

# Content is King! Why Health Care Providers Should Send More Targeted Content Emails

Ways Health Systems Can Personalize Email Outreach Effectively Without Worrying About PHI



**Emilie Ansel**  
CEO  
Private Health News



**Tony Huth**  
CEO/ Co-Founder  
Medicom Health

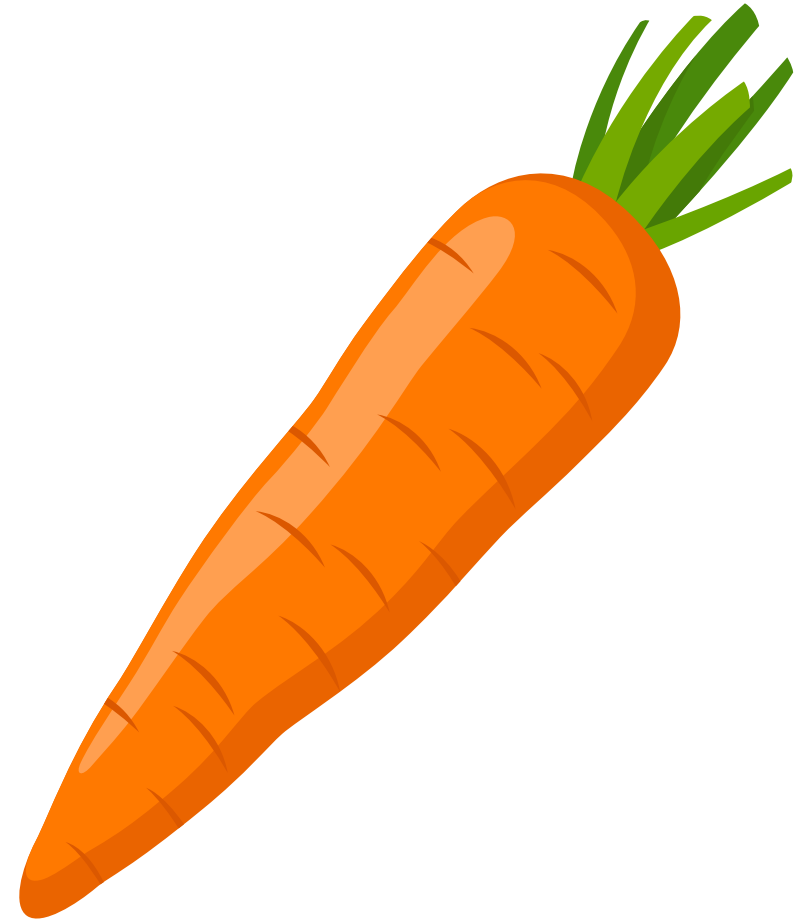
# Disclaimer

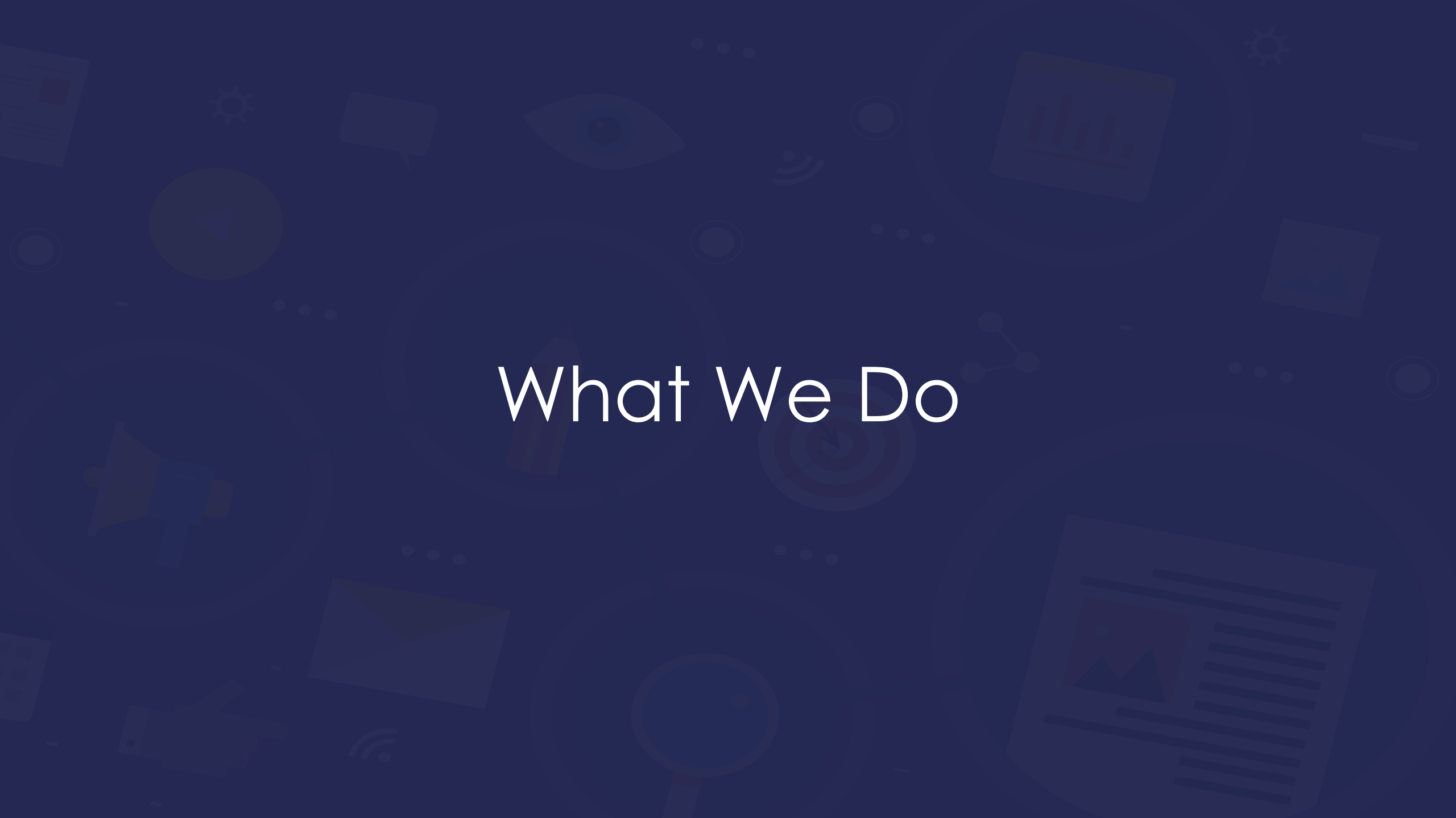
- We are not lawyers, and this is not legal advice. Be sure to consult your organization's legal resources to determine what is right for your situation.
- Note: This presentation comes from our opinions, perspectives and experience in providing marketing services to health systems, including delivering personalized emails to consumers.



