



Medical Board
Ahpra

Visual examples of cosmetic surgery advertising

July 2024

Content warning – sensitive images

[Guidelines for medical practitioners who advertise cosmetic surgery](#) (guidelines) came into effect on 1 July 2023.

Ahpra and the Medical Board of Australia have developed these visual examples and [frequently asked questions](#) to help practitioners comply with the guidelines.

These examples do not represent all of the requirements and should be read in conjunction with the guidelines.

The guidelines have been developed to address the unique features of cosmetic surgery that are not present in many other areas of medical practice and the specific risks involved with cosmetic surgery advertising.

Cosmetic surgery is invasive with the potential for complications, is often irreversible and is often sought by potentially vulnerable people.¹ It can also be a lucrative area of practice and financial gain can compete with and sometimes outweigh patient wellbeing and safety considerations.

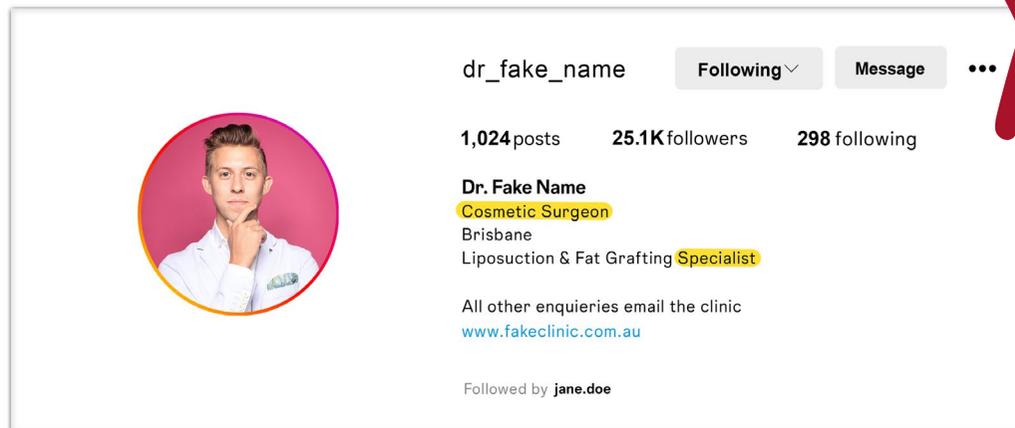
The guidelines describe responsible practice when advertising cosmetic surgery. Good practice cosmetic surgery advertising is honest, balanced, realistic and informative. It protects the dignity of patients and does not exploit patients.

'Cosmetic surgery' is defined in the 'Definitions' section of the guidelines.

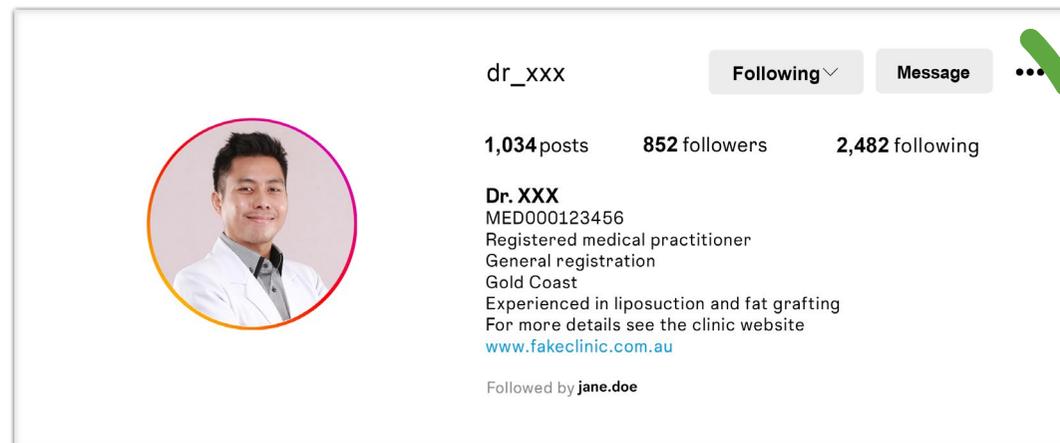
All advertising is also required to comply with the advertising requirements under the National Law and [Guidelines for advertising a regulated health service](#).

¹ Information on consumer vulnerability is available in the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's (ACCC) publication *Consumer vulnerability: A business guide to the Australian Consumer Law (2021)*, available at www.accc.gov.au.

Instagram profile

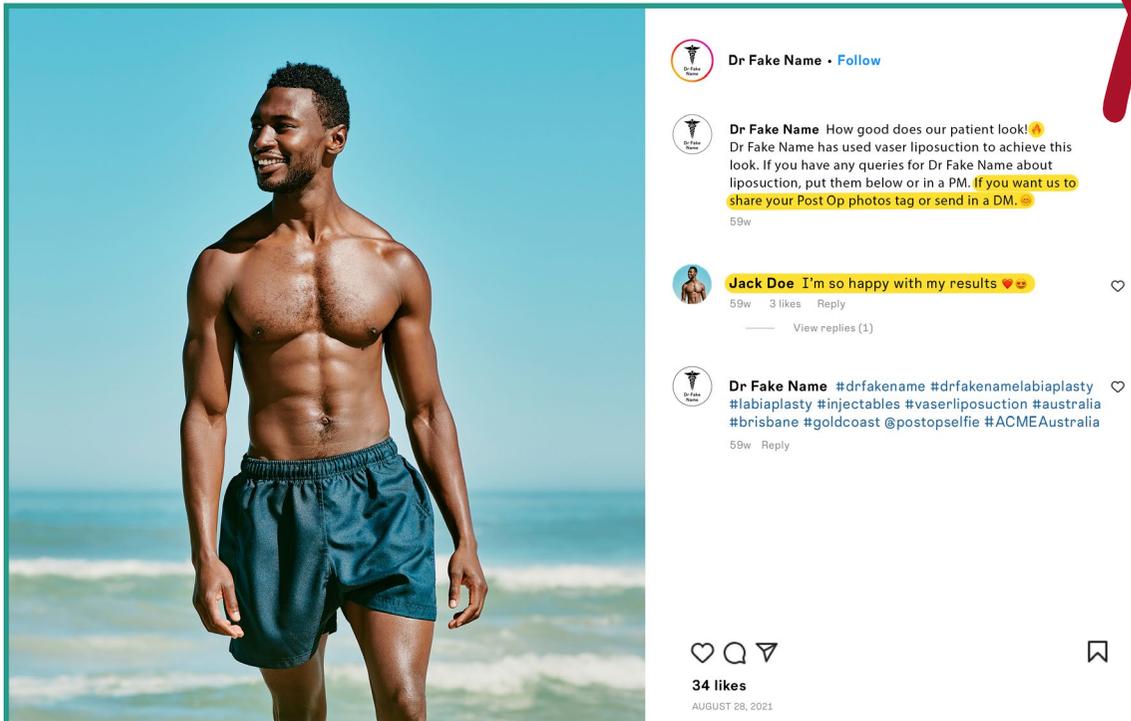


This profile does not provide the required registration information and uses incorrect specialist terminology. Medical practitioners who do not hold specialist registration in surgery, ophthalmology or obstetrics and gynaecology can not use the title 'surgeon'.



