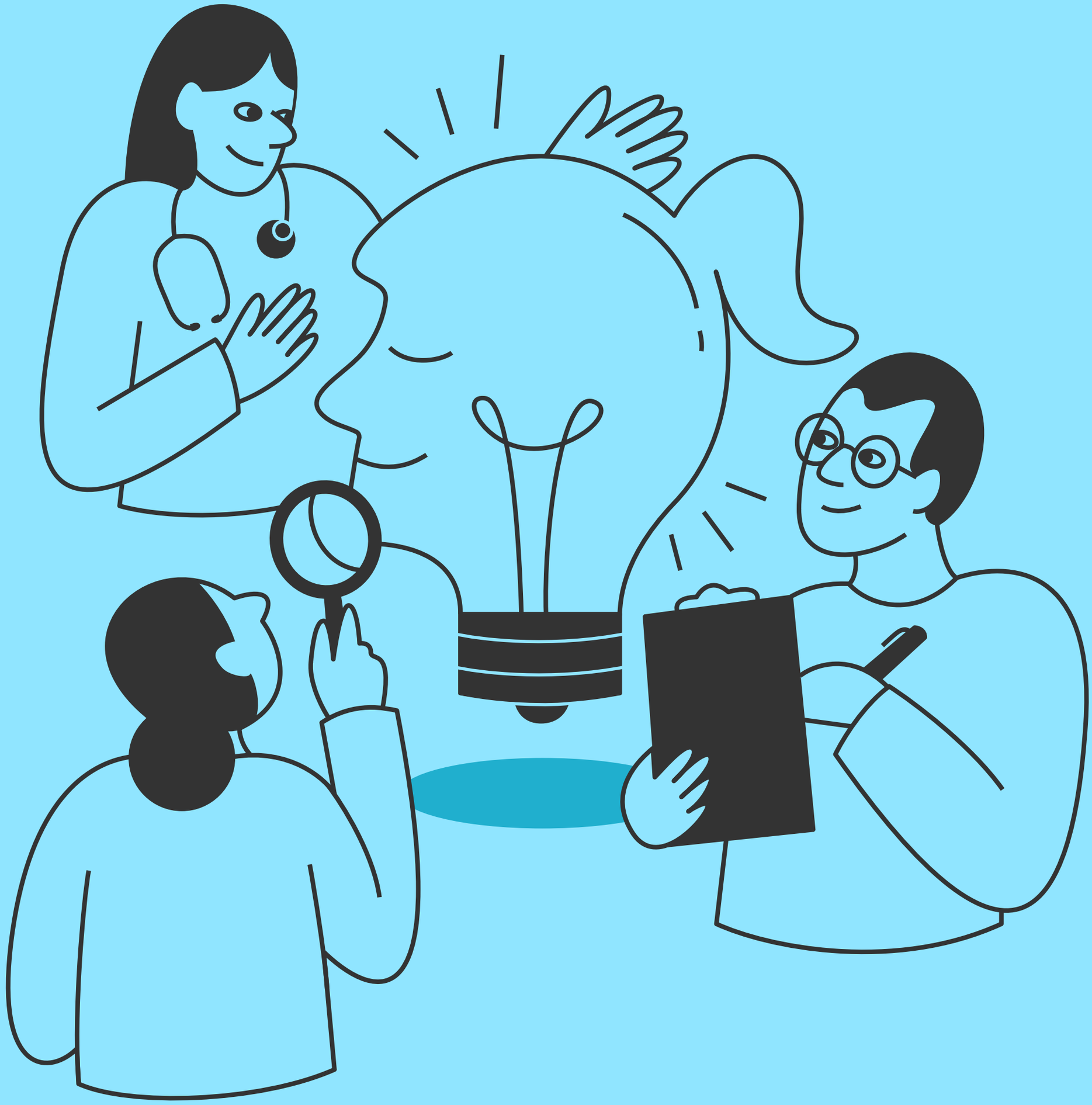
Think Like a Patient

5 data-driven tips for attracting new patients

WHITE PAPER

Zocdoc



Zocdoc

INTRODUCTION

New patients are vital to a thriving healthcare practice. But in today's competitive market, especially after the upheaval of the pandemic, a provider can't just hang up a sign and expect patients to come knocking. Being a credentialed, highly regarded provider is no longer enough to guarantee a steady stream of new patients.