## TOPICS

1. How our digital services relate to the today's topic
2. Three reasons health care providers should send targeted content emails
3. Email details
4. HIPAA & PHI
5. Opt-ins, Interests & Personalization
6. Content
7. Tips & Takeaways
8. Q&A





# What We Do



# About Private Health News

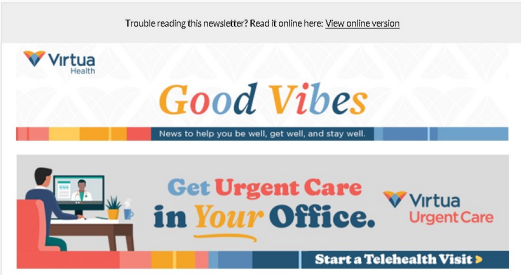
Targeted content marketing and  
communication for your key audiences



*Personalized health  
content for consumers*



*Breaking medical news and free  
CME/ CE for physicians and nurses*

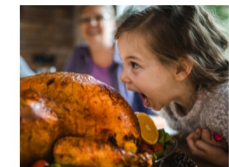


### Here to Keep Your Holidays Healthy, Happy, and Bright

Holidays make you envision picture-perfect celebrations fit for Hallmark movies and Instagram stories. But, we all know—sometime in the next few weeks, someone you love will take a tumble hanging lights, burn their hand baking cookies, or suffer tummy troubles after eating a bit too much of the turkey and trimmings.

If your holiday celebrations give you an unexpected surprise, know where to go for care—so you can get back to the festive fun!

See how we can help you get to the right place at the right time to get the care you need.



#### Resources to Help You Have a Healthy Holiday

- [COMFORTing Tips to Avoid Holiday Heartburn](#)
- [How to Tell the Difference Between Cold, Flu, and COVID-19](#)
- [7 Tips to Help You Stay Strong Against COVID-19](#)
- [Cooking From the Heart: Recipe for a Healthy Holiday](#)

Dear Emilie,  
Below are the articles for the health topics you have chosen.

[EDIT YOUR TOPICS](#)

### Anxiety and Depression



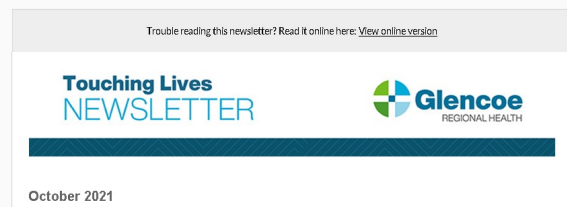
**Stopping Antidepressants Raises Relapse Risk**  
People who stop taking antidepressants after long-time use may face a high likelihood of spiraling into depression again, a new study suggests.

[READ MORE](#)



**'Personalized' Brain Zaps May Ease Tough-to-Treat Depression**  
Imagine battling debilitating depression for years, trying everything but finding little or no relief.

[READ MORE](#)



Anytime is the right time for early detection of breast cancer. But during the month of October it's time to "Think Pink" and schedule your mammogram at Glencoe Regional Health.

After you complete your mammogram during the month of October, you'll receive a **gift bag** at your appointment and you will be entered into our **drawing** to win a fabulous prize!

Convenient evening appointments are offered five nights in October. Appointments are required. Upon arrival, **use the hospital entrance** and check in with the reception desk.

October 4, 11, 14, 20, 26  
4 – 8 p.m.

Call 320-864-7080 to schedule your mammogram today!

Dear Emilie,  
Below are the articles for the health topics you have chosen.

[EDIT YOUR TOPICS](#)

### Blood Pressure



**A Little Wine & Certain Foods Could Help Keep Blood Pressure Healthy**  
An apple and a pear a day may help keep blood pressure under control—a benefit partly explained by gut bacteria, a new study suggests.

