



Medical Board
Ahpra

Visual examples of cosmetic surgery advertising

Context

New *Guidelines for medical practitioners who advertise cosmetic surgery* (guidelines) apply from 1 July 2023. An advance copy is available on the [Medical Board's website](#).

These [changes](#) were announced on 3 April 2023.

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

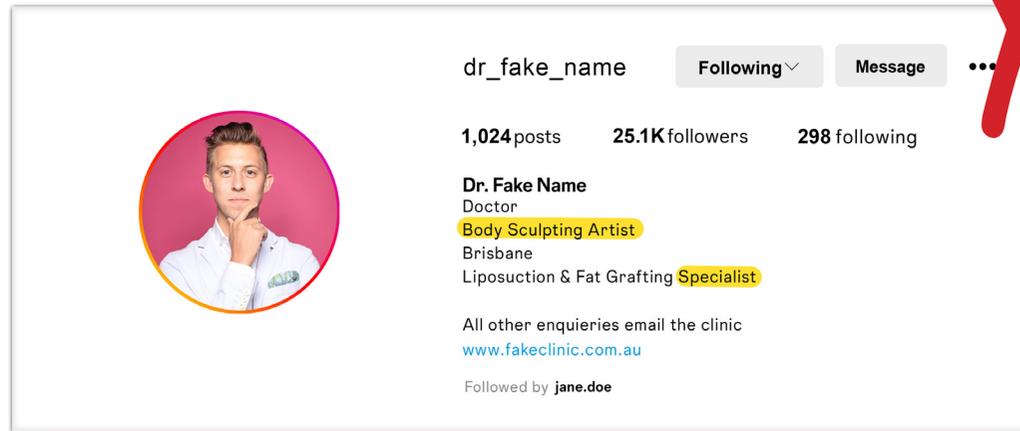
The guidelines describe responsible practice when advertising cosmetic surgery. Good practice cosmetic surgery advertising is honest, balanced, realistic, and informative. It protects the dignity of patients and does not exploit patients.

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

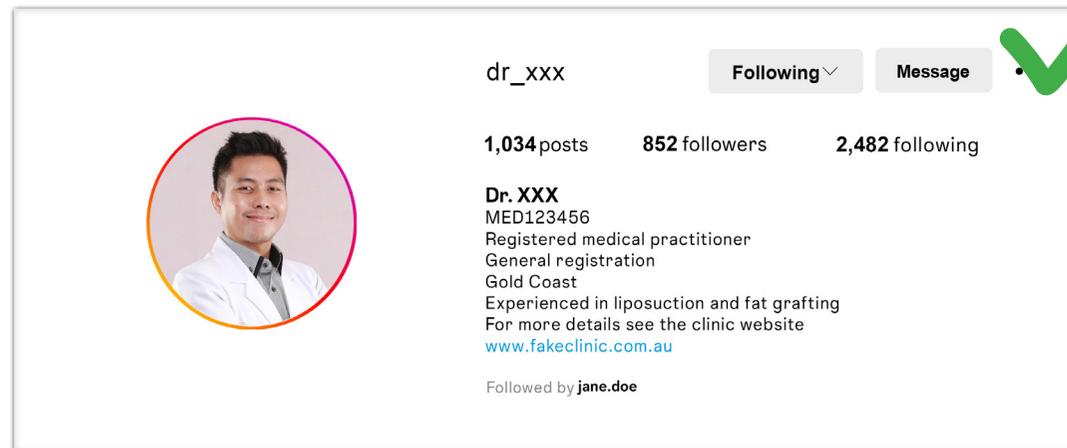
All advertising is also required to comply with the advertising requirements under the National Law and [Guidelines for advertising a regulated health service](#).