Fortunately, there are simple, effective ways to reach and attract more patients, and they're all anchored by the same principle: To get new patients, get into the patient mindset.

Understanding patients is something Zocdoc can help with. Thanks to millions of appointments booked each year, and regular patient surveys and feedback, we've learned a lot about what patients want when they're searching for providers.

Here are five insights on what today's patients are looking for, and some actionable tips on how to draw them into your practice.

Sincerely,

The Zocdoc Team

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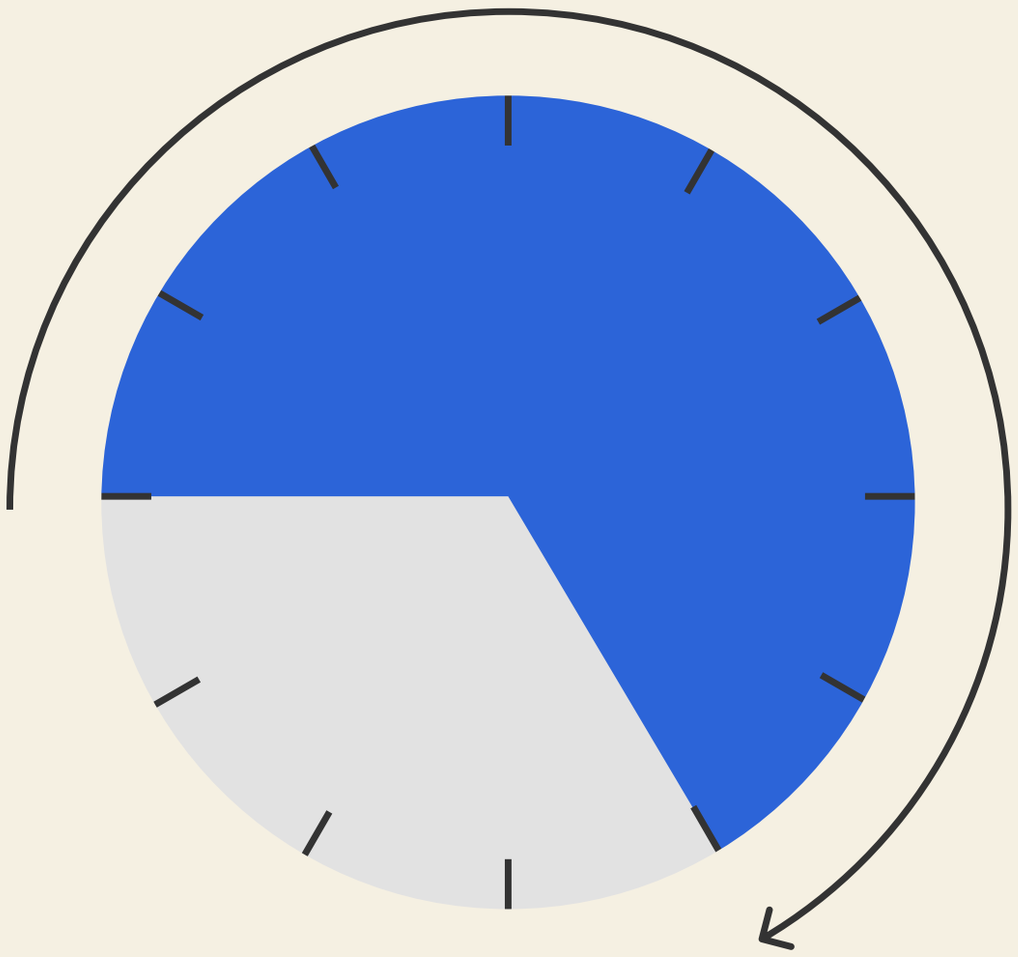
01: PATIENTS WANT TO BE ABLE TO BOOK ANY DAY OF THE WEEK, AND ANY TIME OF DAY OR NIGHT

Many patients find healthcare confusing and overwhelming, so anything that makes the experience simpler and more convenient is a huge draw. For instance, patients really value the ability to book appointments any day of the week, and any time of day.