This profile includes required registration information and uses appropriate language to describe experience.

Testimonials / unreasonable expectations

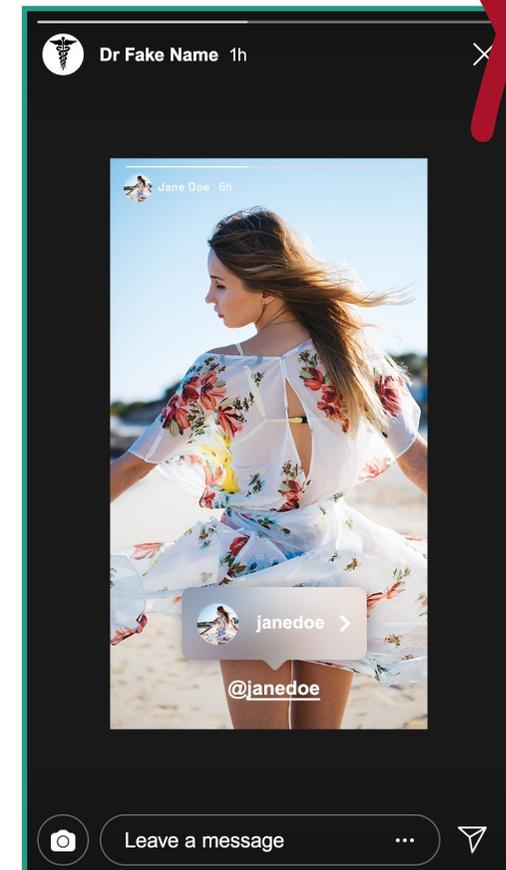


This advertising may create unreasonable expectations due to the use of a single outcome image. Other patients may not achieve similar outcomes.

The patient response is considered a testimonial and should be removed or comments disabled.

This post uses emojis, encourages testimonials, lacks a warning that outcomes may vary between patients and lacks information about risks and recovery.

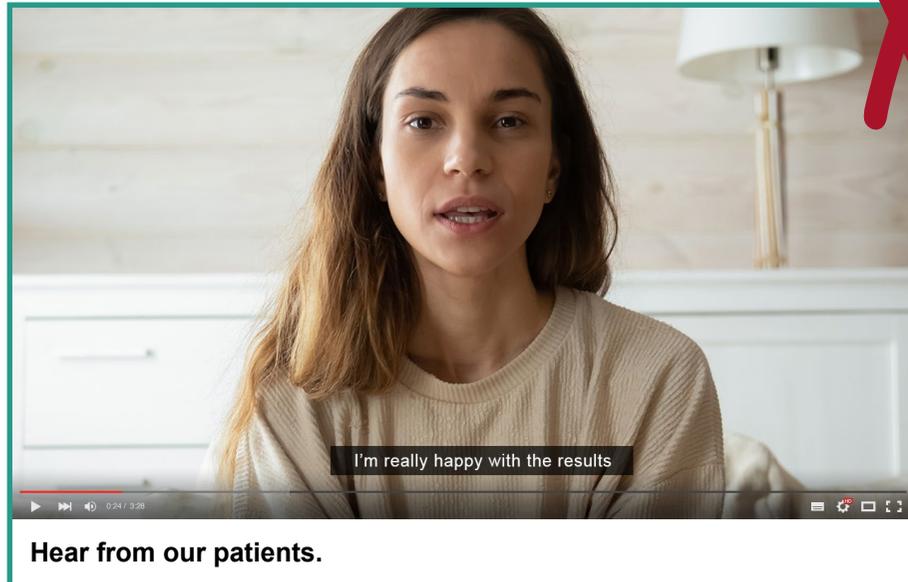
The use of questions in the post is encouraging inappropriate interaction and comment about a patient's body.



Reposting a patient's content is considered a testimonial.

This advertising may create unreasonable expectations due to the use of a single outcome image. This post lacks a warning that outcomes may vary between patients and lacks information about risks and recovery.

Testimonials



This advertising is considered a testimonial as it is a video on the practitioner's website of a patient discussing their treatment and outcomes.



Jane was a 21 year old girl who was troubled by her abdomen, waist and thighs and was really hoping to improve these areas so she could feel more confident wearing slim fitting clothing. Sometimes when multiple areas are performed, for the purpose of safety, it is best to do the procedure over 2 sessions

Following this procedure Jane said her self-confidence had increased and she felt motivated to exercise more as well as be more careful with her diet. Liposuction can be a psychological boost to a patient and act as a trigger for them to change their lifestyle.

This advertising is considered a testimonial (patient story) as it uses a patient voice to describe the outcomes of treatment. This advertising is misleading and may create unreasonable expectations in relation to the claimed psychological benefits.

'Before and after' photos



Makeup and hair placement



Dr Fake Name · Follow



Dr Fake Name 55yo patient before and 4 weeks after deep plane meloplasty (facelift) and cervicoplasty (necklift) performed under local anaesthetic

Results vary from person to person. These images are indicative only and reflect the early results for this patient.

Cosmetic surgery is a serious decision. More information about the risks and recovery of each procedure is available on our website.

www.fakeclinic.com.au/risks

Surgery performed by Dr Fake (MED000123456)
Specialist Plastic Surgeon, Perth.

59w



Dr Fake Name #perth #drfake

59w Reply



22 likes

JULY 29, 2021



Use of clinical terminology and time since surgery ✓

Statement – results may vary ✓

Link to information on risks and recovery ✓

Practitioner registration details ✓

Advertisers should be particularly careful when using before and after photos to ensure that makeup and hair placement does not cover scars. These photos could be improved by the absence of makeup and consistent hair placement, ideally tied out of the way.