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

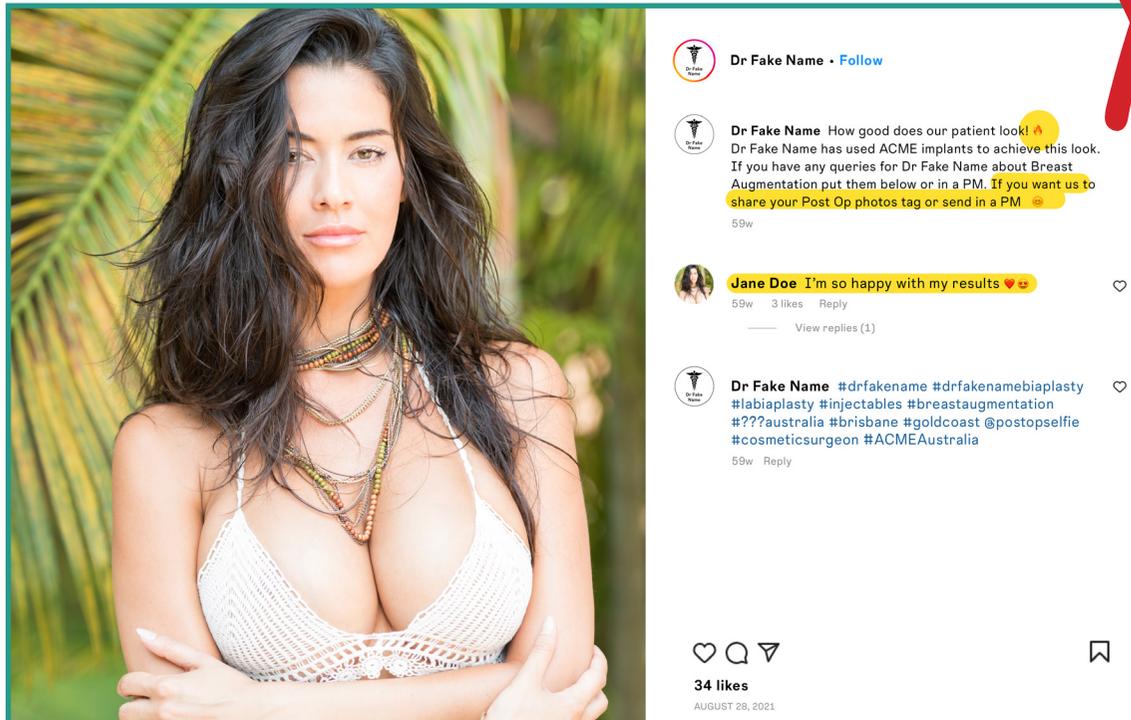


This profile does not provide the required registration information, uses terminology that trivialises cosmetic surgery and uses incorrect specialist terminology.



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

Testimonials / unreasonable expectations

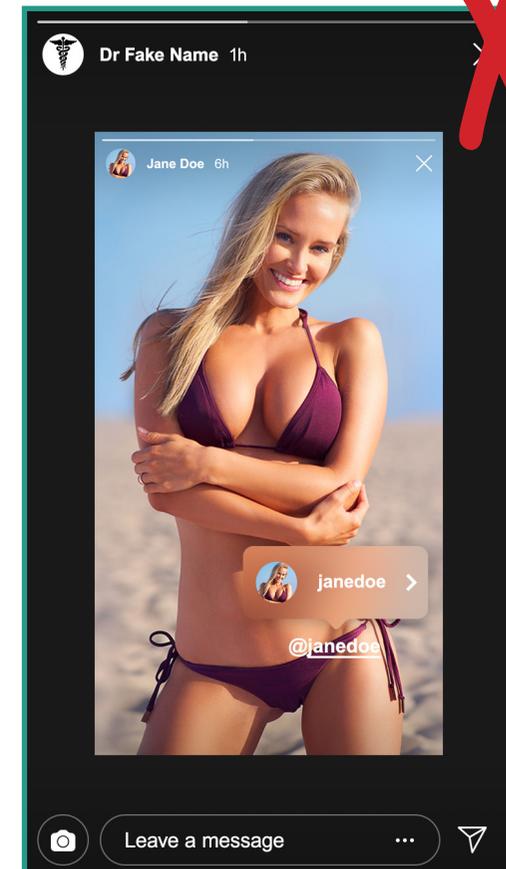


This advertising may create unreasonable expectations due to the use of a single outcome image. Other patients may not achieve similar outcomes.

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.

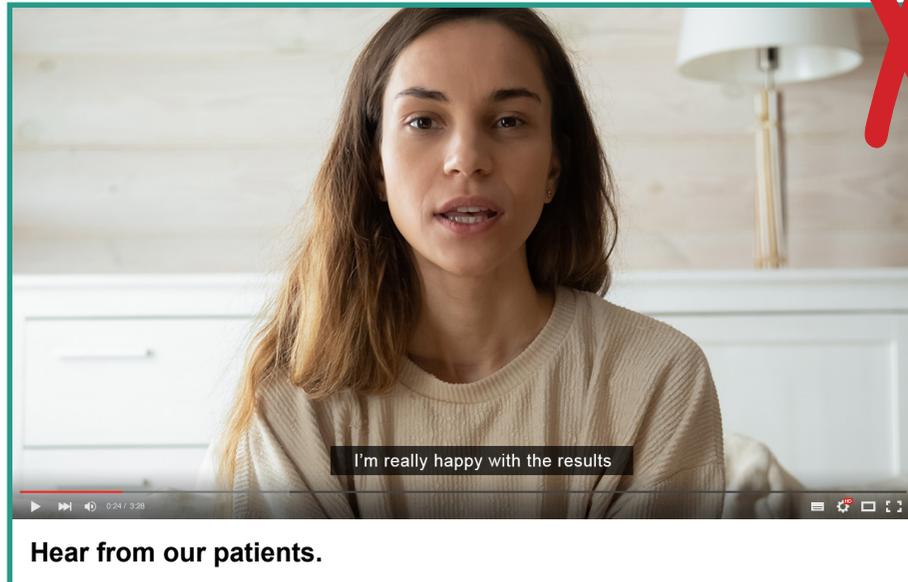
The use of questions in the post is encouraging inappropriate interaction and comment about a patient's body.



