

Finding Good Quality Health Information **Online**

An information leaflet for patients

Finding health information online can be difficult because not everything is reliable, accurate or current. This guide will help you to find good quality information from trustworthy sites and how you can check the standard of information.

Recommended Reliable Resources

A selection of websites with reliable and up to date information. You can find further trusted sites at library.hee.nhs.uk/patient-information/health-information-online/websites-you-can-trust

Great Ormond Street Hospital

www.gosh.nhs.uk/conditions-and-treatments/conditions-we-treat

One of the world's leading children's hospitals. Find information sheets on a range of conditions and treatments.

NetDoctor

www.netdoctor.co.uk

A collaboration between committed doctors, healthcare professionals, information specialists and patients to help readers through every aspect of their daily lives.

The NHS website

www.nhs.uk

The UK's biggest health website, providing information and advice on health conditions, symptoms, healthy living, medicines and how to get help.

Patient.info

www.patient.info

Provides trusted information on health, lifestyle, disease and other medical related topics.

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Search engines

Using a search engine, such as Google, is a great starting point for accessing information however, it is important to recognise that the search results will also contain adverts. Some of these adverts may be legitimate but others may be promoting medicines and treatments that have been designed specifically to make a profit.

Check the web address

An easy way to check how reliable a website is, particularly when looking at search engine results, is make sure the web address ends in one of the following:

- **.nhs.uk**
The most reliable, evidence-based health information written and reviewed by health professionals and experts.
- **.ac.uk**
These are websites belonging to universities or colleges.
- **.org.uk**
These are websites belonging to charities and non-profit organisations registered in the United Kingdom. As they are not commercial organisations, charity websites are generally a reliable source of unbiased information.

Check the quality of a website

When looking for health information online, always ask yourself: **WWW – who, what, where.**

- **Who** wrote and/or published the information you're reading? Are they a recognised and reliable figure or organisation? What is the purpose of the site, are they providing information or trying to sell you something? A reliable site will provide contact information or an *About Us* page.
- **What** content is published on the site?
Does the site use relevant, up to date information linked to evidence? Does it say where the information has come from? When was the information last updated? Reliable sites will normally have a date at the end of the information or web page.
- **Where** in the world has the information on the site come from?
Certain types of information, such as statistics or treatments, may not be relevant to you if they relate to somewhere outside of the UK.

Remember

- Don't take information at face value. Check other websites to compare.
- Don't just rely on information you read online. Talk to health professionals about what you have read.
- Stay safe when searching online and protect your privacy.