



## Media Tips

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*Overview: The purpose of this document is to provide you with a general guide for media interviews and other ways to proactively engage with media. Included are general tips for working with the media and preparing for interviews as well as strategies on how to proactively engage with local media.*

*AUGS encourages you to engage with local media in order to provide helpful, informative information that will, ultimately, help raise awareness around effective surgical treatment options for women's health. Check with your institution or hospital policies before engaging the media.*

*Below are tips to help you start the conversation with your local media and can serve as a general guide when preparing to speak with the media.*

## Proactive Media Outreach

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- *Building Relationships:* The local media often look for subject matter experts and/or physicians to speak on a particular health topic or provide general health-related content for their audience. Look into who the health editor/producer is for your local television news, radio stations, and local daily newspaper. Once you've identified the best contact, introduce yourself over phone or email as an expert in women's pelvic health and offer to serve as a source on any future stories.

## Media Interview Basics

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- **You have an active role to play during the interview** – You are not simply answering questions. While the reporter is trying to get their story, you are trying to tell yours.
- **Each interview is an opportunity – YOUR opportunity** – View every interview as your chance to deliver your key messages – regardless of the questions being asked. You need to answer the reporter's questions, but you need to tell your story, too.
- **Keep it interesting** – Be certain to keep the interview interesting and newsworthy. Plug in important facts and statistics where appropriate, but don't overload the reporter with too many numbers. The audience will only retain a couple of the points that you make.
- **Remain focused** – Although the tone of an interview should be that of a lively conversation, engaging and enthusiastic, open and forthright – remaining focused will ensure a successful placement.
- **Be concise** – A 10-minute interview may end up as a 20-second sound bite on the air or three lines in print. Be able to crystallize your thoughts into a few hard-hitting sentences. If you can't say it in 15-30 seconds, it isn't worth saying.



- **HOW you say something is just as important as WHAT you say** – A television interview is a vastly different experience from doing an interview with a print reporter. When doing a broadcast interview, keep in mind that emotion, or lack of it, comes across on camera as clearly as the words themselves. It is also more difficult to reference your notes while on camera than while you're talking to a print reporter over the phone or across the table.
- **Rehearse before the interview** – This will assist in keeping your thoughts simple and clear. Another person may be able to point out questions you had not anticipated and evaluate your answers.
- **Prepare** – Regardless of the format or type of interview (print, TV, radio), preparation is the single most important element for success.

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## Making the Most Out of Every Interview

- **As You Prepare...**
  - Do your homework
  - Ask questions
  - Be sensitive to deadlines
  - Think of the reader / audience / viewers
  - Be accessible
- **During the Interview...**
  - **Do This...**
    - ✓ Get comfortable
    - ✓ Be yourself
    - ✓ Anticipate
    - ✓ Make your points -- deliver your key messages
    - ✓ Be concise -- but avoid *yes or no* answers
    - ✓ Answer only what was asked
    - ✓ Use the printed word
    - ✓ Tell the truth
    - ✓ Keep your composure
    - ✓ Control the interview: Don't be led by the reporter
  - **But Avoid...**
    - ✓ Memorizing sentences or paragraphs verbatim
    - ✓ Technical terms or industry jargon
    - ✓ The impulse to fill silence with babble
    - ✓ Repeating loaded questions -- be positive, not negative – answer the question, don't repeat it
    - ✓ Speculation -- know when to say "I don't know"
    - ✓ Responding to third-hand information
  - ✓ Speaking "Off the Record"



## Helpful Techniques

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**Bridging:** Bridging helps you move from one issue to another and bring the focus back to your key messages. When you bridge, you first answer the question, but answer briefly, concisely, and then move or “bridge” to what you want to discuss.

- *Using the Bridge:*
  - ✓ “I’m sorry, but I don’t know the specifics. But I do know that...”
  - ✓ “I don’t know the answer to that question. But what I do know is...”
  - ✓ “Historically, that was the case. But today, here’s what we’re doing...”
  - ✓ “No, but let me explain...”
  - ✓ “That’s an interesting question, let me remind you though...”
  - ✓ “That’s not my area of expertise but what I can tell you is...”
  - ✓ “...that’s why...”

**Flagging:** Flagging helps you place priority on specific thoughts. Prior to delivering a key message, it is very beneficial to “flag it.” This technique draws attention to what you are about to say.

- *Using a flag:*

To do so, you can preface sentences with such phrases as:

  - ✓ “The most important thing to remember is...”
  - ✓ “I think it all boils down to...”
  - ✓ “The best part about...”
  - ✓ “Before I forget, I want to tell your audience...”
  - ✓ “What’s important to remember, however...”
  - ✓ “What’s most important is...”

**Deferring:** If a reporter persists with questions you can’t answer, defer him or her to the AUGS website at [www.augs.org](http://www.augs.org).