

Evaluating Health Information on the Internet

The Internet is a valuable source of health information, but some websites contain information that may be biased, inaccurate, or even harmful to your health. The following questions may be useful to consider when you look at a health-related Web site.

Who is responsible for the content? Is it a branch of the government, a university, a health organization, a hospital or a business?

Is the purpose and goal of the sponsoring organization clearly stated and is there a way to contact the sponsor for more information or to verify information presented?

Because health information gets outdated so quickly, does the Web site post the source and date for the information?

Here are some Web sites that provide accurate and useful health information:

www.healthfinder.gov

This award-winning government Web site provides information on a variety of health topics.

www.medlineplus.gov

This Web site, from NIH, can provide valuable help when looking for specific information about medications.

www.cdc.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) links to health statistics, travelers' health guides, information on diseases and health topics. There is a Spanish-language version of their Web site.

www.nia.nih.gov

This Web site, National Institute on Aging, lists a variety of publications pertaining to health and links to various informative sites, including NIHSeniorHealth.gov, an easy-to-use Web site featuring basic health and wellness information for older adults.

Remember: Information that you find on the Internet doesn't replace your doctor's advice. Your doctor is the best person to answer questions about your personal health. If you read something on the Internet that doesn't agree with what your doctor has told you, ask him or her about it.

Visit your local library if you don't have an Internet connection at home.