[READ MORE](#)



**4-in-1 Blood Pressure Pill Could Improve Outcomes**  
A four-in-one pill containing "ultra-low doses" of different medications can provide better blood pressure control than standard drug treatment, a new clinical trial from Australia shows.

[READ MORE](#)

### Breast Cancer



**Exercise Could Help Fight 'Chemo Brain' in Breast Cancer Patients**  
For breast cancer patients battling "chemo brain," regular exercise may be a powerful prescription, a new study suggests.

[READ MORE](#)



### SameDay Care Online Scheduling Available



We know your life is busy. That's why we offer SameDay Care online scheduling.

See us for sprains, ear aches, sore throats, and other minor illnesses and injuries. On site x-ray and 24 hour lab access is available, plus the added resources of over 50 specialty departments of the Billings Clinic. [Learn more and schedule your SameDay Care appointment online.](#)

If you believe you have been exposed and are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough and/or shortness of breath), please call (406) 255-8400 for instructions.

Dear Emilie,  
Below are the articles for the health topics you have chosen.

[EDIT YOUR TOPICS](#)

### Alzheimer's Disease

#### 2021 Walk to End Alzheimer's



Billings Clinic is a proud sponsor. Join us:

Sunday, September 19 • Registration begins at 1 pm  
Rocky Mountain College, 1511 Poly Dr.  
Billings, MT

[Register online](#) and get more information.



**1 in 20 Cases of Dementia Occurs in People Under 65**  
Dementia is largely a disease of old age, but a new study finds that up to 5% of all cases are among people in the prime of their lives.

[READ MORE](#)



**'Light Flash' Treatment Might Help Slow Alzheimer's**  
While efforts to develop Alzheimer's medications have so far borne little fruit, new research highlights the therapeutic promise of two non-drug tools: light and sound.

[READ MORE](#)

### Blood Pressure



**High Blood Pressure: Which Drug Works Best for You?**  
Two long used types of blood pressure drugs are equally effective, but the less popular one seems to have fewer side effects, according to a large "real-world" study.

[READ MORE](#)



## Subscriber Registration

Please select your topics of interest:



Select All Topics



Allergy



Alzheimer's Disease



Arthritis



Asthma



Blood Pressure



Breast Cancer



Cancer



Depression



Diabetes



Exercise / Fitness



Female Urological Disorders



Fertility



Gastrointestinal Health



Healthy Diet



Heart Disease



Integrative Medicine



Menopause



Men's Health



Neurology



Orthopedics



Parenting



Pediatrics



Pregnancy



Senior Caregiving



Seniors' Health



Skin Health



Sleep Disorders



Sports Medicine



Vision



Weight Management

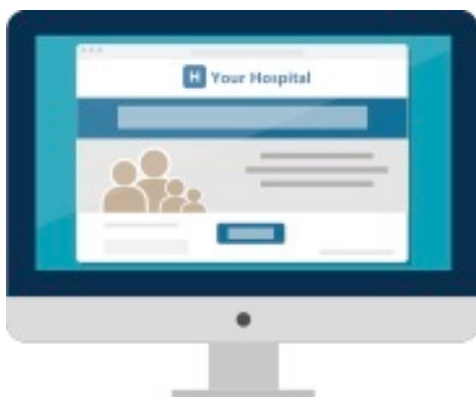


Women's Health



Women's Heart Health

# Personalized Email Workflow



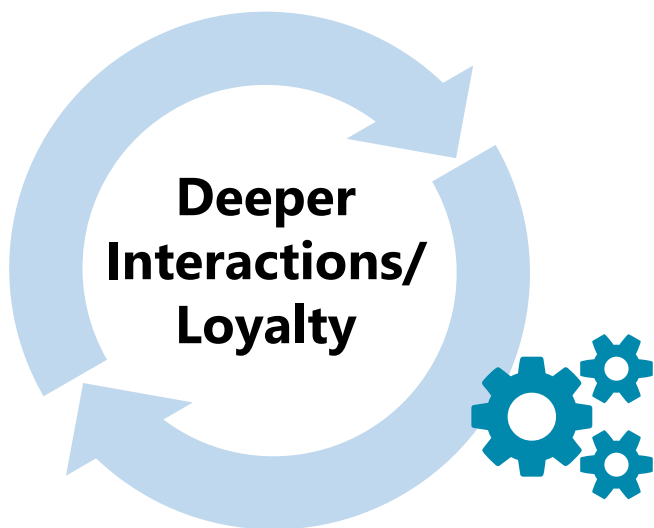
Up to 10 post-completion emails  
(transactional)


**Subscriber Registration**

Please select your topics of interest:

<input type="checkbox"/> Select All Topics	<input type="checkbox"/> Allergy	<input type="checkbox"/> Alzheimer's Disease	<input type="checkbox"/> Arthritis	<input type="checkbox"/> Asthma
<input type="checkbox"/> Blood Pressure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Breast Cancer	<input type="checkbox"/> Cancer	<input type="checkbox"/> Depression	<input type="checkbox"/> Fertility
<input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes	<input type="checkbox"/> Exercise / Fitness	<input type="checkbox"/> Female Urological Disorders	<input type="checkbox"/> Heart Disease	<input type="checkbox"/> Integrative Medicine
<input type="checkbox"/> Gastrointestinal Health	<input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Diet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neurology	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Orthopedics	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Caregiving
<input type="checkbox"/> Menopause	<input type="checkbox"/> Men's Health	<input type="checkbox"/> Pediatrics	<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy	<input type="checkbox"/> Sports Medicine
<input type="checkbox"/> Parenting	<input type="checkbox"/> Skin Health	<input type="checkbox"/> Sleep Disorders	<input type="checkbox"/> Women's Health	<input type="checkbox"/> Women's Heart Health
<input type="checkbox"/> Seniors' Health	<input type="checkbox"/> Weight Management			
<input type="checkbox"/> Vision				

Receive on-going content emails





Why should health care  
providers send targeted  
content emails?

