are urged to use these platforms with thoughtfulness, recognizing the public visibility and the resulting impact on patient trust and the reputation of our profession.

*The American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons is a professional society of over 8,00 foot and ankle surgeons. Founded in 1942, the College's mission is to advance excellence in foot and ankle surgery to achieve superior patient outcomes.*