

How to Review Health Information Online

With the advancement of social media, health information is now easy to find. However, it is not always accurate and sometimes you find different views and opinions which can be confusing. When you see health information online, it is important to check if it is a reliable source and to do your own search and fact check if the information is true.



What “Red Flags” should you keep an eye out for?

- The information is made to sound very dramatic or scary.
- The website says that a treatment works the same for everyone or promotes a secret formula.
- The website is trying to sell you something.
- It is not clear who wrote the information or what their qualifications are.
- The studies mentioned are very old (10 years or more) or do not say when they were published.
- Links are broken, which might mean the website has not been updated in a while and could be old.
- The website has many spelling mistakes.

How do I know if the health information is accurate?

1. **Know the Source:** Websites ending in .gov, .edu, or .org are reliable. You can also find reliable health information on government and international agency websites.
2. **Check the Quality:** Good articles show the author’s name, titles, and sometimes have reviews. Check for the date when the article was published or last updated. Good health websites have a list of other websites they used to get their information.
3. **Look at the Structure of the Page:** Good websites should be easy to use. The website should say the purpose of the article clearly. Any advertising should be clearly marked and separated from the site’s main content.
4. **Compare and Double Check:** Check more than one website and compare the information you are reading. If many sources are saying the same thing, then the information is likely accurate.

Follow these steps to help you find the right health information. Be careful about the information you read and see on social media, as people often add in their own opinions.

Do not self-diagnose through online searches. If you are still not sure about the information, talk to a healthcare professional.



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