# 1. Because it's a key part of content marketing that consumers expect today.

- Consumers crave content, more than ever before.
- Many consumers are passive, not actively looking for your services, but open to exploring them if compelling messaging is pushed their way.
- They are always connected, and they expect decent, relevant content to be PUSHED to them on a routine basis.



## 2. Because health care providers are equipped to do this very well.

- Health providers are trusted.
- Health is important to people, so they are intrinsically motivated and invested.
- Providers have the data to do personalization well.
- Plenty of topics and quality content is available.





### 3. Because it works (in relationship to cost)

- The largest, most successful retailers rely on it.
- Just look at your inbox.
- Even impressions have some value.
- Years of research says it does. (Google it.)





# Big Consumer Brands Fill Your Inbox

- They monitor your interactions with them, then drip messaging and calls-to-action about related topics of interest that drive more revenue.
- They know that digital relationships are REAL relationships today. They know they need to keep buying opportunities in front of you for more chances to align with need or impulse.
- Yes, they go too far, but there are lessons there.

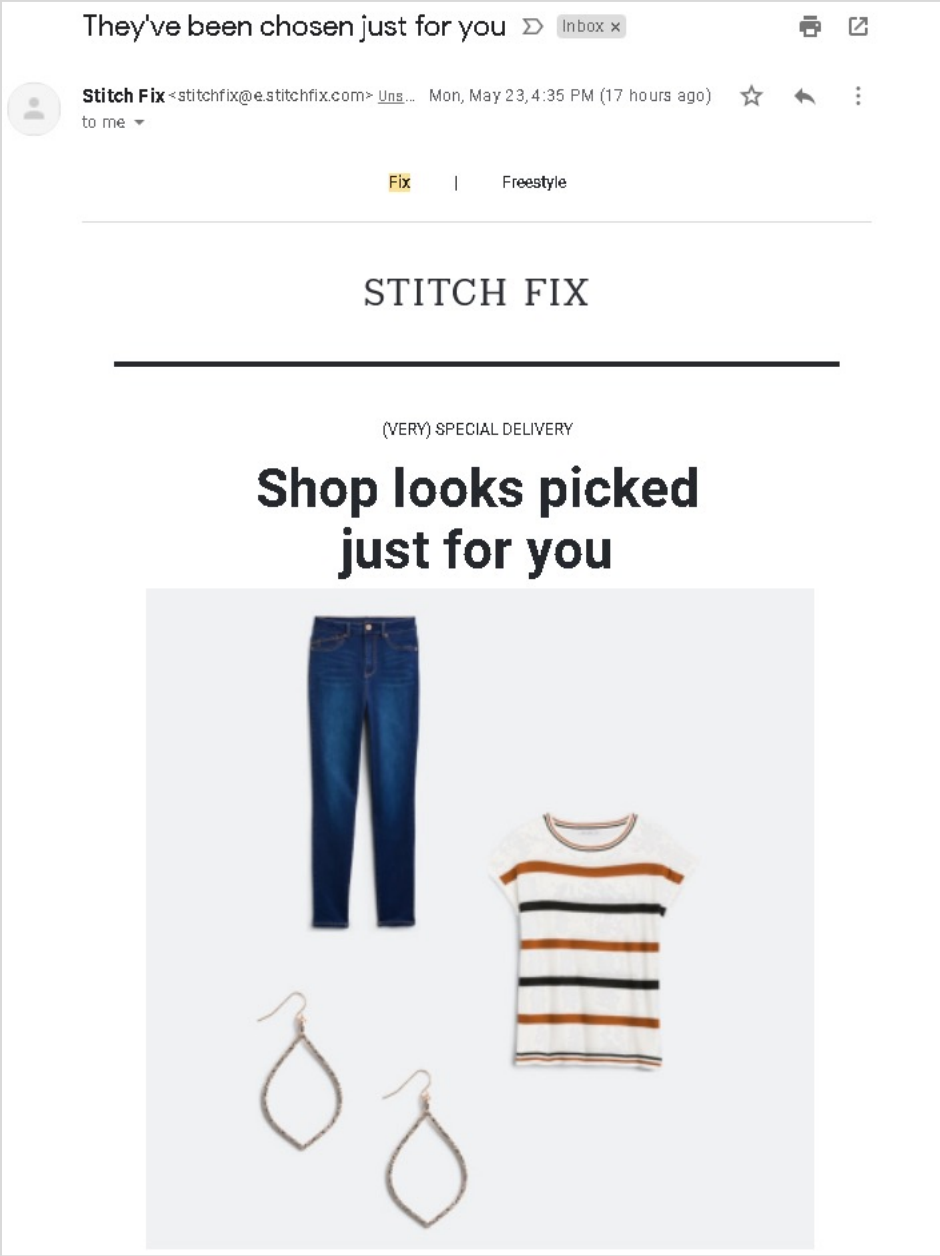


Etsy

ebay



# Example 1



# Example 2

Free shipping\* on all orders!