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 (MED123456) 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 the results may vary. ✓

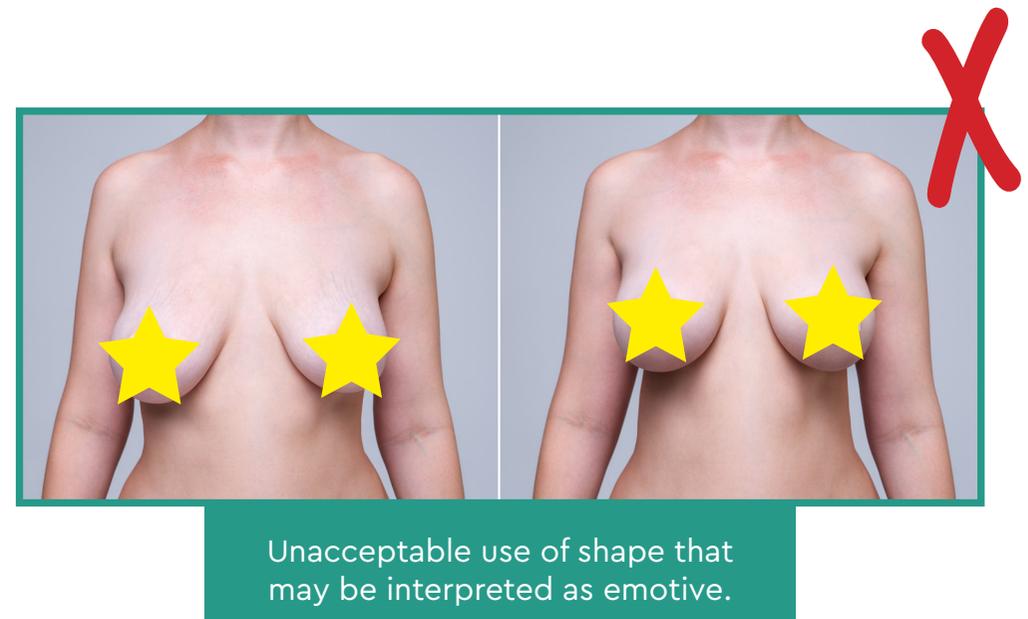
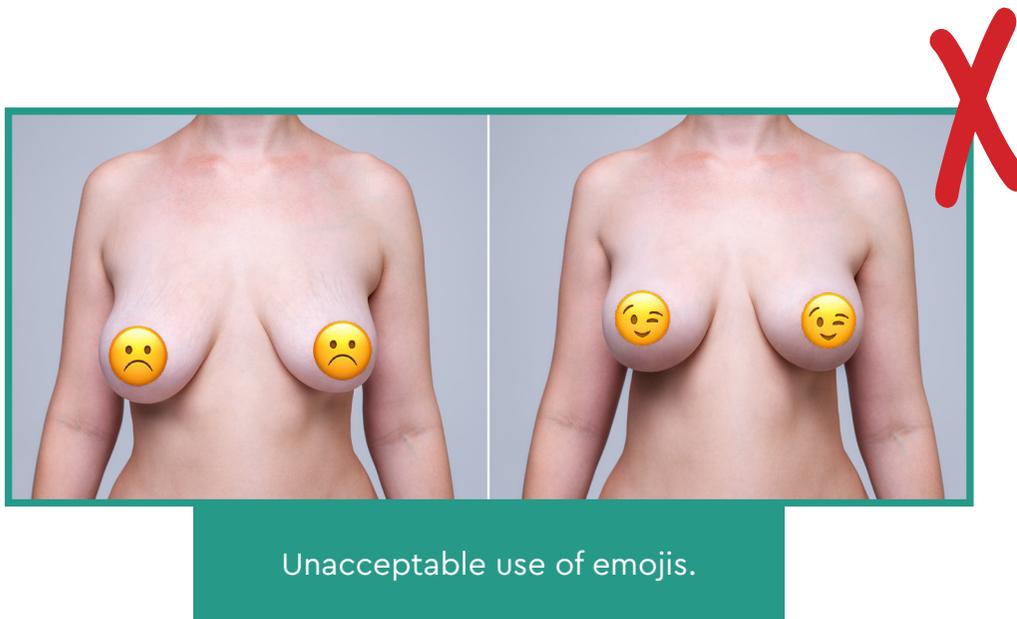
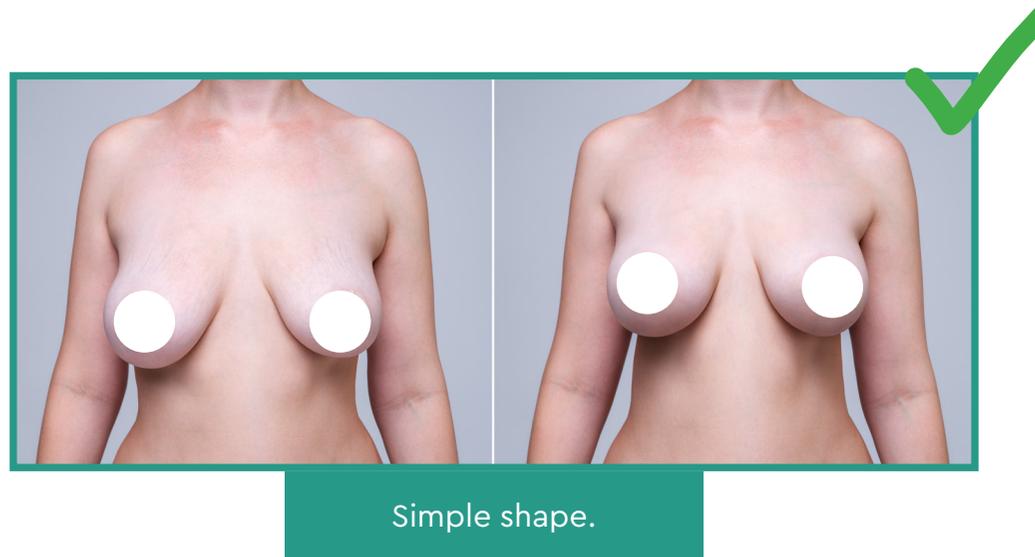
Link to information on risk and recovery. ✓

