

The after-hours patient: the bookings your clinic loses at night and on weekends

By The Anservo Team | Last updated July 2026 | anservo.ai/blog/after-hours-patients

Key takeaways

- About 40% of appointments are booked outside standard business hours, and ~34% of online bookings happen after the office closes.
- 68% of patients prefer providers that offer online booking, and roughly 80% prefer a physician who offers self-scheduling.
- A traditional answering service takes a message, not a booking, so the after-hours patient still waits and often books elsewhere.
- An after-hours answering service powered by AI books the visit on the spot, nights, weekends, and holidays.

When patients actually want to book

Roughly 40% of appointments are made outside normal business hours, and about 34% of online bookings happen after the office has already closed [1]. Demand does not stop at 5pm; only your ability to answer it does.

Booking demand by window (illustrative)

Window	Share of booking activity
Early, before 9am	18%
Core, 9am to 5pm	42%
Evening, after 5pm	28%
Weekend	12%

Illustrative distribution based on reported after-hours booking shares [1]; directional, not a per-clinic figure.

What patients expect now

68% of patients prefer providers that offer online booking, more than double the 33% who prefer to book by phone [2], and about 80% prefer a physician who offers online scheduling [3]. Accenture documented this digital front door shift years ago [4].

How to capture after-hours demand (four options)

1. Voicemail: most after-hours callers will not leave a message, and a voicemail is not a booking.
2. Answering service: takes a message, usually cannot book, so the patient waits and may book elsewhere.
3. Online self-scheduling: valuable, but only serves web visitors; many patients still call.
4. AI voice receptionist: answers at any hour, checks the live calendar, and books in the same call, escalating emergencies per your rules.

Sources

1. Zippia, "Appointment Scheduling Statistics" (~40% booked outside business hours; ~34% of online bookings after close). zipppia.com/advice/appointment-scheduling-statistics
2. LLCBuddy, online appointment-scheduling statistics (68% prefer online-booking providers vs 33% phone). llcbuddy.com
3. Kyruus Health, patient access research (~80% prefer self-scheduling physicians). kyruushealth.com
4. Accenture digital health / patient-engagement research. accenture.com/us-en/insights/health
5. Phreesia, "Understanding Patients' Preferences". phreesia.com

Anservo answers calls nights, weekends, and holidays, checks your live calendar, and books on the spot. Book a demo at anservo.ai/demo.html.
Full interactive article: anservo.ai/blog/after-hours-patients.