The popularity of after-hours booking makes sense. In healthcare, the impulse to book often strikes the moment a patient decides they need to see a doctor. Those moments don't always happen during office hours, when patients are focused on work.

On Zocdoc, between August 2021 and August 2022, 37% of all appointments were booked between 5 pm and 9 am. Plus, 17% of all appointments were booked on a Saturday or Sunday. Anytime-booking is especially appealing because it enables patients to get last-minute care.

If a patient decides at night they need to see a doctor right away, they want to be able to make an appointment on the spot. If they can hit "book" before going to bed, that's one thing standing between them and the exam room.

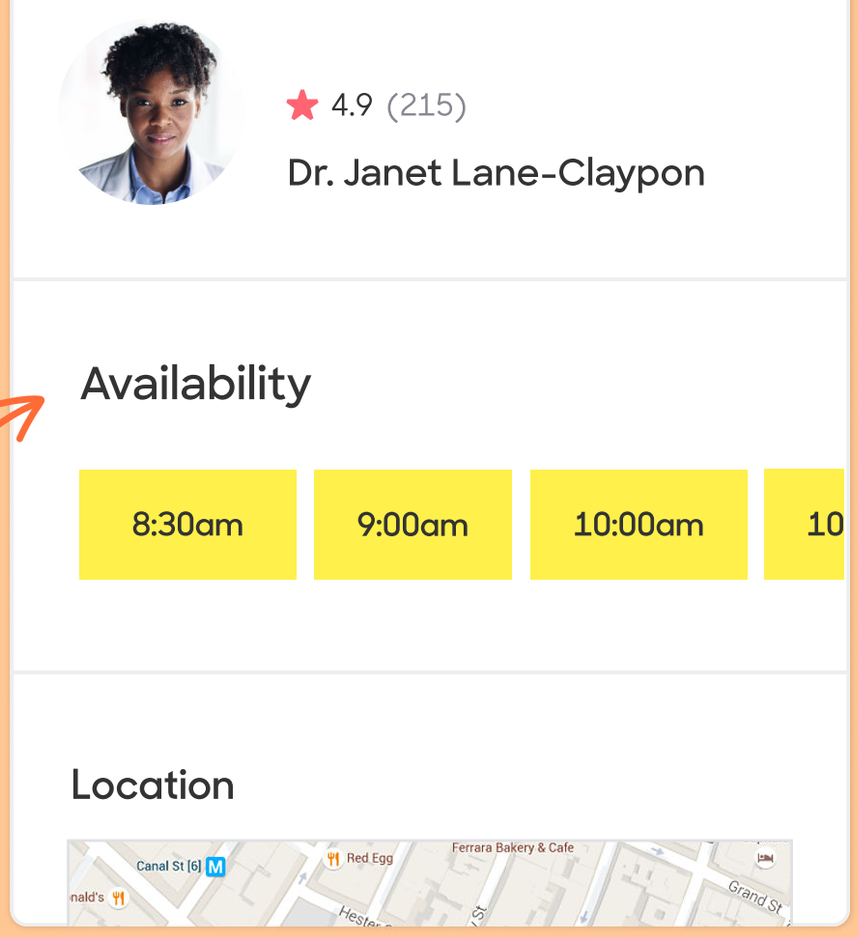


On Zocdoc, from 2021 to 2022, **37%** of all appointments were booked between 5 pm and 9 am.