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.

Use of shapes and emojis



Unreasonable expectations

X 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.

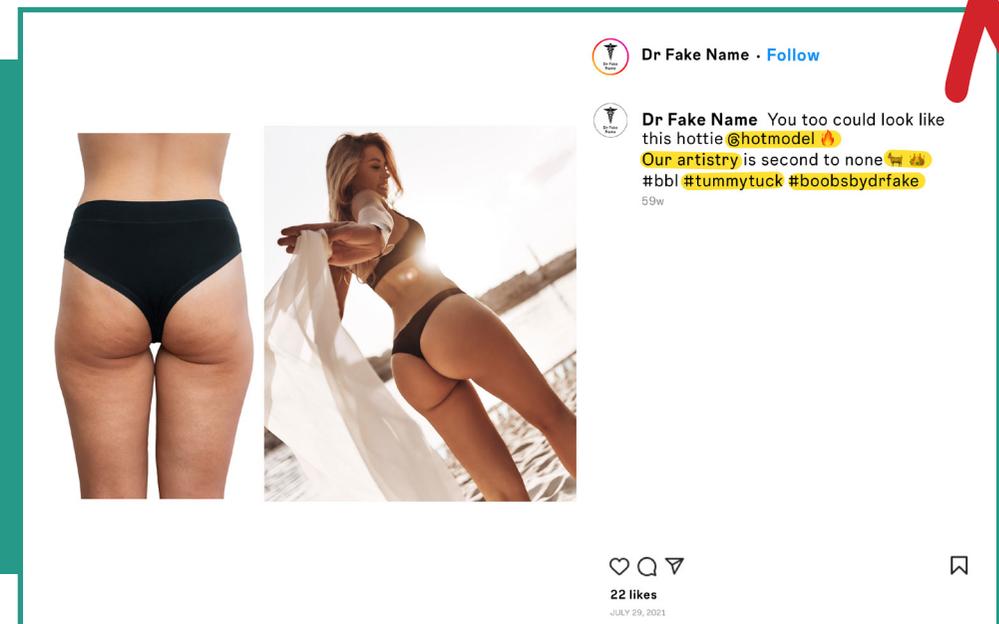
This advertising may create unreasonable expectations as the before and after photos are not in similar poses, lighting or clothing.

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.



