Today’s piece was prepared by Priya Saha, MD, based on a New York Times article [Doctors on TikTok Try to Go Viral](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/31/health/tiktok-doctors-sex-ed.html).

While we continue to counsel families to limit screentime, many doctors have begun using social media to connect with their pediatric patients.

This article discusses how doctors have begun using TikTok, the trendiest new social media platform that caters most strongly to adolescents, to disseminate evidence-based medical information. TikTok users devise short (60 seconds or less), musical, witty videos about literally anything. Some doctors have used TikTok to teach viewers about vaping-associated lung disease and what to do if your condom breaks during sex, garnering millions of views in a matter of days. Those who have succeeded in attaining viral viewership claim that TikTok “humanizes” them and breaks down barriers to meet kids on their level. However, for some it is easier said than done as the criteria for “cool” defined by our children continues to change.

While TikTok has allowed many providers to connect with viewers on medically relevant and meaningful messages, some have experienced significant backlash and harassment. One provider even received a death threat after attempting to debunk the myth about vaccines causing autism. Despite the potential for abuse, other physicians have stood up against such harassment to assert their obligation to use the most current forms of media to counter false information.

This article presents anecdotal evidence of the positive and potentially deleterious effects of using social media for medical information without referencing other social media-related safety concerns such as bullying and suicide.

**RESOURCES ON SOCIAL MEDIA-RELATED SAFETY:**

[Social Media and Kids](https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/pages/Social-Media-and-Kids-Some-Benefits%2C-Some-Worries.aspx) *American Academy of Pediatrics*

[Social Media Toolkit](https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/social-media-toolkit/Pages/default.aspx) *American Academy of Pediatrics, designed for primary care clinicians, funded by a CDC grant*

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!