Refer & Get 15% | Sign Up / Login

Ruggable

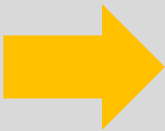

Runner, Marvel, Star Wars, Blue.


SizeColorsStyleMoreHow It Works


Washable Rugs  
for Every Space


SHOP ALL RUGS


FIND YOUR PERFECT RUG




































Ruggable

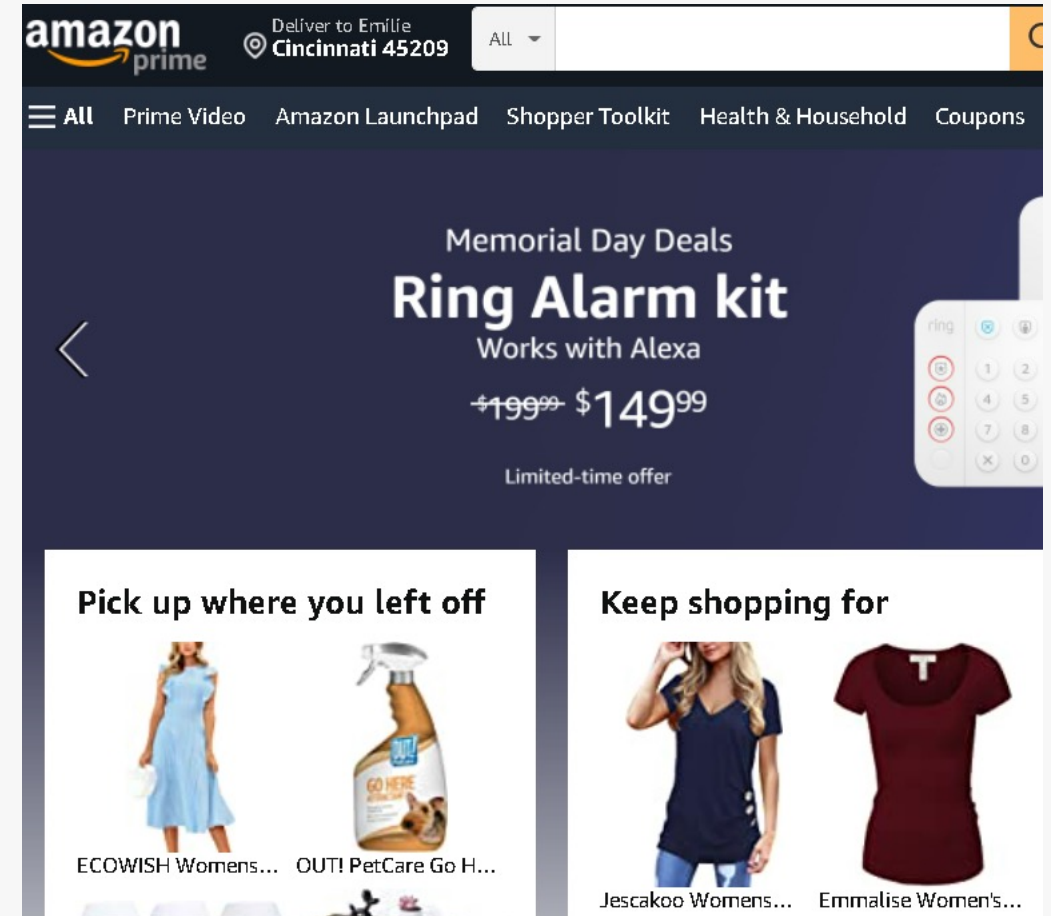
Sponsored ·

The best rugs for dogs. Go washable.



# Example 3

amazon





# Real-World Example – No Emails

**I haven't had a physical in years and I am overdue for a colonoscopy. I know this.**

- I've never got an email prompting me to do these things, or really anything, even though my provider is also my insurer– they are presumably doubly invested in my preventative care.
- I've also never expressed that I would NOT be open to such communication.
- Why is this not happening?



**Tony**  
Age 51



# Real-World Example (cont'd)

**The only thing worse than no email outreach is woefully off-target outreach.**

Not only does this NOT resonate with me, a 50+ yr.-old male, but it makes me question their competency and wastes a slot for content I may have found valuable.

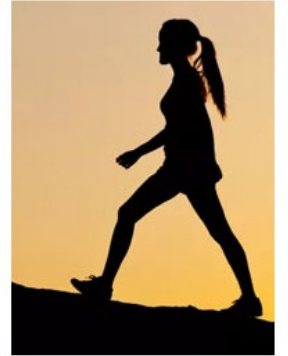
This could be easily avoided.

## TIP OF THE WEEK

### Secrets to Walk off Weight

Sometimes a short stroll is all you need to start dropping pounds. Maximize your walk with these smart moves that keep the scale going in the right direction.

4 GREAT WAYS



### Healthy Vagina Rules

Ladies, you may be hurting yourself down there without even knowing it! Check out these must-follow tips.

10 EASY TIPS

### Top Diet Tricks

Which popular diet is best? Why not steal from all of them! Here are the tweaks you should try.

5 TAKEAWAYS



### Best Moves for RA

A little exercise can go a long way for people with rheumatoid arthritis. Try these to soothe stiffness.