Dr Fake Name · Follow

You too could look like this hottie @hotmodel 🍑

Our artistry is second to none 🍑🍑

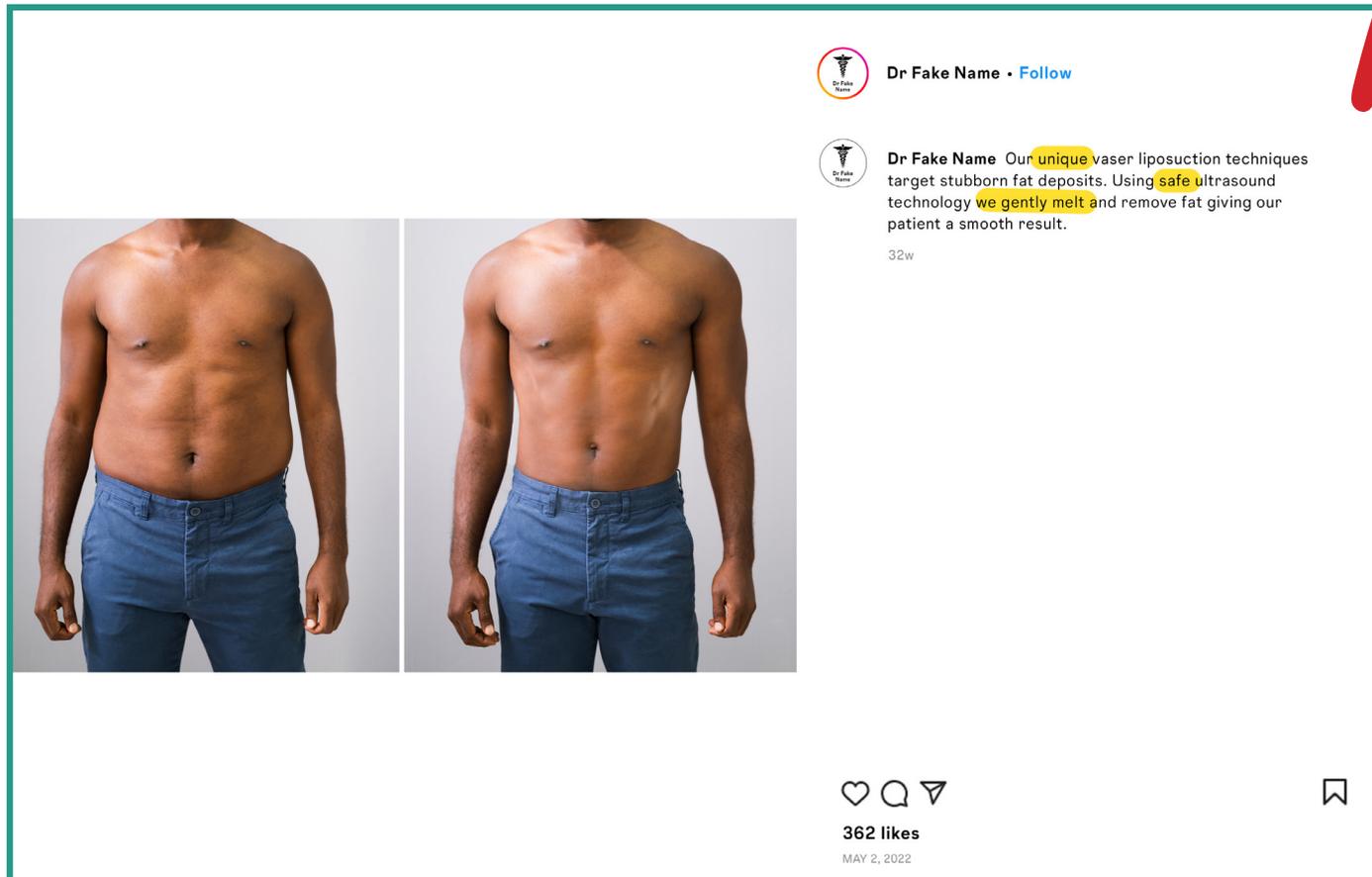
#bbl #tummytuck #boobsbydrfake

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.