APPLY THIS INSIGHT

Give patients a way to book with you, no matter when they search. After-hours booking gives you access to an expanded new-patient pool. It can also help you capture the last-minute appointments that many patients covet, and which might fill otherwise unused time slots.

Seamless, 24/7 online booking is a built-in feature for all providers on Zocdoc. You can also offer after-hours booking by having a staff member on call to field evening appointment requests, or even just by allowing patients to request appointments via voicemail or email once the office closes.



02: PATIENTS WANT CARE, QUICKLY

Our fast-paced, on-demand culture has changed the way patients see healthcare. While they want to book whenever they want, they also want to be seen as soon as they can. In fact, patients vow they will go to great lengths if they can't get care for even minor ailments quickly.

In 2019, a Zocdoc study found **3 in 4** patients said it's easier to go to the ER than to get a doctor's appointment.

Yet the study also revealed that 86% of Americans would avoid this costly trip to the ER if they could see an in-network trip within 24 hours.

Fortunately, while patients wait an average of 29 days to see a PCP when calling, on Zocdoc, patients usually see a doctor within 24 to 72 hours. This is particularly notable for mental health access, given the **25% global rise** in anxiety and depression during the pandemic. Usually, patients wait an **average of 25 days** to see a psychiatrist, with some waiting more than 90 days. Wait times for mental practitioners are overall **continuing to grow**.

On Zocdoc, the median number of days between a Zocdoc user booking a mental health appointment and attending that appointment is between 4-5 days for an in-person visit and 5-6 days for a virtual visit.

While patients wait an average of 29 days to see a PCP when calling, on Zocdoc, patients typically see a doctor within **24 to 72 hours.**

APPLY THIS INSIGHT

By streamlining your booking process, through expanding after-hours booking and allowing patients to book online, you'll also be able to speed up how quickly you can see patients. You can also make more room in your schedule by offering both telehealth/in-person visit options.

Within the waiting room itself, you want to focus on actual and perceived wait time. **One study** suggests perceived time impacts patient satisfaction more than actual wait time. You can add calming elements, like plants and interesting magazines, to your waiting room, to make the environment less stressful to patients. Patients also value transparency.

> In one survey, 61% of respondents said they would like a text alert about the wait status, even if they've left their house.