STAY IN SHAPE

IN THE SHARECARE SPOTLIGHT

@sharecare

"Get younger with this free mobile app from my friends at Sharecare"

- Dr. Mehmet Oz

DOWNLOAD FOR FREE!

App Store Google play



# Follow-Up Emails (Transactional)

## Hand-raisers

- If a consumers signals you, they expect timely, relevant follow-up. A simple transactional email works for this.
- They expect you to care about their wishes and act on them. Don't miss the opportunity for easy conversions.
- Pair these transactional emails with continued, related content email nurturing based on the interaction.





# Nurturing Emails

Most health care consumers are open to receiving health content from their provider, even unsolicited, if it makes sense for them and treads lightly on selling services.

- Examples:
  - Personalized newsletters
  - Health awareness month content
  - Check-up or screening suggestions
  - Facility news for their area, etc.



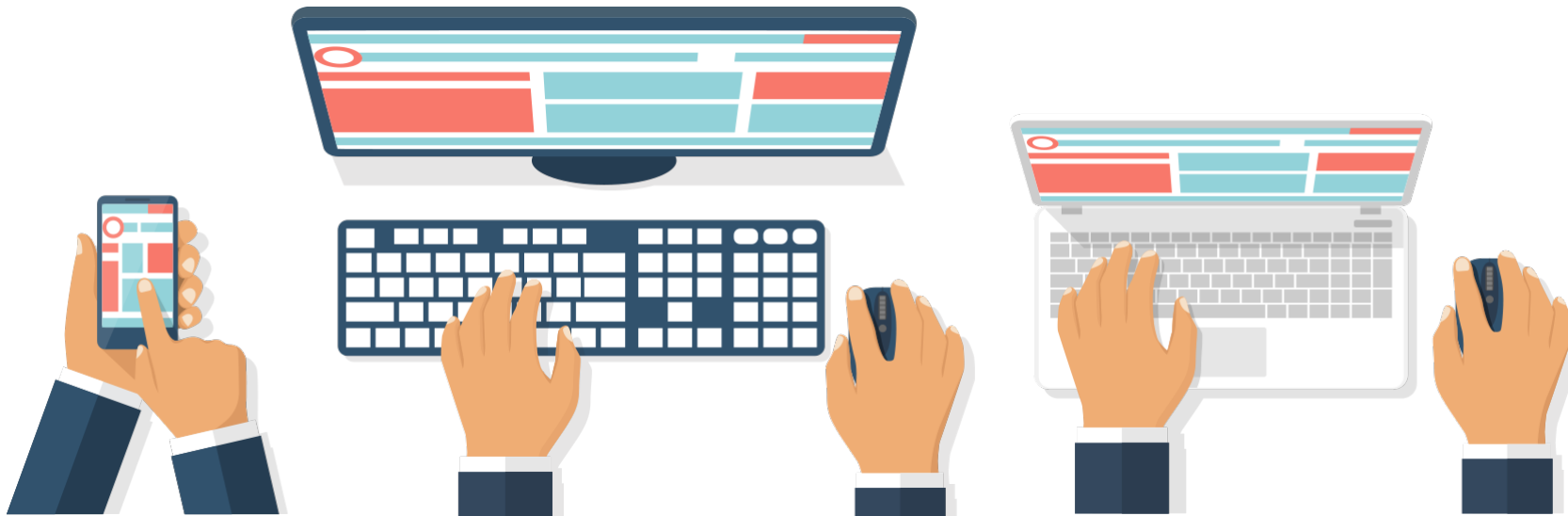
# Nurturing Emails (cont'd)

- The more personalized, the better.
- A regular cadence of outreach also demonstrates your commitment.
- Should be mostly content
- Can have some conversion CTAs
- Try to not be too “sales-y.”
- Easy, granular unsubscribe preferences



# Email Advantages

- Cheap
- Easy/Fast
- Trackable
- Repeatable
- Scalable
- Flexible
- Improvable
- Expected
- Efficient
- Multi-channel
- Passive audiences
- A/B tests



# Basic Email Recipe

- Email address
- User agreements, marketing opt-in, emails list opt-in / form fill
- Targeting data
  - Demographic data
  - Expressed interest
  - Implied interest (interactivity)
  - EHR data (advanced)
- Personalized Content
- CTA / Conversion
- Tracking & Reporting







# HIPAA, PHI & Marketing Opt-Ins

# HIPAA & PHI – Safeguarding PHI

HIPAA requires providers (called *covered entities*) and their *business associates* (covered by a BA Agreement) to **safeguard** *protected health information (PHI)*.

*PHI* is health data created by HIPAA-covered entities and their business associates in relation to *providing healthcare*.

PHI includes all *individually identifiable* health information, including demographic data, medical histories, test results, insurance information, and other information used to identify a patient or provide healthcare services or healthcare coverage.





# HIPAA & PHI – 18 identifiers

- Names (Full or last name and initial)
- Geographical identifiers smaller than a state, except for first 3 digits of zip
- Dates (other than year) directly related to an individual
- Phone Numbers
- Fax numbers
- Email addresses
- Social Security numbers
- Medical record numbers
- Health insurance beneficiary numbers
- Account numbers
- Certificate/license numbers
- Vehicle identifiers (including serial numbers and license plate numbers)
- Device identifiers and serial numbers;
- Web Uniform Resource Locators (URLs)
- Internet Protocol (IP) address numbers
- Biometric identifiers, including finger, retinal and voice prints
- Full face photographic images and any comparable images
- Any other unique identifying number, characteristic



# Clarification

Just because you must safeguard this data that was collected while providing care does not mean you cannot **use it for communication**.