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

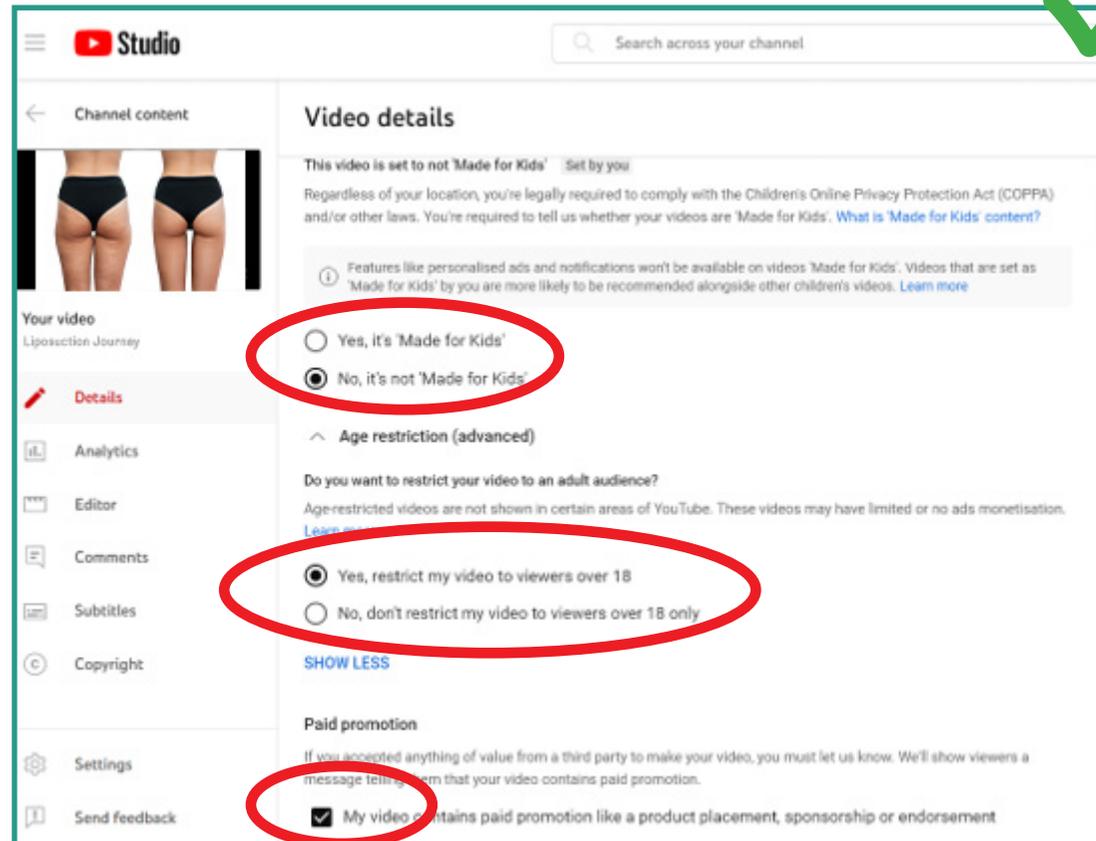
Lorem ipsum digentios que sinusam voluptur magnis as cone et prestiossit molupta spienit officabore commoluptat doluptae volupta

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.

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 in the top right corner. Three red circles highlight specific settings: the "No, it's not 'Made for Kids'" radio button, the "Yes, restrict my video to viewers over 18" radio button, and the "My video contains paid promotion" checkbox.

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.

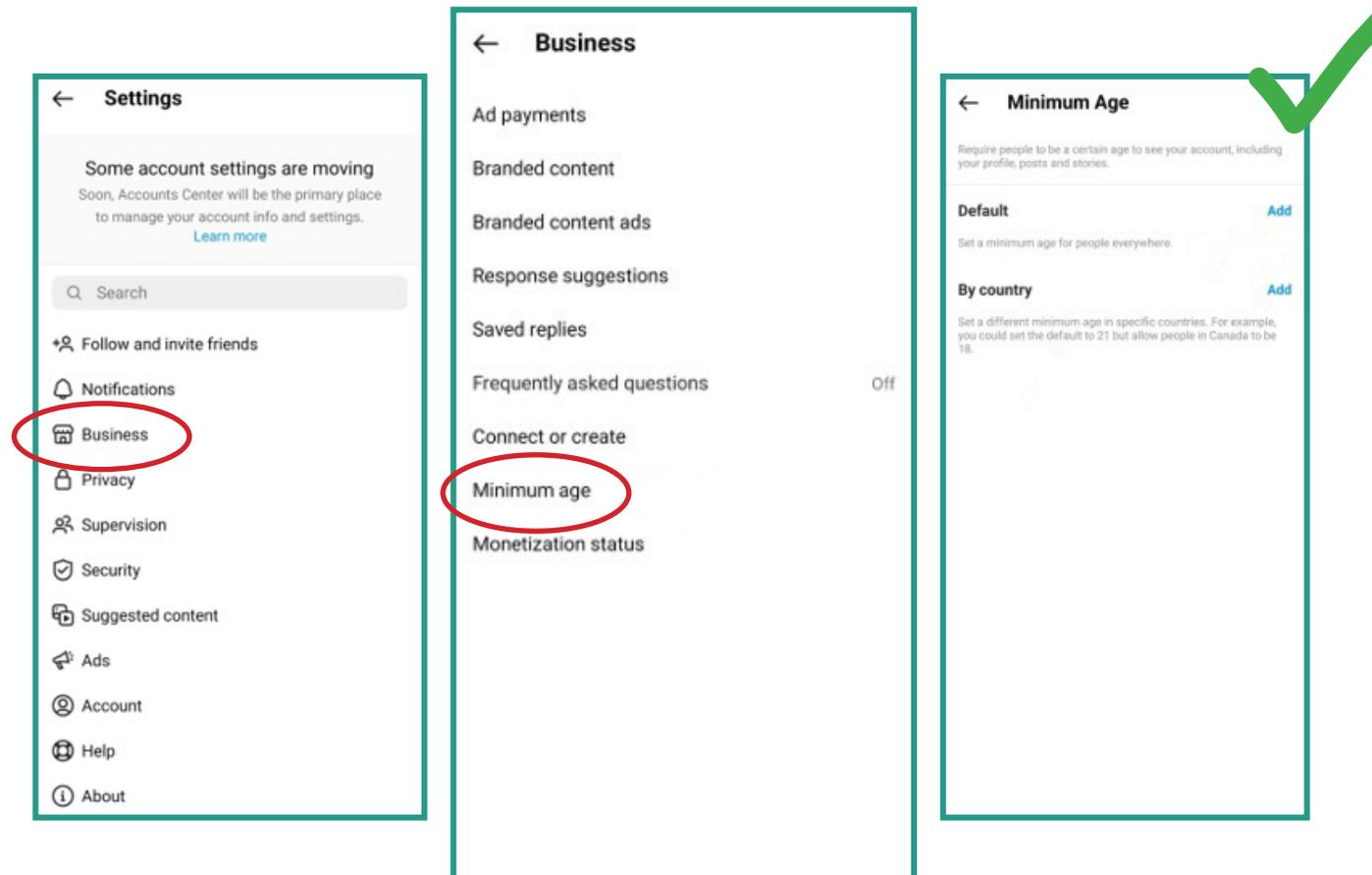
My video contains paid promotion like a product placement, sponsorship or endorsement