The post text addresses the information expected in this form of advertising. The web page listed should include prominent information about specific risks.

'Before and after' photos



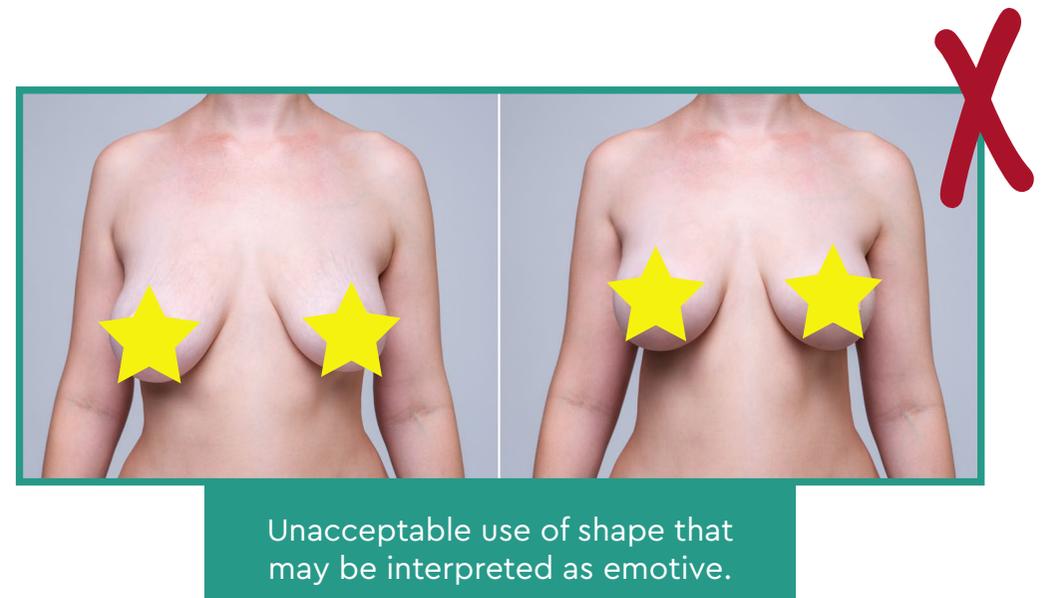
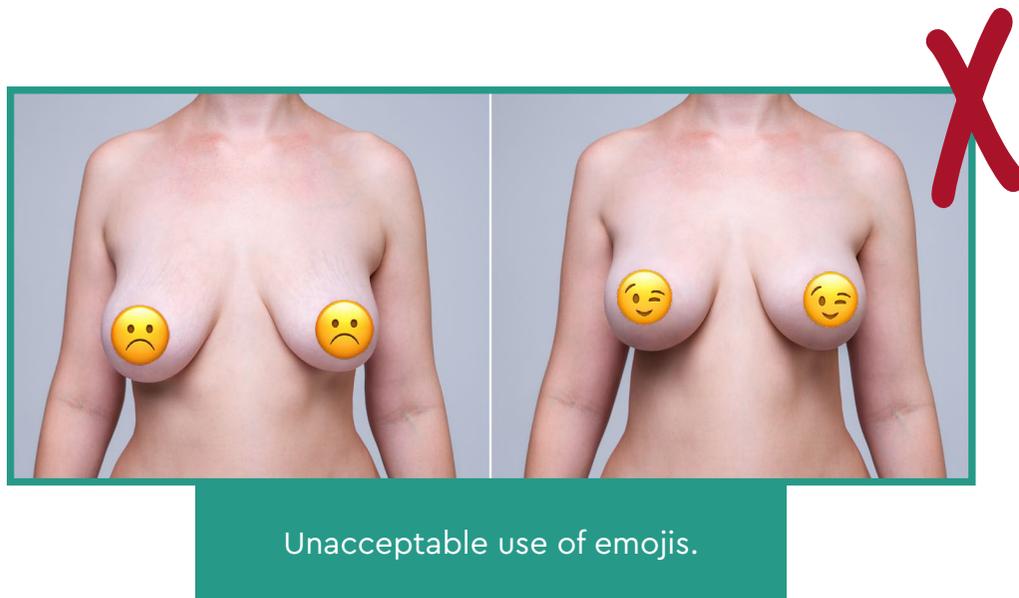
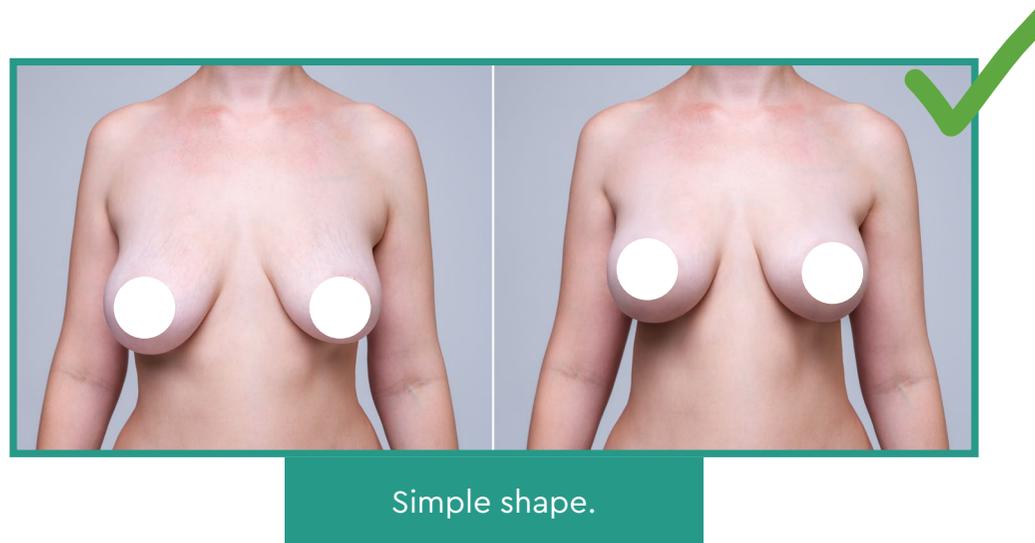
This advertising contains gratuitous nudity. Advertising must not include photographs, videos or images of naked breasts, even if censored, when presenting information about cosmetic surgery unrelated to the appearance of breasts such as abdominoplasty or abdominal liposuction. This 'before and after' image is likely to create unreasonable expectations as it does not use similar posture, clothing and framing. This 'before and after' image uses a digital/virtual background or backdrop which has the potential to alter the outline of the body making the image misleading and create unreasonable expectations. 'Before and after' images used in advertising of cosmetic surgery must not be edited or enhanced.

