

Can You Trust That Website?

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What Will You Learn Today?

- Steps to find reliable health information on the Internet
- Some recommended health information websites
- Tips for finding useful health information and how to avoid those sites that are not reliable

Steps for finding reliable health information on the Internet

Step 1: Who is the Sponsor or Host?

- Look at “About Us” (mission or goal)
- Look at domain extension. There are over 1000 domain extensions, so it’s not always a reliable tool.
- Best choices are a Federal agency, medical school or large professional/nonprofit organization (.gov, .edu, .org)
- Are you able to contact the sponsor of the website?

Step 2: What is the Purpose of the Site?

- Why was it created? Look for goals and mission.
- Was it created to inform or explain?
- Or to sell a product?
- Are there ads for products they are selling?
- Does it rely on scientific evidence and not opinion or testimonies?

Step 3: Who wrote it? And who reviewed it?

- If author is listed, are they a healthcare professional? If not, do they include professional sources?
- Does author have any financial gain from website?
- Is information reviewed by a healthcare professional?
- Is information cited so you can see original source?
- Is there an email address or phone number to contact site or author?

Beware of testimonies, blogs and social media developed by one single person

Step 4: What is the Privacy Policy?

- Look for “Privacy policy” or “Our policies”
- If they want to share information, find out how it will be used. Make sure site is https, and has a lock if it is collecting information and/or a username and password
- Only share Social Security Number on secure sites
- Do not enter sensitive information on public Wi-Fi

Step 5: When was it written?

- Might be found at top or bottom of page
- Health information is always changing
- Pages may be updated at different times
- Also be careful of new studies that are still under review (might have new date, but not be reliable)

Step 6: Does website offer quick and easy solutions? Is there a miracle cure mentioned?

- Beware of sites that claim one remedy will cure a lot of different illnesses
- Question dramatic writing or cures too good to be true
- Follow up on topic by comparing information with other websites (reputable, of course!)
- Even on a reputable site, there may be misleading or misinformation.

Recommended Health Sites

Some Notable and Reputable Health Websites

- MedlinePlus (medlineplus.gov/)
- National Institute on Aging (nia.nih.gov/)
- DailyMed (dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/)
- Mayo Clinic and Johns Hopkins: (mayoclinic.org and hopkinsmedicine.org)
- NIH Office of Dietary Supplements: (ods.od.nih.gov/)
- Healthfinder: (health.gov/myhealthfinder)
- Center for Disease control and Prevention (cdc.gov)
- My Medicare Matters: (mymedicarematters.org/)

Tools to Determine if Website is Reliable

Is That Site reliable? One More Tool.

- Health Web Navigator (healthwebnav.org/) is a source that provides reviews of health-related websites.
- Search by topic to find a reliable site.
- Goal is to connect with accurate, easy-to-read and up-to-date health information
- Uses diverse team of medical professionals and usability experts

Is Your Favorite Health Website Biased or Not Based on Fact?

- Media Bias/Fact Check (MBFC) (mediabiasfactcheck.com/) is an independent online media outlet created to educate public on media bias and deceptive news practices
- Uses a strict methodology for determining biases of sources
- Funding from donations and third-party advertising
- Search on this page for your health website

Review

Review of the Steps:

- Who is the sponsor or host?
- What is the purpose of the site?
- Who wrote it? And who reviewed it?
- What is the privacy policy?
- When was it written?
- Does website offer quick and easy solutions?
- Is there a miracle cure mentioned?

Review Tools

- Health Web Navigator (healthwebnav.org/) to find reputable sites
- Media Bias/Fact Check (mediabiasfactcheck.com) to see if your site has bias or is not based on science

Use Reliable Sources for Reliable Health Information!

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