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.

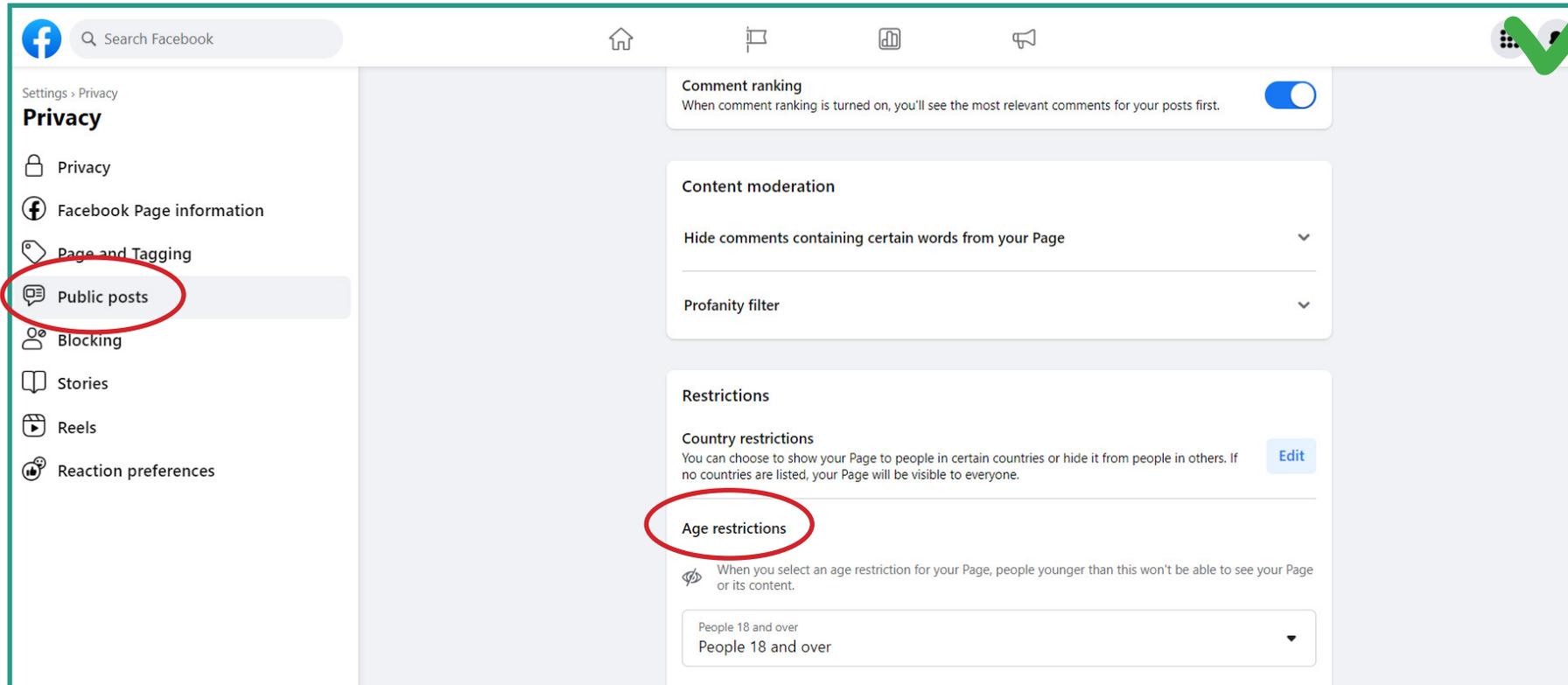
Advertising by influencers must meet the guidelines for advertising cosmetic surgery.