'Before and after' photos



This 'before and after' image is likely to create unreasonable expectations as the referenced treatment or procedure is not the only visible change to the person being photographed (pre-surgery markings).

Use of shapes and emojis



Unreasonable expectations



Candidates For Abdominoplasty Surgery

Abdominoplasty surgery may be recommended to address any or all of the following concerns:

- Dramatic weight loss
- Isolated pockets of fat remain that will not respond to diet and exercise
- Excess folds of skin are causing irritation, rashes and infections
- Despite your weight loss, you are still unable to fit into your smaller clothing
- Dissatisfaction with your body image despite reaching your weight loss goals
- Need a boost in self confidence

This advertising may create unreasonable expectations as it overstates the benefits of surgery. Practitioners should not imply that surgery will address dissatisfaction with body image or improve self confidence.

This advertising may create unreasonable expectations as the before and after photos are not in similar poses, lighting or clothing.

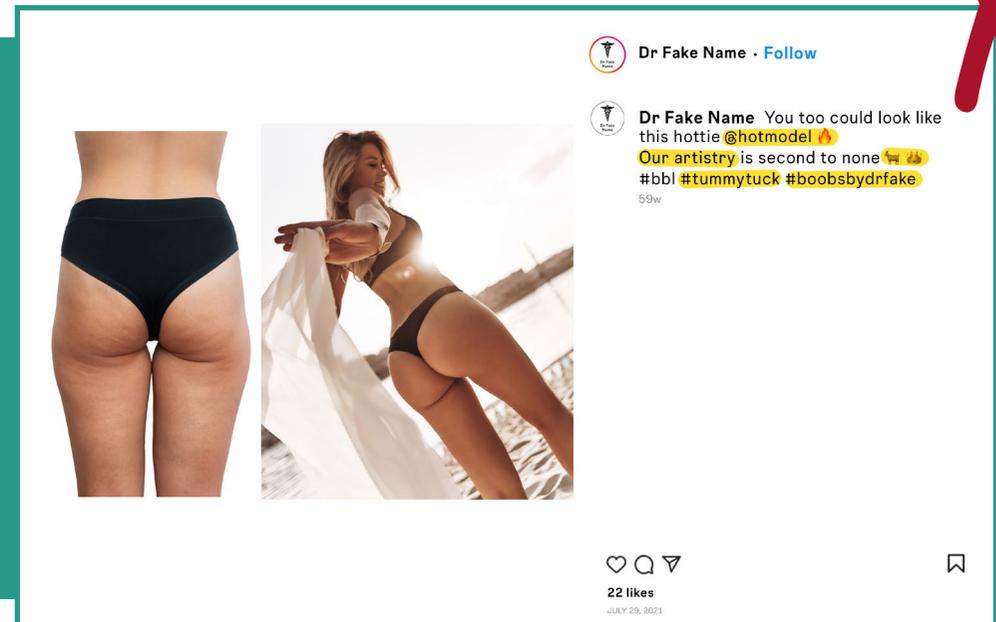
Use of the terms 'artistry', 'hottie' and emojis trivialise the risks associated with surgery.

The hashtags include colloquial terms without the relevant medical term.

There is no prominent warning that outcomes may differ.

There is no prominent information about risks or recovery.

This advertising uses lifestyle shots, for example, images taken on a beach.

Dr Fake Name · Follow

Dr Fake Name You too could look like this hottie @hotmodel 🔥
 Our artistry is second to none 🙌
 #bbl #tummytuck #boobsbydrfake

59w

22 likes

JULY 29, 2021

False, misleading or deceptive



 **Dr Fake Name** • Follow

 **Dr Fake Name** Our **unique** vaser liposuction techniques target stubborn fat deposits. Using **safe** ultrasound technology **we gently melt** and remove fat giving our patient a smooth result.

32w



362 likes

MAY 2, 2022

This advertising is misleading as it claims to be a unique technique, gently remove fat and is safe.

This post lacks a warning that outcomes may vary between patients and lacks information about risks and recovery.

Unacceptable post pregnancy surgery example

Mummy makeover surgery/ Post pregnancy makeover surgery/ Post pregnancy combination surgery

With **mummy makeover** surgery, mothers can address their **undesirable** stretch marks and **saggy** skin. Women can undertake multiple surgeries at once to **restore** their pre-pregnancy bodies and feel more **confident** in their appearance. Changes to your body after pregnancy don't need to **stop you from enjoying your life**. You can improve the **quality of motherhood** by **having the body you desire**.

There are many benefits to combining surgeries such as reducing costs, having a single recovery period, and **obtaining your ideal body sooner**.

Surgeries often combined for mummy makeover surgeries are:

- Breast lift/augmentation or reduction
- **Tummy tuck**
- **Lipo** to the waist and thighs

This advertising uses language or statements which are exploitive, disapproving or imply that a normal change (for example, post-pregnancy body), body shape or bodily feature is abnormal or undesirable or is not aesthetically pleasing and can be fixed or created by cosmetic surgery. Such as, 'mummy makeover', 'post pregnancy makeover', 'post pregnancy combination', and 'undesirable stretch marks'.

This advertising states or implies cosmetic surgery should be used to obtain an acceptable or 'ideal' body type by using phrases that imply wellbeing will suffer without cosmetic surgery, such as 'restore'.

This advertising makes claims about psychological or social benefits (e.g cosmetic surgery will change the patient's life, boost

