NMC Do's & Don'ts for Doctors in India

Professional conduct, social media and advertising rules for registered medical practitioners and hospitals

WHICH RULES APPLY RIGHT NOW

The NMC placed its 2023 conduct regulations in abeyance on 23 Aug 2023. The Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, 2002 apply instead. On 6 Oct 2026 the NMC's Ethics and Medical Registration Board issued separate **Guidelines on Ethical Advertising and Public Communication**, in force with immediate effect, which govern social media and promotion.

1 Professional conduct: core Do's and Don'ts

Based on the Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, 2002

DO

- **Show your registration number** on prescriptions and certificates.
- **Keep patient records** for at least 3 years.
- **Protect confidentiality** unless the law or public interest requires disclosure.
- **Get informed consent** before treatment.
- **Attend to emergencies.** Do not refuse emergency care.
- **Prescribe by generic name**, written legibly.
- **Keep learning:** stay current through continuing medical education.
- **Refer** the patient when a case is beyond your competence.

DON'T

- **Take commissions** or cuts for referrals or investigations.
- **Accept gifts** or pharma-sponsored travel, or endorse medical products.
- **Advertise** or solicit patients.
- **Do sex-determination tests** or issue false certificates.
- **Practise outside your recognised system** of medicine, or employ unqualified people to treat patients.
- **Exploit patients** sexually.
- **Abandon a patient** mid-treatment.

2 Social media & advertising: Do's and Don'ts

NMC Guidelines on Ethical Advertising and Public Communication, issued 6 Oct 2026. They cover social media, websites, messaging platforms, podcasts, influencer and sponsored posts, and AI-generated content.

DO

- **Post factual health education:** awareness campaigns and academic discussion are allowed if they do not promote your practice, solicit patients or earn money through promotional marketing.
- **Add your credentials** to posts: name, qualifications, registration status and register number.
- **Protect identity:** blur or crop anything that could identify a patient, even where use of patient material is legally allowed.
- **Document consent** where the law requires it: specific, informed, voluntary and verifiable.
- **Hospitals:** share factual details of facilities, equipment, technology and diagnostic services.
- **Supervise agencies and influencers.** You remain responsible for content you authorise or knowingly allow.

DON'T

- **Request or share patient testimonials,** reviews or endorsements for promotion.
- **Buy, fake or manipulate** reviews and ratings.
- **Post patient stories or before-and-after content.** Patient consent alone does not make it allowed.
- **Claim guaranteed results** or superiority over other doctors, or use unverifiable claims such as "best".
- **Push unnecessary** tests, treatments or procedures through promotion.
- **Use AI** to create synthetic testimonials, voices, clinical outcomes or fake endorsements.
- **Hire influencers or marketing agencies** to solicit patients.

Penalties: violations could lead to suspension or removal from the medical register.

3 If the 2023 Regulations return

Currently in abeyance. These are the additional requirements they would bring back.

Prescribing	Generic names only.
CPD	At least 30 credit hours every five years.
Pharma sponsorship	No involvement in seminars, conferences or CPD with direct or indirect pharma sponsorship.
Intoxicants	Alcohol or other intoxicants that affect practice, on or off duty, count as misconduct.
Social media	Educating the public is allowed. No patient specifics, no testimonials, no soliciting.
Penalties	Penalties confirmed by medical councils or the NMC are to be publicised.

SOURCES AND NOTES

- NMC Guidelines on Ethical Advertising and Public Communication (6 Oct 2026), as reported by The South First, Careers360 and Medbound Times.
- NMC notification of 23 Aug 2023 holding the 2023 regulations in abeyance and re-adopting the 2002 regulations (TaxGuru, The Wire).
- NMC Registered Medical Practitioner (Professional Conduct) Regulations, 2023 (Mondaq, PTI).

This guide summarises news and secondary coverage and is a general reference, not legal advice. Always check the full guidelines and any later amendments on nmc.org.in or with your State Medical Council.