HEALTH ONLINE: Finding Information You Can Trust

Supported by:
The National Network of Libraries of Medicine
Greater Midwest Region
Today we will talk about:

- Searching for health information that can be trusted
- How to read a webpage – finding quick facts and key points
- How to tell if the information you found is from a reliable source
- Finding websites in other languages
- Local places to use the internet
IMPORTANT:

Information you find on any website does not replace what your medical provider recommends.
# Common Web Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Icon</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>URL</td>
<td>![URL Icon]</td>
<td>Uniform Resource Locator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search bar</td>
<td>![Search Bar Icon]</td>
<td>A field where users can enter search queries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browser</td>
<td>![Browser Icon]</td>
<td>A software application that accesses and displays resources on the internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain</td>
<td>![Domain Icons]</td>
<td>Identifiers for websites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>![Social Media Icons]</td>
<td>Platforms for communication and interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scroll</td>
<td>![Scroll Icon]</td>
<td>A mechanism for navigating through content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spam</td>
<td>![Warning Icon]</td>
<td>Malicious content or messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperlink</td>
<td>![Link Icon]</td>
<td>A connection to another page or resource.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How can using online resources for health be helpful?

- Find information quickly
- Check your health symptoms
- Research diseases
- Communicate with your doctor or nurse
- Look for wellness tips
- Track your health conditions
- Much more...
Search for health information

- Different Search Tools:
  - Search engine:
    - Google
    - Bing
  - Search bars on websites
  - Search tools for privacy:
    - DuckDuckGo
    - Google Chrome Incognito Browser
Tips for doing a search:

- List multiple symptoms
- Use full disease name
- Be gender specific
- Be age specific
Try a search

You just saw the doctor about your symptoms. They told you it sounds like an upper respiratory infection. You are given papers before you leave, called an after-visit summary. You want to learn more about your diagnoses. On the papers you see the following words:

- upper respiratory infection
- cold
- URI

Using a search engine, search the words listed above (one at a time). What differences do you see from your search results?
Open a new tab
How to read a webpage

Scanning makes for a quick and easier way to find what you are looking for.

Scanning tips:

• Start with bigger, bolder words
• Read left to right
• Use left tool bar and top menu bar to find topics
• Read content before clicking on hyperlinks

When scanning search results:

• Scan multiple results, not only the top two results

• If you don’t find what you want, start over with new words in search box. Don’t continue to add words to what you already searched.
An overview of diabetes types and treatments

Diabetes is a condition that impairs the body's ability to process blood glucose, otherwise known as blood sugar.

In the United States, the estimated number of people over 18 years of age with diagnosed and undiagnosed diabetes is 30.2 million. This figure represents between 12.9 and 13.7 percent of the population.

Without ongoing, careful management, diabetes can lead to a cascade of sugars in the blood which can increase the risk of cardiovascular disease and heart disease.

Different forms of diabetes can lead to different symptoms based on the type. Not all forms of diabetes can be avoided or treated through lifestyle changes.

Types

Types | How insulin problems develop | Net tips | Using insulin | Other medical condition | Outlook | Takeaway

Latest news

Closing schools has only a minor role in suppressing COVID-19

Maintaining healthy blood sugar levels (glycemic control) improves your overall health.

COVID-19: few updates; total number of deaths remains 120,000

Researchers reveal factors linked with staying healthy for longer
How to tell if information is good or harmful

**Credibility** = Proof that information is reliable and from a trusted source.

Ways to find credibility:

- Look at "About Us" section of the site
- Look for unbiased research (supported by facts)
- Check bottom of webpage for dates, sponsors, crediting, and other details

Domain differences

- .com - most likely owned by commercial business
- .gov - government owned website
- .org - most likely owned by non-profit organization
- .edu - owned by school
Credible things to look for:

- Medical providers writing articles about topics in their practice
- Contact information
- Clear, straight forward information – does not hide any information
- Content reviewed by a medical professional (MD, DO, PHD, RN)
- Evidence-based: based on credible research findings
- Privacy policy
Be careful of:

- Certain brand names or products being credited - may be trying to sell you on something
- Content reviewed by “medical experts”
- Opinion-based: based on someone's opinion
Compare websites for credibility:

Compare health.com to medlineplus.gov
Websites to visit for health information

Basic consumer health information:

- medlineplus.gov
- cdc.gov
- mayoclinic.org/patient-care-and-health-information
- familydoctor.org
- healthline.com
- pillbox.nlm.nih.gov
- healthcare.gov
- medicare.gov
- mlanet.org/page/top-health-websites
What about Wikipedia?

Can be an okay source to get a general idea, but you should do more research.

Information on the site can change at any time by anyone in the world. Wikipedia has paid workers who review edits and correct if edits are false.
Websites to search for recommendations

You may be looking for a new doctor, caregiver, health insurance or need to find another service. Here are websites that show reviews, customer feedback, and finder tools:

• [healthgrades.com](http://healthgrades.com) - healthcare rating website to find doctor or hospital
• [care.com](http://care.com) - website to find caregiver, childcare, home cleaning
• [medlineplus.gov/directories](http://medlineplus.gov/directories) - list of websites to find different health services
Evaluate a website

Use the checklist on the handout to evaluate the website familydoctor.org
Websites with multiple languages

medlineplus.gov/languages

medlineplus.gov/spanish

medicare.gov/about-us/other-languages/information-in-other-languages
Differences between using a computer or mobile device

Computers, tablets and phones can be used to access online information and resources. You may prefer one over the other.

Mobile device (phone or tablet):
• smaller screen
• less visuals and text
• drop-down icon
• easier to access and take with you
• takes longer to scroll through information
• may lose track of place on webpage when clicking on new pages or hyperlinks
Differences between using a computer or mobile device - continued

Computer device (desktop or laptop):
- larger screen
- full page views making it easier to see more information at a time
- more navigation tools and tabbed selection bar
- usually more visuals and information
- easier to search and scroll through information on webpage
Local places to use the internet

Internet is not always available or reliable, especially in rural areas.

- Mobile devices can help if...
- you do not have Wi-Fi but have smartphone data. Phone data can be used to access the internet.
- you visit a local cafe or business that offers free Wi-Fi.

Places to use a computer:

- Library
- Hospital
- County health departments
- Community centers or senior centers
- Schools (for students)
Other online resources - 1

Ask *Siri, Alexa, Google Assistant* about a health question – it is like searching “Google”

**Health portals** through healthcare providers:
- After visit summaries
- Medications
- Communication with providers
- Prescription requests
- Health news
Other online resources - 2

**Wearables**: track your health vitals, such as heart rate, steps walked or run, sleep pattern, diet

**Apps**: provides online health resources for mobile devices

Examples:
- [Medicare "What's Covered"](https://www.medicare.gov/whatmatters/what-is-covered)
- [Mayo Clinic](https://www.mayoclinic.org)

**NLM Mobile Resources**:
- [nlm.nih.gov/mobile](https://www.nlm.nih.gov/mobile)
Other online resources – 3

Sign-up for health newsletter

• Looking for a printed or e-mail version of information?
  • Sign up for reliable health news by subscribing to newsletters from credible websites
  • Some are free
  • Can be age and gender specific
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