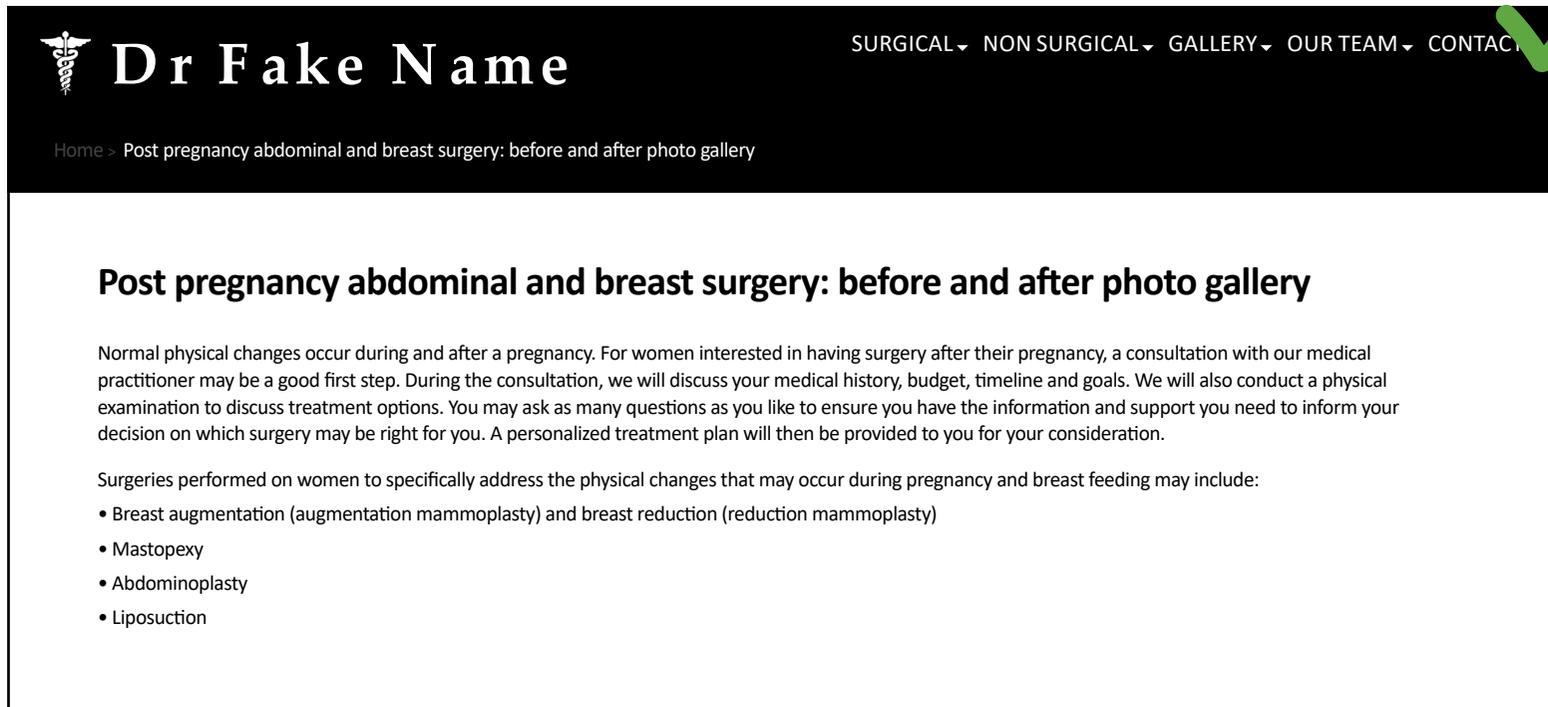
confidence, improve body image or self-esteem) which are not supported by acceptable evidence.

This advertising uses statements or marketing techniques that implies any desired outcomes can be obtained. Such as, 'obtaining your ideal body'.

This advertising encourages patients to undergo multiple surgeries at the same time (for example, through promotion of packages or 'bundling' of cosmetic surgery)

This advertising trivialises cosmetic surgery through the use of colloquial terms or non-clinical terms without also using the medical term for the surgery for example, 'tummy tuck' and 'lipo'.

Acceptable post pregnancy surgery example



The screenshot shows a website header for 'Dr Fake Name' with navigation links: SURGICAL, NON SURGICAL, GALLERY, OUR TEAM, CONTACT. Below the header is a breadcrumb trail: Home > Post pregnancy abdominal and breast surgery: before and after photo gallery. The main content area has a title 'Post pregnancy abdominal and breast surgery: before and after photo gallery' and a paragraph of text explaining that normal physical changes occur during and after pregnancy, and a consultation with a medical practitioner is recommended. It lists several types of surgeries performed on women to address physical changes: Breast augmentation (augmentation mammoplasty) and breast reduction (reduction mammoplasty), Mastopexy, Abdominoplasty, and Liposuction.

This webpage does not use language or statements which are exploitive, disapproving or imply that a normal change (for example, post-pregnancy body), body shape or bodily feature is abnormal or undesirable or is not aesthetically pleasing and can be fixed or created by cosmetic surgery.

Risk and recovery



Liposuction

Procedure description
Lorem ipsum

Consultation process
Lorem ipsum

Price estimate
Lorem ipsum

Contact us

All surgery has risks

This example does not provide detail of the risks and the information is not prominent or balanced with the reported benefits. There is no information about recovery.



Liposuction

Risks
Lorem ipsum

Recovery
Lorem ipsum

Procedure description
Lorem ipsum

Consultation process
Lorem ipsum

Price estimate
Lorem ipsum

Contact us

This example provides prominent details of the risks and information about recovery.

Risks and complications of cosmetic surgery



Every surgery has its own procedure specific risks. Some general risks that can potentially occur across a number of procedures include:

Scarring

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Infection

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Pain

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Undesirable cosmetic outcome

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Nerve damage

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Bruising and swelling

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Bleeding

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Seroma

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Anaesthetic complications

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Death

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This web page provides useful information on general risks related to surgery. Similar information on the risks related to specific procedures should be provided on the relevant procedure page.

Who performed the surgery?



 **Dr Fake Name** • Follow

 **Dr Fake Name** 38w
Sculpting a smooth back profile & new silhouette with Vaser liposuction! ✍️

This patient wanted to target stubborn pockets of fat in her midsection & use it to treat her hip dips & buttocks. The Sydney team performed a Brazilian butt lift & sculpted her curves to achieve a beautiful hourglass shape!

What do you think of her transformation? Comment below.

For more information call us: 1300 361 041

Fake clinic doctors
@drfakename
@drnotreal
@drcosmetic
@drliposuction

This post does not provide any information about risks or recovery. This post uses terminology that trivialises or downplays risk.

This advertising trivialises cosmetic surgery through encouraging interaction. This post does not provide the required registration information. It is not clear which practitioner performed the procedure.

Risk in a post – Facebook



NOTE: Any surgical or invasive procedure carries risks. Before proceeding, you should seek a second opinion from a qualified health practitioner.
Results, recovery & potential complications will vary for each individual patient.
Photos & videos featured are not a guarantee that your results will be the same & do not guarantee a particular surgical outcome.
Content on our Facebook page is published with the consent of our patients.
The content featured is general in nature and does not constitute medical advice.
Images taken immediately post-operatively may not reflect final results.

Full information about risks and potential risks is not easily found in this advertising. Where it is not possible to provide full information about the risks and recovery, advertising should direct the public to the location of the information (eg via a hyperlink or specific website address).