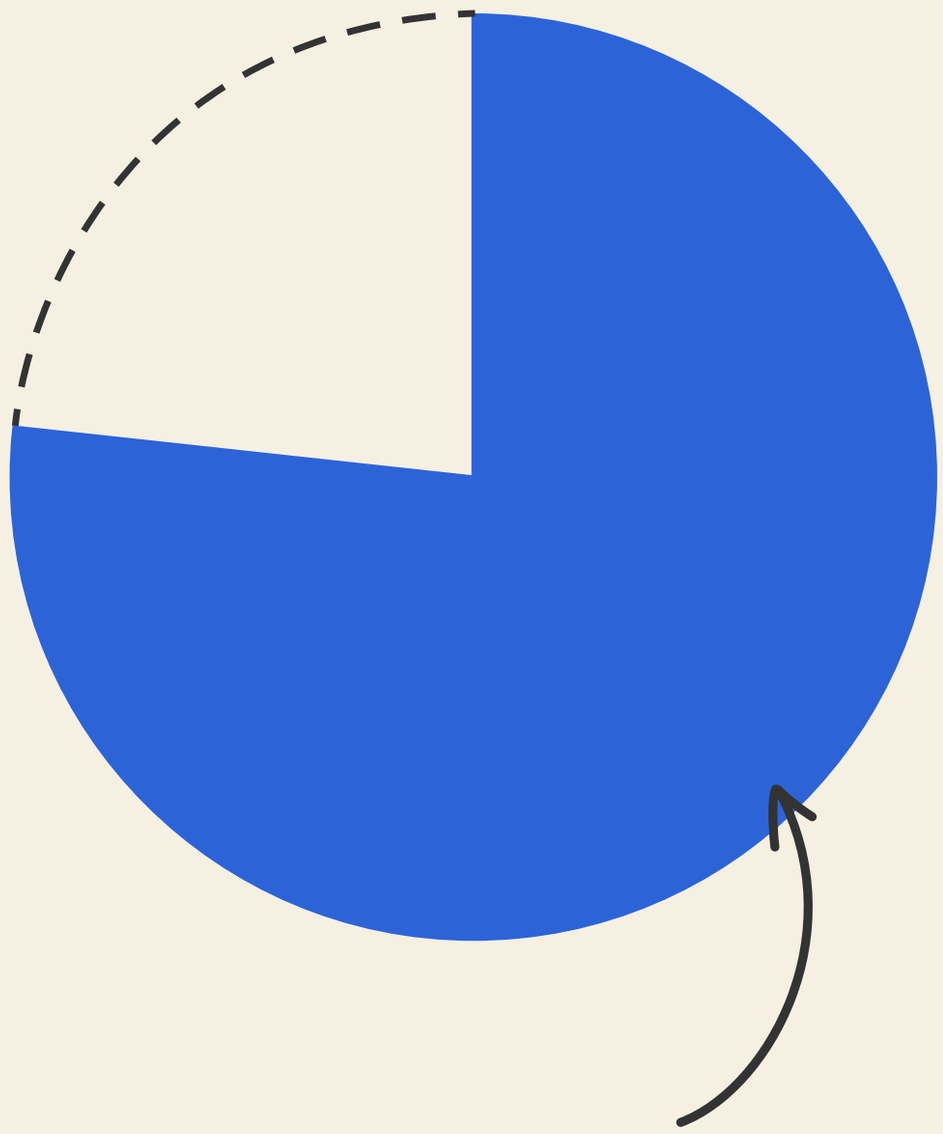
All in all, think of your office like an airport. You want to get your patients in and on their journey to better health as seamlessly as possible (without those annoying TSA wait times!).

03: PATIENTS WANT A LOT OF INFORMATION UP FRONT

Whether a consumer is swiping through a dating app or making dinner reservations, they're doing it with profile pictures and menus at their fingertips. We know patients approach healthcare decisions in a similar way: They want to be able to read and compare details easily before committing to who they feel is the right choice for their own needs. Some patients want to confirm that a provider speaks their language.

Others might prefer providers who are in their age group or are affiliated with specific hospitals. Are you part of any professional organizations that cater to specific populations, such as trauma survivors, or LGBTQ+ or BIPOC patients? Patients want to know.

Having clear insurance information up front is also particularly important to patients. In Zocdoc's **insurance confidence survey**, 77% of insured Americans would like an easier way to ensure their doctor is in-network when booking appointments. All in all, the more details you put forward, the better.



In one Zocdoc survey, **77%** of respondents reported they would like an easier way to ensure their doctor is in-network when booking appointments.

APPLY THIS INSIGHT

If you have a website, it should include any information patients might need in order to feel confident choosing you. And don't bury it behind links; if patients have to click around to learn that you speak Spanish, they might never learn it.

For any marketing you do, remember that patients – not other healthcare professionals – are the target audience. So share any information that patients might want to see.

> Joining Zocdoc, or another site or app that lets patients search and filter for providers, is a win because patients can find you through customized searches, based on the criteria they care about.