HIPAA allows for **non-marketing** use and **marketing use** with written opt-in.

It also does not preclude similar data from being collected through NON-CLINICAL means, not bound by HIPAA regulations.



# Marketing Communication with PHI (HHS.gov)

## Yes, you can use PHI for marketing communication...

HIPAA requires individual written authorization before protected health information can be used for marketing communication. Marketing communications are distinguished from communications about goods and services essential for quality health care.

- **Example:** A communication from a hospital informing former patients about a cardiac facility, that is not part of the hospital, that can provide a baseline EKG for \$39, when the communication is not for providing treatment advice.



# Non-Marketing Communication with PHI

**Providers don't need individual authorization for non-marketing use.**

In addition to other more clearly clinical use cases, a communication is “non-marketing” if it describes a health-related product or service (or payment for such product or service) that is supplied by a care provider.

- **Example:** A hospital uses its patient list to announce the arrival of a new specialty group (e.g., orthopedic) or the acquisition of new equipment (e.g., x-ray machine or magnetic resonance image machine) through a general mailing or publication.
- **Example:** A health plan sends a mailing to subscribers approaching Medicare eligible age with materials describing its Medicare supplemental plan and an application form.

# Data Gathered via Marketing Interactions

Data gathered in non-clinical interactions, like on your website via form fills, or an HRA or a communications preference page, etc. can be a legal “gray area.”

Some providers do not *always* consider this data to be PHI, but most do. Responsible vendors will use an abundance of caution, treating it as PHI. Whether providers sometimes, always or never do is up to them.

If you want to be legally safe and considerate, include clearly HIPAA-compliant opt-in mechanisms. As always, consult your in-house counsel for guidance.





Legal & Compliance

Configuration  
options

## Marketing Opt-In Consent

### Indicate how to gather marketing opt-in consent from users.

- ☐ User agreement contains marketing opt-in consent or marketing opt-in not required
- ☒ Present marketing opt-in checkbox on contact form (pre-checked) - implied consent with opt-out
- ☐ Present marketing opt-in checkbox on contact form (not checked) - opt-in
- ☐ Present and require marketing opt-in checkbox on contact form (pre-checked) - implied consent required
- ☐ Present and require marketing opt-in checkbox on contact form (not checked) - opt-in required

### Marketing opt-in checkbox label

- ☒ Use Default Label
- ☐ Use Custom Label

I opt-in to receive marketing communications

44/80

### Treat follow up emails as...

- ☒ Operational (sent regardless of opt-in)
- ☐ Marketing (sent only to users who opt-in)

### Example

☒ I opt-in to receive marketing communications

☒ Email me a copy of my report

Next ►

◀ Back

©2020 Medicom Health

About | Contact

Preview of  
what a user  
will see with  
these options  
selected.

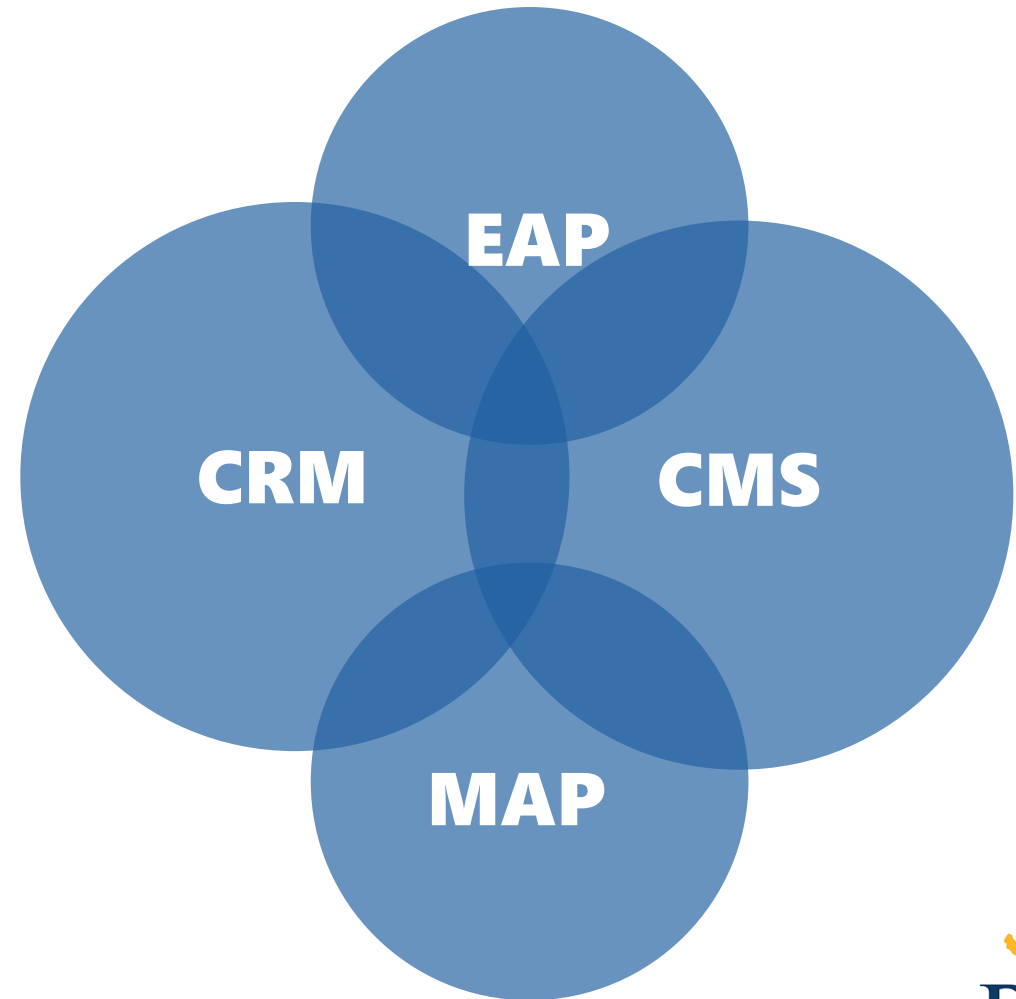
Over the years we have seen every variety of request from health system legal depts. for how their **Marketing Opt-ins** appear in our HRAs and their interplay with other compliance settings. Currently, there are 9 different controls just for this. And a similar amount of interrelated **User Agreement** and **Phone Call Opt-in** controls.