Disclaimer:
All surgeries on this page are performed by Dr Fakename and are published with consent by our patients. Please note comments have been turned off for all clinical before/after images as per AHPRA guidelines. Before/after images are taken at approximately 6 months post-op unless otherwise stated. They are not guarantees that your results will be the same or similar as results will vary between individuals. The content on our page is general in nature and does not constitute medical advice. Any surgery or invasive procedure carries risks and has a recovery time, please see our website for more information on this www.fakename.com.au/recovery. Before proceeding, please seek medical advice from an appropriately qualified medical practitioner. Dr Fakename is a specialist plastic surgeon (Registration: MED0001234567) See less

This advertising contains a hyperlink to the practitioner's web page where useful information on general risks related to surgery can be found.

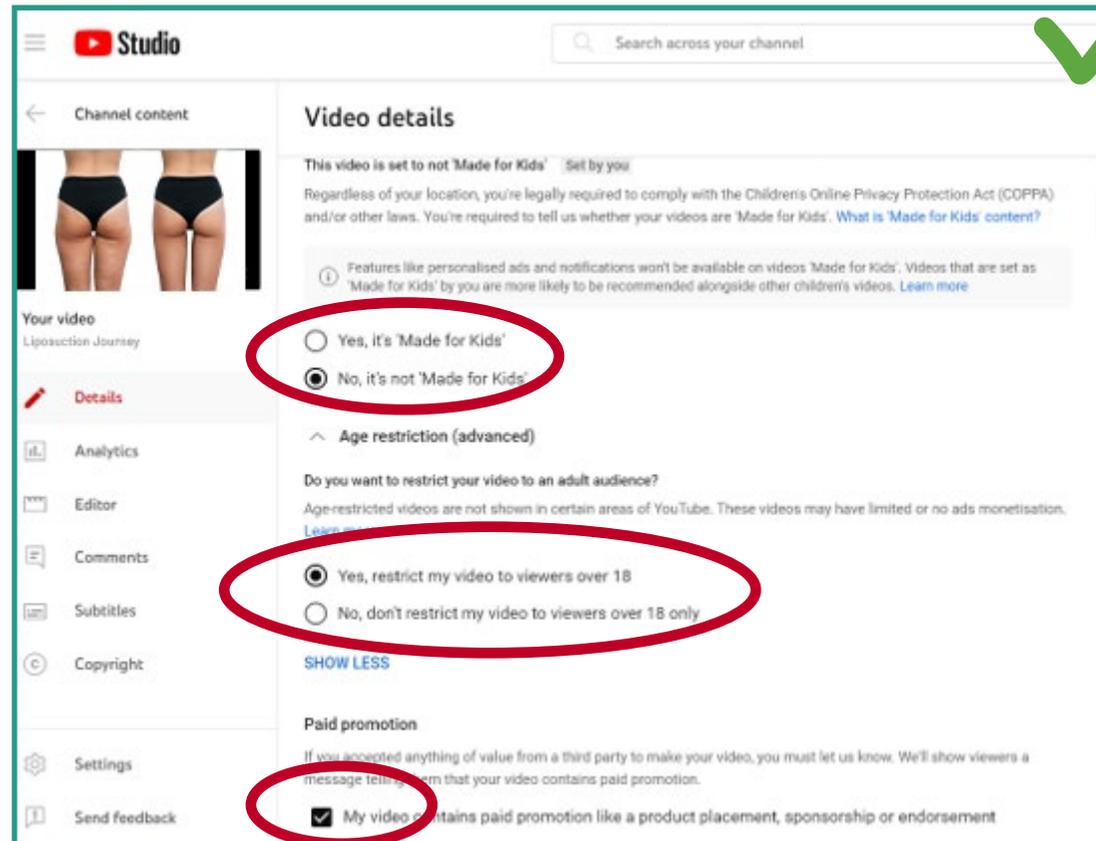
Risk in a post – Instagram



Disclaimer:
All surgeries on this page are performed by Dr Fakename and are published with consent by our patients. Please note comments have been turned off for all clinical before/after images as per AHPRA guidelines. Before/after images are taken at approximately 6 months post-op unless otherwise stated. They are not guarantees that your results will be the same or similar as results will vary between individuals. The content on our page is general in nature and does not constitute medical advice. Any surgery or invasive procedure carries risks and has a recovery time, please see our website for more information this www.fakename.com.au/recovery. Before proceeding, please seek medical advice from an appropriately qualified medical practitioner. Dr Fakename is a specialist plastic surgeon (Registration: MED0001234567) See less

This advertising contains a text based website address to the practitioner's web page where useful information on general risks related to surgery can be found.

Identifying adult content – YouTube



The screenshot shows the YouTube Studio interface for a video titled "Liposuction Journey". The "Video details" section is highlighted with a green checkmark. Three red circles highlight specific settings: "No, it's not 'Made for Kids'", "Yes, restrict my video to viewers over 18", and "My video contains paid promotion".

Video details

This video is set to not 'Made for Kids' Set by you

Regardless of your location, you're legally required to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) and/or other laws. You're required to tell us whether your videos are 'Made for Kids'. [What is 'Made for Kids' content?](#)

Features like personalised ads and notifications won't be available on videos 'Made for Kids'. Videos that are set as 'Made for Kids' by you are more likely to be recommended alongside other children's videos. [Learn more](#)

Yes, it's 'Made for Kids'

No, it's not 'Made for Kids'

Age restriction (advanced)

Do you want to restrict your video to an adult audience?

Age-restricted videos are not shown in certain areas of YouTube. These videos may have limited or no ads monetisation. [Learn more](#)

Yes, restrict my video to viewers over 18

No, don't restrict my video to viewers over 18 only

[SHOW LESS](#)

Paid promotion

If you accepted anything of value from a third party to make your video, you must let us know. We'll show viewers a message letting them that your video contains paid promotion.