04: PATIENTS LIKE TELEHEALTH VISITS, PREFERABLY WITH NEARBY PROVIDERS

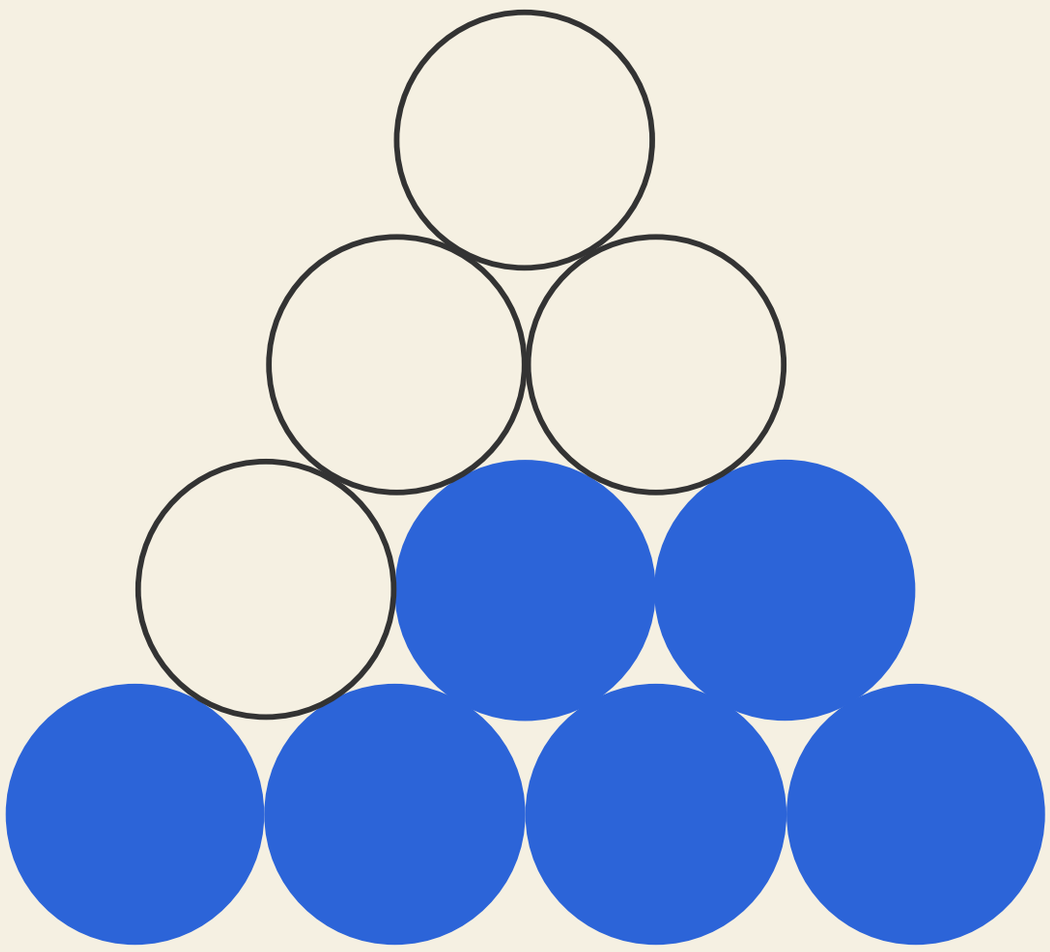
Telehealth was touted as the next big healthcare trend for years, but it never took off — until 2020. When COVID-19 hit, and most in-person visits were put on hold, telehealth suddenly became the only way to obtain some types of care.

So, tens of millions of patients across the country gave it a whirl. In a 2020 Zocdoc survey, 30% of respondents said they'd tried telehealth for the first time during the early days of the pandemic. Of that group, 90% said they had a positive experience and would do it again.

Research on telehealth use during the pandemic supports high satisfaction among both patients and providers. Telehealth is here to stay, but even with virtual visits, patients still choose doctors located close to home.

Between May 2020 and May 2022, across all specialties excluding mental health, 81% of in-person appointments and 61% of virtual appointments were located less than 20 miles from the patient's home address.

This likely indicates that patients are looking for providers to see on a long-term basis and that, at some point, they expect to see them in person, not just on a screen.



Around **6 in 10** patients choose nearby doctors even when booking virtual visits.

APPLY THIS INSIGHT

Offer telehealth, if you can. Telehealth doesn't work for every health issue or service. But if you're in a specialty where it's feasible to furnish at least some care virtually, telehealth gives you greater access to an expanded group of new patients.