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 for a page. The left sidebar lists various settings, with 'Public posts' circled in red. The main content area shows 'Age restrictions' also circled in red, with a dropdown menu set to 'People 18 and over'. A green checkmark is visible in the top right corner of the settings area.

Settings > Privacy

Privacy

- Privacy
- Facebook Page information
- Page and Tagging
- Public posts**
- Blocking
- Stories
- Reels
- Reaction preferences

Comment ranking
When comment ranking is turned on, you'll see the most relevant comments for your posts first.

Content moderation

Hide comments containing certain words from your Page

Profanity filter

Restrictions

Country restrictions
You can choose to show your Page to people in certain countries or hide it from people in others. If no countries are listed, your Page will be visible to everyone. [Edit](#)

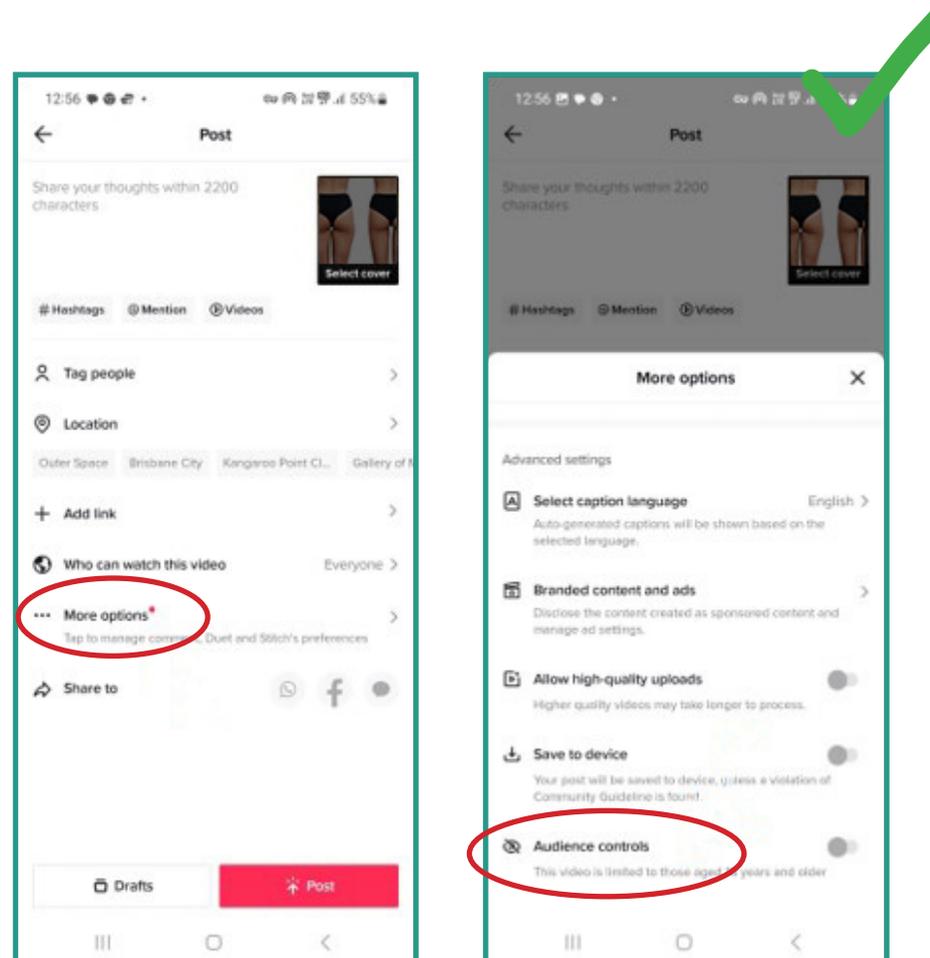
Age restrictions

When you select an age restriction for your Page, people younger than this won't be able to see your Page or its content.

People 18 and over
People 18 and over

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.



Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

Contact Ahpra

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+61 3 9125 3010 (outside Australia)

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