# Personalization

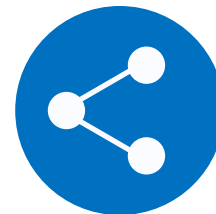
# Typical MarTech Functions

- Customer relationship manager
- Marketing automation platform
- Email automation platform
- Content management system



# Potential Data Inputs

- Patient registration
- Call center
- Billing systems
- Patient portal registration
- Appointment scheduling
- Information requests
- Screening registration
- Online health risk assessments
- Classes and event registration
- Mobile app registration
- E-Newsletter registration & interests
- Some social media interaction
- Online chat communications
- Financial giving





# Personalization - Demographics

- Even simple demographics are powerful for meaningful personalization.
- A little goes a long way if you have not been doing any personalization.
- Health reminders based on H1H/CDC guidelines typically require age & gender



# Personalization – Interest

## **Expressed interest**

Example: A form with checkboxes to “sign-up” for topics of interest

## **Implied interest**

Based on the content one consumed on the website, usually you can assume there is interest in that topic.

## **Extrapolated interest**

You could infer that interest in weight loss might carry over to interest in diet or exercise topics.





# What Makes Content Effective?



- **Current**  
No content over 30-60 days old
- **Widely Sourced**  
Sourced from a variety of publications & sources
- **Trustworthy**  
Where it comes from matters
- **Personalized**  
Right content in front of the right person

# Benefits of Personalization

A survey conducted by Researchscape found that 63% of respondents reported increased conversion rates as the top benefit from using personalization.

- ✓ Helps develop consumer trust by enabling more contextual content
- ✓ Increases engagement with consumers across your system
- ✓ Promotes positive behavior change and outcomes
- ✓ Increases loyalty and nurtures long-term patient relationships
- ✓ Becomes a cost-effective initiative when combined with efficient tools



63%

# Sample Stats



86%

of consumers said that personalization influenced what they purchase to some extent, a figure that includes **25% who said that personalization significantly influences what they purchase.**

60%

or more of shoppers say they find it appealing when an online store remembers their personal and payment information to speed up a purchase.

99%

of marketers surveyed said personalization was important to the long-term growth of their brand. **83% said it was extremely or very important.**

*According to MarketingProfs, businesses that personalize web experiences see an average 19% increase in sales.*

# Content Increases Retention

**\$1.4M**

Lifetime Value in  
healthcare per family

**\$600K+**

Lifetime Value of a  
single patient

**5-10x**

The Hospital cost to  
acquire a new patient than  
to retain

Retention is cheaper than acquisition.

A **5%** increase in loyalty = **25-100%** increase in net profit.

# Content Challenges

## **Content creation can be a grind.**

- Deciding on topics
- Time/cost to create and distribute
- Consistency, quality
- Opportunity costs





# Shortcuts

## **Buy content, don't build it**

- Your expertise is better spent elsewhere
- Tweak, edit, customize, but don't create from scratch

## **Repurpose it everywhere**

- Re-use content in multiple channels: Newsletters, blogs, emails, postcards, etc.

## **Cross-market**

- Example: Promote HRAs in e-Newsletters, promote e-Newsletter sign-ups in HRAs





# Tips & Takeaways

# Personalized email content

It's a very powerful concept, but difficult to do well. It typically involves lots of separate systems that must be coordinated.

It's a continuum. You will always be striving to increase the depth of personalization in your marketing efforts.



# Key Takeaways

- Just do it! Don't let Great be the enemy of Good.
- Start as small as you can. Define your goals. Learn lessons as you go. Don't be afraid to fail.
- Get your Marketing Opt-in particulars defined and implemented if it is not already.
- Try to understand what your audience wants.
- Trust your gut and your common sense.
- Look for help. Don't do it all yourself. Ask the experts.
- Leverage automation and external resources.







**Emilie Ansel**

*CEO, Private Health News*

513.731.6700 ext. 41

[eanse1@privatehealthnews.com](mailto:eanse1@privatehealthnews.com)



*Personalized health  
content for consumers*