> It's important to think of telehealth as an additional entry point to in-person care, not a distinct category of care or a funnel for one-off visits.

Most patients who book virtual visits aren't looking for "telehealth" doctors. Don't make the mistake of thinking of them as "telehealth" patients.

First, make sure patients know you offer telehealth. Then give them an easy way to book visits. It should be obvious to patients when they're booking virtual vs. in-person care.

Finally, choose a HIPAA-compliant telehealth platform that makes the virtual visit process as seamless and simple as possible. (Yes, all of this is done for you if you join Zocdoc.)

05: NEW PATIENTS WANT TO BECOME EXISTING PATIENTS

It's a lot easier for a patient to go back to a provider they already know and like than to find someone new every time they need an eye exam or get a sinus infection. So, when patients are looking for new providers, they're usually looking for someone they can keep seeing. Our data backs up this preference, as around 70% of Zocdoc patients rebook with the same practice when rebooking in the same specialty.

People continue to want to rebook with Zocdoc providers, even when switching between virtual and in-person visits. For instance, per Zocdoc data from March 2021 to March 2022, 50-60% of people who booked a virtual visit with a new provider, specifically in OB-GYN, eye doctor and dentist specialties, booked a second, in-person appointment with that same practice.

This is great news for providers. It's also a reminder that you should always think of new patients as future existing patients.

Not only do existing patients generate considerable value over time, they can also drive further growth via patient-to-patient referrals.

The bottom line is: When you spend money on marketing to attract new patients, you're really investing in the long-term growth of your practice.

Of patients who have rebooked within the same specialty, around **70%** of Zocdoc patients return to the same practice.

APPLY THIS INSIGHT

When you think about acquiring new patients, think long term. Many providers struggle to decide if marketing is a worthwhile expense, or how much they should be willing to pay to acquire a new patient.

> Calculating the value of a first visit is a good start, but it's just a start. Next, think about the lifetime value of your average patient. How many times does a typical patient come back? Do you get word-of-mouth referrals from satisfied patients?

You know you deliver high-quality care that makes new patients want to rebook. If you factor that into your ROI calculations, you may feel empowered to invest in new patient acquisition with confidence.

Getting new patients isn't a precise formula, and these five insights only scratch the surface of what Zocdoc has learned about patient booking behavior. But they all reinforce the importance of understanding how patients think in order to offer them what they want – which should be the crux of any acquisition strategy in a consumer-driven healthcare market. To make your practice's growth last, put patient interests first.



HERE'S A QUICK BREAKDOWN

37% of all Zocdoc appointments, from 2021 to 2022, were booked between 5 pm and 9 am.

24-72 hours is the typical timeframe in which patients see a doctor on Zocdoc.

