

TOP TEN TWITTER TIPS

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Why Twitter? Twitter is a social media platform in which users post short text updates no more than 140 characters in length. It is one of the top three social media platforms in Canada, alongside Facebook and LinkedIn. Weekly, more than one-fifth (21 per cent) of British Columbians visit Twitter; 13 per cent visit daily (according to a survey by Insights West). **Your customers are talking on Twitter, you need to be part of the conversation.**

NOTIFICATIONS: Social media, at its core, is about social interaction. That's why you don't want to miss a single message. In order to ensure that you don't miss anything, make sure that you have Twitter notifications enabled: Sign into your Twitter account. In the upper right-hand corner of your screen, next to the "Tweet" button, there's a box with your profile picture in it. Click on it and a drop-down menu will appear. Choose "Settings," then choose "Email Notifications" from the menu on the left side of the screen. On this page you can choose which actions will result in a notification. Make sure that you have notifications enabled for mentions and direct messages. You may also choose to be notified when a tweet you posted is retweeted or favourited or if your account gains a new follower.

FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW: A good way to get started on Twitter is to find and follow accounts that are posting content that is relevant to you, your practice and your audience. Following fellow NDs is a great place to start. If you visit the BCNA's Twitter feed, you can check out (and follow) other member clinics from our "BC Naturopaths" list. Pro tip: If you find an account you really like, check out who they're following to find other great accounts.

CURATE: Once you've followed a few accounts, you'll find that your Twitter newsfeed can be a pretty noisy place. Cut through the noise by creating mini-newsfeeds. You can do this by separating accounts into different categories and adding them to lists. Note: your followers also have access to these mini-newsfeeds, unless you make your lists private.

VISUAL: Humans are very visual creatures. Until recently, Twitter was geared more to text than to visuals, but they've recently introduced better photo integration to their platform. This means that if you post an image to Twitter, it does not simply appear as a link, but rather as a photo that will show up as users scroll through their newsfeed. Photos are incredibly noticeable. Studies show that tweets that include an image receive twice the engagement as those without. Additionally, tweets that contain images are 35 per cent more likely to be retweeted – arguably one of the best forms of engagement that tweets can receive. So, whenever possible, include an image with your tweet. Twitter crops images to a 2:1 ratio, so horizontal or landscape-orientation images will display best. If you don't have many visual resources, try looking for relevant images on the Creative Commons (search.creativecommons.org), but make sure you adhere to the license for each photo.

HASHTAGS & HANDLES: If you've been on Twitter, you may have noticed that many users preface the occasional word (or sometimes phrase) with the pound sign. This is called a hashtag. It is a searchable label that tells others what your tweet is about and

allows it to show up in a search of that topic. Tweets that include hashtags receive twice the engagement of those without. But don't use too many; tweets that include one or two hashtags receive 21 per cent higher engagement than those with three or more. What should you hashtag? Some of the best things to tag are places (find out what the hashtag is for your community), trending topics (such as seasonal holidays) or tags that indicate that your tweet is about naturopathic medicine. Try #naturopath, #health, or similar tags. Handles are each users' Twitter username, which are preceded by an @ symbol. If you're discussing another user, be sure to tag their handle. If you're including a photo, you can tag users as being "in the photo" in order to keep usernames from eating up too much of your 140 character count limit.

SHARE: Sift through the huge piles of available information to share the information that is most relevant with your followers. People following a naturopathic clinic would be most interested in tips on healthy living, recipes and other information about naturopathic medicine. Be sure to share the love by retweeting and favouriting great content posted by other accounts – and, if you're lucky, they may share your posts in return.

AUTOMATE: In order to fill out your Twitter feed, you can automate posts from other accounts, e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn & Instagram. If you automate posts from Facebook, anytime you post on Facebook, the post will also appear in your Twitter feed. To set this up, visit the social media platform you want to connect to Twitter.

PRESCHEDULE: To keep posting consistent, even when you're not online, you can also preschedule posts using Twitter's native scheduling application, which is available through Twitter Ads. In order to access this feature, you need to sign up for Twitter Ads, which is a free tool; it only costs money if you decide to run a Twitter ad campaign. You can also preschedule tweets using Hootsuite.

THE 80/20 RULE: Content marketing is about providing valuable information that is of use to followers. You don't want to come across as an aggressive salesperson. A good rule of thumb to follow is to post 80 per cent useful, informative content and 20 per cent marketing content that points users toward your services, products or promotions. This approach will gain you more followers and ensure that users listen to what you have to say, so that when you do want to sell something, they're less likely to simply tune out.

REPEAT YOURSELF: Twitter is in real time. Feeds fill up quickly, meaning tweets sent a couple of hours prior rapidly fall down in a user's feed. This means that it's perfectly okay to send the same tweet out more than once. The followers who see your tweet in the morning are unlikely to see the same message in the evening. Ideally your tweet won't be identical – instead, reword it slightly or use different hashtags.

The BCNA Twitter feed is here to promote BC NDs—that's you! But do we know about your account? Visit twitter.com/BCnaturopath/lists/bc-naturopaths to check. If you're not on the list, please introduce yourself by sending a tweet or direct message to @BCnaturopath. We'll do the rest—we check this feed daily looking for tweets to share with our 2,600 followers!