

Media Interview Basics



Keck Medicine
of USC

Media interviews position you as an expert in your field and support Keck Medicine of USC as a leading academic medical center.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE:



Picture the reader, listener or viewer and say what would matter to them in a way they can easily understand. Save technical terminology for scientific publications.

YOUR TOOLS: PREPARE THESE IN ADVANCE.



Key Messages

Make a list of the two or three most important points you want to make.



Stories

Use short examples and analogies to help paint the picture.

NOTHING IS OFF THE RECORD

Act as if the microphone is live, the camera is on and every word you say from “hello” to “goodbye” is a quote for the front page. Every word or action is fair game. No matter what they tell you.



CAUTION: IMPLIED INDORSEMENT

University policy prohibits faculty and staff from saying anything that might imply the institution’s endorsement of a product or service.

- ✗ You cannot endorse or imply your endorsement of a product or for-profit company.
- ✗ Avoid using product names. Reference generic names when possible.
- ✓ When discussing clinical trials, you can provide factual data, including promising or positive data.
- ✓ You can give your personal academic opinion about how a product may impact your field or patient care, so long as you **do not endorse** the product.

TECHNIQUES:



Ace the Opening

This is usually an easy, general question. It’s your chance to share your message points and set the direction.



Speak in Headlines

Make your conclusion first, back it up with facts and examples.



Bridge to Control

Steer the interview back into your territory with a phrase such as:

- The important thing is ...
- What our research shows is ...
- Here’s what I know ...

... then follow with one of your key messages!



Prep the Tough Questions

What do you hope they don’t ask?

Prepare answers for those questions to be ready and relaxed.



Be Pleasant and Professional

- Keep an interested expression
- Smile, if appropriate
- Get to the point
- Be engaged and enthusiastic



Use Your Clinical Title

- This is what resonates with patients and consumers

Questions? Visit news.keckmedicine.org to contact media relations.