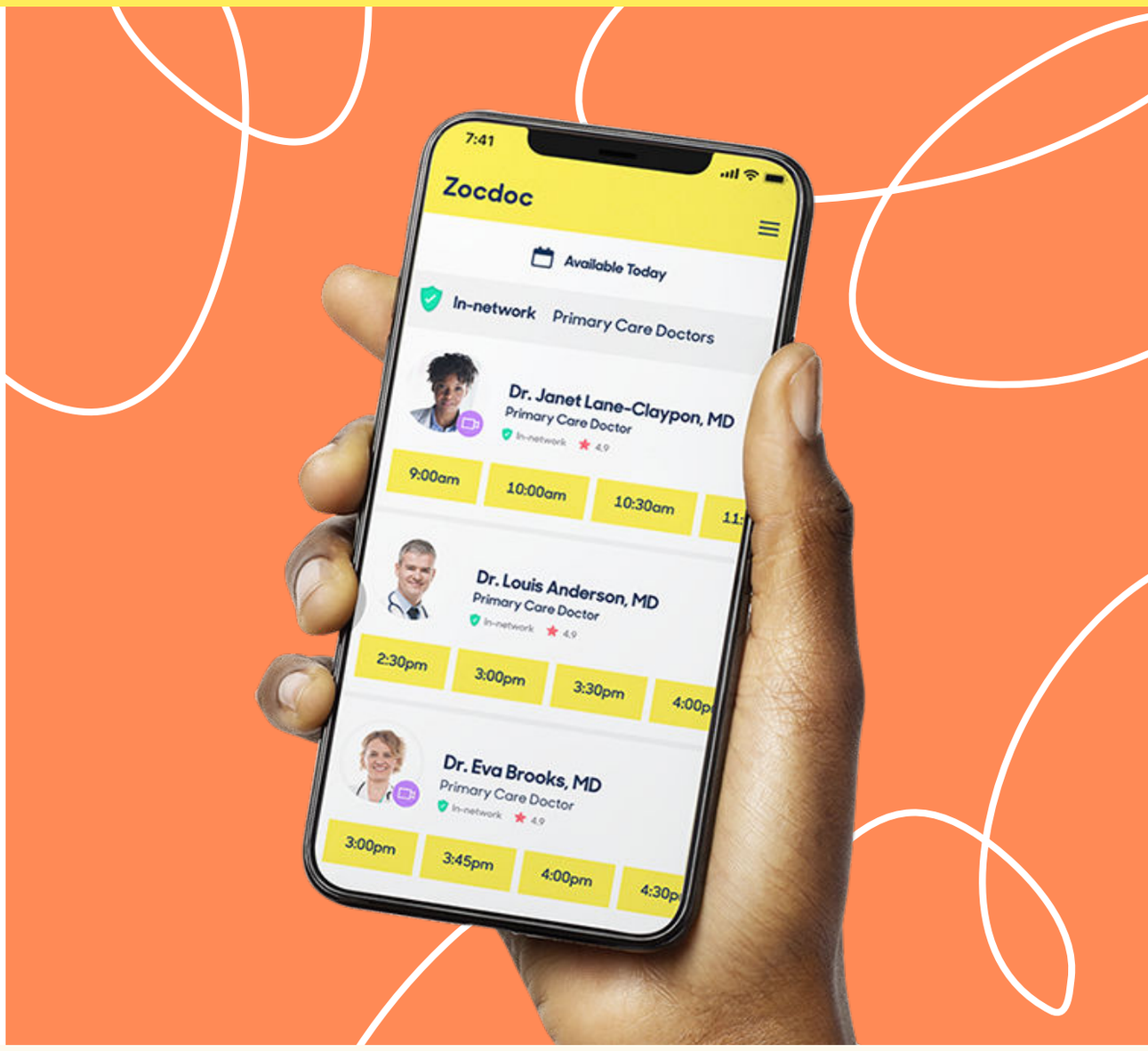
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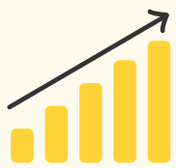
~70% of patients return to the same practice.

ABOUT ZOCDOC

Zocdoc is the most direct way to get the right patients for your practice. Millions of patients visit our website and app every month to search for local providers based on insurance, visits reasons, location and more. Patients can view your availability and book directly - and you receive their pre-appointment information online before they step foot in the office. It's free to join and you only pay when a new patient books with you. Take a free demo today to see how we can help you grow.



WHY PROVIDERS LOVE ZOCDOC



Reach new patients

6 million+ patients visit our website and app every month to search for a local provider.



Fill last-minute openings

Almost half of Zocdoc appointments occur within 72 hours of booking.



Pay for bookings, not clicks

Lower risk than when you are paying for clicks, impressions, or re-acquiring existing patients.



Capture bookings from your website

Use Zocdoc's technology with your branding to convert your website traffic to bookings.



No signup or setup fees

There are no upfront or setup costs, just a one time fee for each new patient booking.

Request a demo at
zocdoc.com/about/think