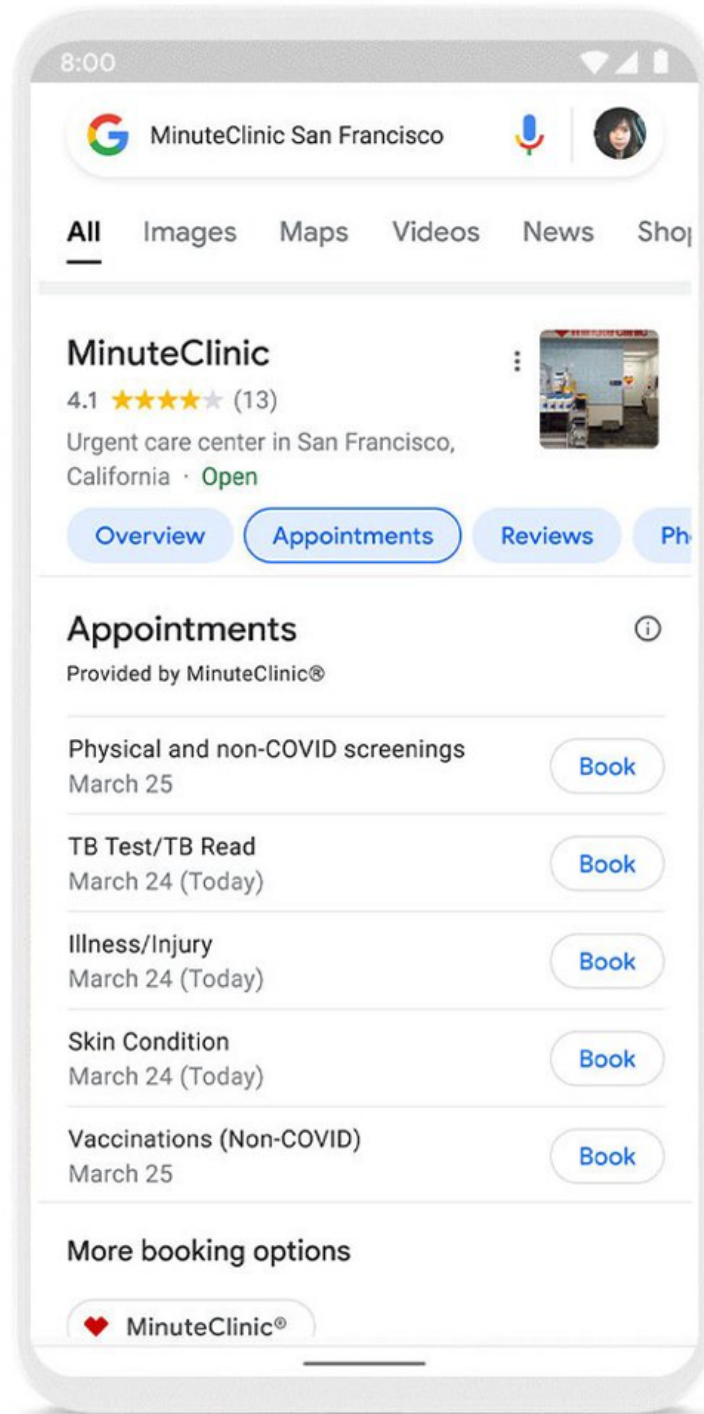


# Google makes Search even more of a health tool appointment finder and booking options

Article

**The news:** Google pulled the curtain back on a new **Search** feature that lets Google users find and book available appointments with nearby healthcare providers. The tech giant says it's

still in the early stages of rolling out the feature, but it's already secured its first partner, **MinuteClinic at CVS**, per a Google blog post.



**How we got here:** Google is focusing on what it knows best following a [reshuffle](#) of its Health organization: **Search**.

For example, last December, the tech giant [unveiled](#) a new Google Search feature that makes it easier for patients to find doctors that accept Medicare.

- Many Medicare Advantage (MA) patients are willing to see doctors they haven't had a visit with yet. **Only 29% of MA members** knew their home health clinician prior to the visit, [per](#) an October 2021 OIG analysis of 26 million beneficiaries.

**The opportunity:** Google is tapping into the rising number of US adults turning to online search directories like **Yelp** to find new providers.

- **More than 1 in 3 US patients** use **Facebook, Yelp, and WebMD** to research and select a doctor, [per](#) a 2021 analysis of US adults by PatientPop.
- Google already has a ton of consumers relying on its Search tool, and it's likely they've used its expanded health Search features over the past two years to find the hours and location of the nearest retail clinic—particularly to [seek](#) COVID-19 testing and vaccine appointments.

**But can it catch up to the likes of Zocdoc?** Appointment scheduler **Zocdoc** has a competitive advantage since it already has a large pool of private practice doctors enabling booking through its platform.

- However, that doesn't mean Google won't threaten Zocdoc in the long haul, especially since its Search engine has the highest number of monthly unique visitors in the US—[surpassing](#) **Facebook and Amazon**.

**What's next?** We suspect Google will turn to retail clinic partners like **Walgreens** and **Walmart** next, since these players already offer convenient virtual booking options and appointment times on their websites—and don't currently partner with an appointment scheduler like Zocdoc.

- **US retail clinic patients are on the rise:** We expect the number of US retail consumers to **jump from 53.5 million US adults in 2019 to 82.7 million adults by next year**—all while patients from primary care practices are declining, per [Insider Intelligence's US Retail Health Clinic January 2021 forecast](#).

- In fact, both Walgreens and CVS recently announced an aggressive strategy to expand their retail clinics across the US. **CVS even plans to convert 10% of its retail stores into primary care offices** over the next three years.