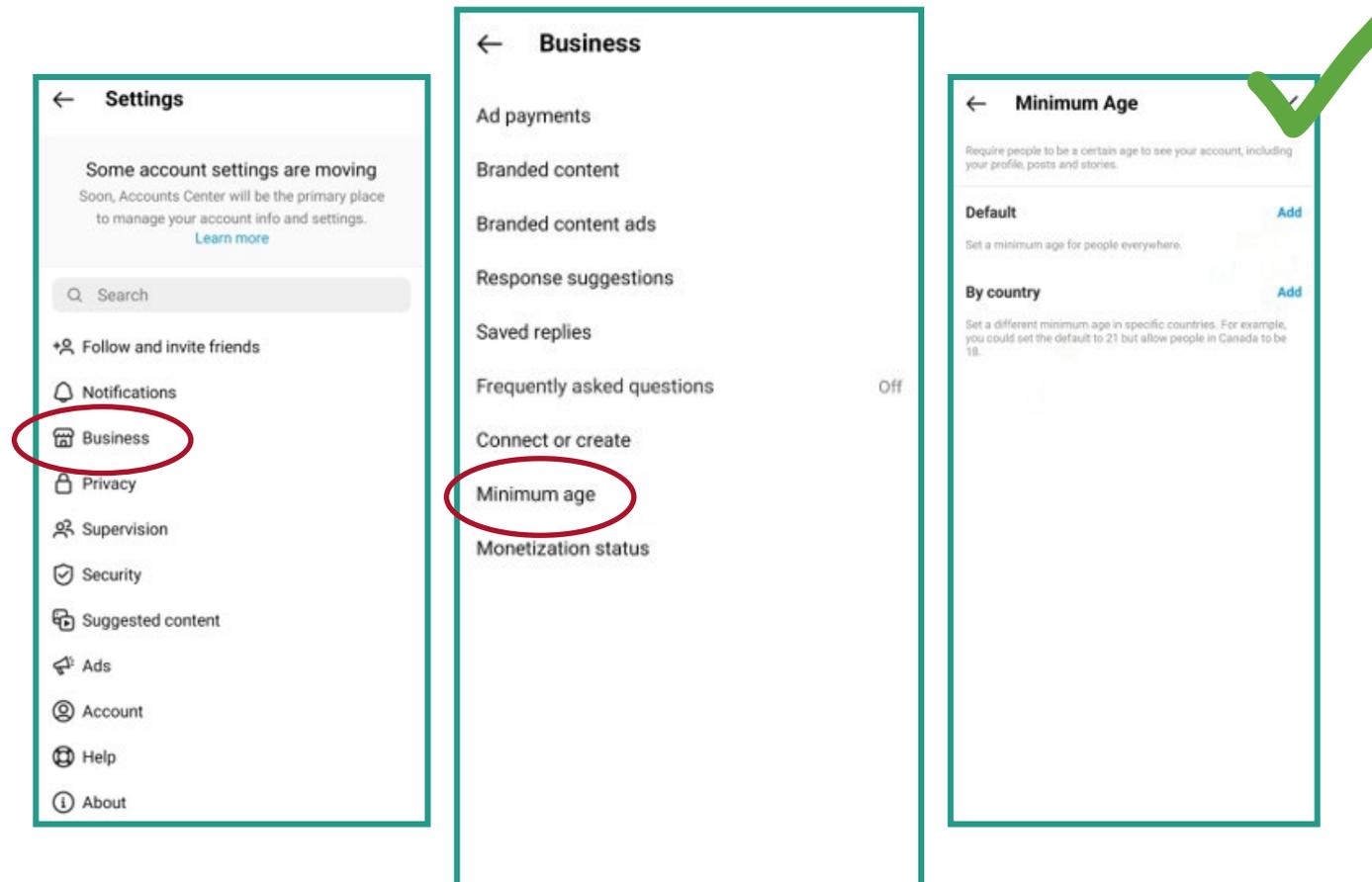
My video contains paid promotion like a product placement, sponsorship or endorsement

Every YouTube post that advertises cosmetic surgery should identify that it is not 'made for kids' and that it should be restricted to viewers over 18.

Advertising by influencers who are being paid to promote the practitioner should also tick 'paid promotion' and meet any other platform requirements.

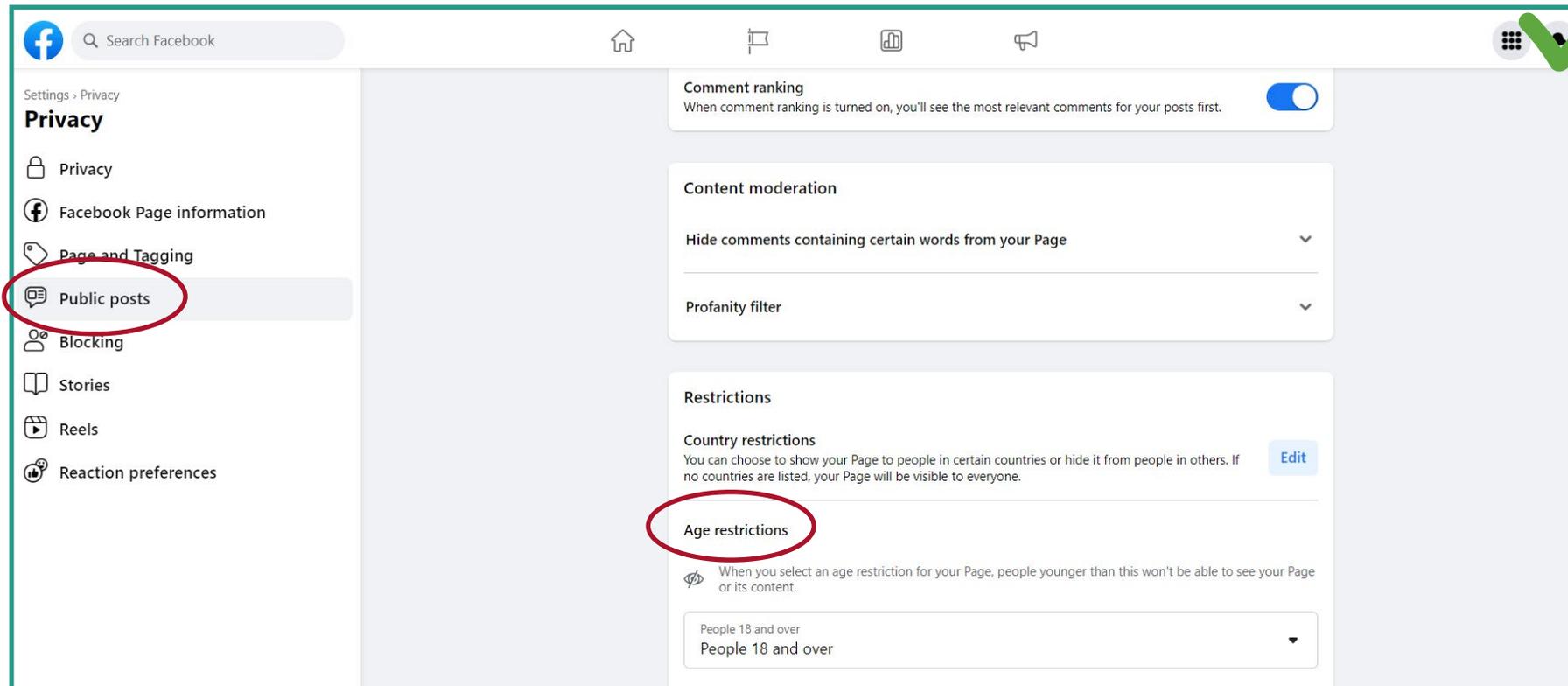
Advertising by influencers must meet the guidelines for advertising cosmetic surgery.

