



Key advantages of online appointment scheduling

Online appointment scheduling is becoming increasingly popular as patients become more comfortable and knowledgeable using the internet. A recent [Wall Street Journal](#) survey showed that the majority of adults prefer making their appointments online. The widely read journal [Medical Economics](#) has articles that report the same attraction with online appointment scheduling. Dr. Robert Pearl, executive director and CEO of [The Permanente Medical Group](#), said that online appointment scheduling gives patients "...more choices and control over their health care... in a way that's personalized and convenient."

- **Advantageous for the hearing impaired.** Patients with impaired hearing do not need to struggle making an appointment or having to rely on someone else to make their appointment. Online appointments are a convenient and effective method for hearing impaired individuals to schedule appointments.
- **Appointments can be made after hours.** When your office is closed and telephone access is no longer available, appointments may still be made smoothly and efficiently.
- **No waiting to book an appointment.** Patients or clients do not need to be put on indefinite hold. There is no prolonged wait with online scheduling. Appointment availability is identified quickly and appointments are secured.
- **Receptionist conflict is avoided.** A rushed or distracted receptionist may seem brusque or rude when a patient calls in for an appointment. The human "attitude" factor is not present when making online appointments.
- **Appointment reminders are generated automatically.** Automated reminders for appointment confirmations and appointment recall is a terrific way of staying in touch with patients, maintaining good patient rapport, and maintaining a steady flow of patients. Electronic appointment reminders reduce the need for labor-intensive reminder postcards and save a ton on postage costs. Automated appointment reminders reduce no shows and minimize scheduling conflicts.

- **Online appointment scheduling is becoming more popular.** A survey from the Wall Street Journal (Wall Street Journal Online, www.wsj.com, Harris Interactive Poll, September 2006) reported that 75% of patients want online appointment scheduling.

- **Telephone and online appointment capability.** The best online appointment scheduling systems incorporate telephone and online scheduling. The [DayClips](#) scheduling system calendar seamlessly integrates online appointments with appointments made in the office and over the phone, into one unified calendar.

- **Online appointment scheduling systems often have features that enhance practice management.** In addition to electronic reminder systems, email marketing newsletters from your office to patients can be conducted with no postage costs associated with regular mail. [Online newsletter](#) campaigns may be outsourced for effective newsletter management. If done properly, online newsletters can be an effective way for you to promote your practice and your image. Several online scheduling websites, including the popular [DayClips](#) website, has capabilities for sending newsletters to a population group selected by the service provider. Online appointment scheduling may also be used as a means of disseminating correct and timely medical information from reliable sources that include [The Mayo Clinic](#) and [The National Library of Medicine](#).

- **Easy Access.** Many offices have multiple people booking appointments. A scheduling system that is uniform, accessible by all schedulers in the office is ideal. A computer network with internet access provides multiple employees simultaneous access for making appointments. The competition for the paper appointment calendar is non-existent with multiple computers with internet access. All qualified office personnel have access to the same calendar information.

- **Online appointment systems may also serve your patients with access to pertinent office information.** Office policy is presented in written form, and patients may receive detailed instructions. A map providing directions can be incorporated. [DayClips](#) is implementing a GPS system to actually direct patients to a doctor's office.