



# Four ways to sell patients on your portal

By Joanna Weiss | June 8, 2016

Healthcare practices understand the benefits of patient portals: They save time for providers and office staff, keep patients engaged with their own health, and are linked to other signs of financial and clinical success. But even in this digital age, it's notoriously hard to get patients to sign up.

Healthcare organizations that have bucked the trend – and steered more than 60 percent of their patients onto portals – suggest that a killer pitch to the right demographic makes the difference.

Here are four ways to convince patients that portals will make their lives easier.

**1. For busy parents: The camp physical, made simple.** It's a time of year harried parents always dread: having to dig through paperwork from months ago for the physical reports and immunization records that make a kid eligible for Camp Whatchamacallit. One click on a website and you can print out a new one? Priceless.

**2. For older patients: Lab results fast.** Older patients or patients with chronic

conditions know the telephone dance of lab results: Missed calls, messages, frustrating delays. With a portal, you can get results on your time table, view them repeatedly, and print them out to discuss with a doctor at your next appointment.

**3. For younger patients: Scheduling at your fingertips.** For a generation accustomed to Uber and OpenTable, the chance to schedule appointments online – or easily email a doctor – is a compelling sell. No small talk or pesky conversations with human beings required.

**4. For sensitive health issues: Confidentiality.** If you work in an open-space office, your phone calls aren't private. Portals offer a safe, confidential way to view results on your own time. Some practices, particularly in fields such as family planning and behavioral health, have found that patients value secure messaging for its confidentiality – and the convenience of emailing their doctor 24/7.



*Illustration by Leela Wagner.*



A daily news hub reporting from the heart of the health care internet, with access to a comprehensive data set of health care transactions from athenahealth's nationwide network. We equip leaders with actionable insight and inspiration for making health care work as it should.

## Stay in the know

Sign up for weekly data and news:  
[insight.athenahealth.com/newsletter](https://insight.athenahealth.com/newsletter)