Identifying adult content – Instagram



Every Instagram account that advertises cosmetic surgery should identify a minimum age of 18.

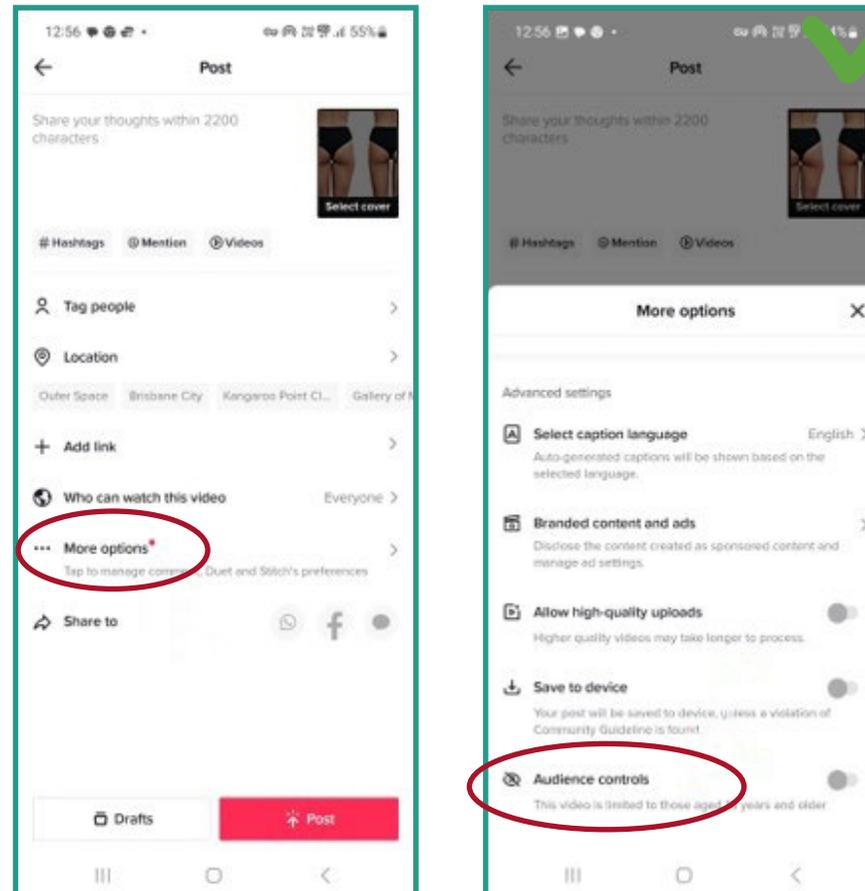
Identifying adult content – Facebook



The screenshot shows the Facebook 'Privacy' settings page. The 'Public posts' option in the left-hand menu is circled in red. In the main content area, the 'Age restrictions' section is also circled in red, showing a dropdown menu set to 'People 18 and over'. A green checkmark is visible in the top right corner of the settings area.

Every Facebook page that advertises cosmetic surgery should include an age restriction for people 18 and over.

Identifying adult content – TikTok



Every TikTok post that advertises cosmetic surgery should have audience controls activated to limit the video to those aged 18 and older.

Manage the mention and tag options – Instagram

Manage who can mention you

Your mention settings allow you to manage who can link your account in stories, comments, live videos and captions.

To update your mention settings:

1. Click  **More** in the bottom left, then click **Settings** .
2. Click **How others can interact with you**.
3. Below **Mentions**, click a circle to select who can mention you (e.g. **Everyone** or **No one**).

Manage who can tag you

Your tag settings allow you to manage who can tag your account in their photos and videos.

To update your tag settings:

1. Click  **More** in the bottom left, then click **Settings** .
2. Click **How others can interact with you**.
3. Below **Who can tag you**, click a circle to select who can tag you (e.g. **Everyone** or **No one**).

Disabling the ability for others to 'mention' or 'tag' you on Instagram reduces the likelihood of breaching the prohibition on testimonials.

Reviewing tags – Instagram



You can choose whether posts you're tagged in appear on your profile automatically or manually. When you choose to add photos and videos manually, they'll only appear on your profile after you've approved them. By default, when someone tags a photo or video of you, it will automatically be [added to your profile](#).

To manually select the photos and videos that appear on your profile:

1. Click  **More** in the bottom left, then click **Settings** .
2. Click **How others can interact with you**.
3. Below **Manually approve tags**, select **Automatically show tagged posts on your profile** or **Manually approve posts when you're tagged in them**.

If you choose to add photos and videos to your profile manually, you'll still be notified when someone tags you in a photo or video. To add that photo or video to your profile, click the photo and then click **...** in the top right. Select **Post options** and then select **Show on my profile** or **Hide on my profile**.

Learn more about how to [hide a post that you've been tagged in](#) from your profile.

Manually reviewing posts that you have been tagged in reduces the likelihood of breaching the prohibition on testimonials.

Turning off reviews – Facebook

To turn Recommendations on or off for your Page:

1. Log in to Facebook, then click your profile photo in the top right.
2. Click **See all profiles**, then select the Page that you want to switch into.
3. Click your Page's profile photo in the top right.
4. Click **Settings and privacy**, then click **Settings**.
5. Click **Privacy** in the left menu, then click **Page and tagging**.
6. Toggle **Allow others to view and leave reviews on your Page?** on or off.

Note: If your Page previously had reviews, Recommendations have been automatically turned on for your Page. If you can't find a review, check your Page's recommendations (you can filter by most recent recommendations to help you find it). If you still can't find a review or recommendation, it may have been removed because it didn't follow our [Community Standards](#).

Disabling recommendations reduces the likelihood of breaching the prohibition on testimonials.



Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

Contact Ahpra

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