

# Online Health Information: Can I Trust It?

Many people wonder: “Can I trust the health information I get on the Internet?”

There are thousands of medical websites. Some provide reliable health information. Some do not. Some of the medical news is current. Some of it is not. Choosing which websites to trust is an important part of using the Internet.

## HOW DO I FIND RELIABLE HEALTH INFORMATION ONLINE?

As a rule, health websites sponsored by Federal Government agencies are good sources of information. Large professional organizations and well-known medical schools may also be good sources of health information. Website addresses are helpful in identifying who the group is. Addresses that end with:

- ❖ **.gov** identify a government agency
- ❖ **.edu** identify an educational institution, like a school, college, or university
- ❖ **.org** usually identify non-profit organizations (such as professional groups; scientific, medical, or research societies; advocacy groups)
- ❖ **.com** identify commercial websites

## HOW DO I NAVIGATE HEALTH WEBSITES?

Usually, you can find the menu at the top of a page or along the left side. Look for the name of the sponsor or owner of the site and learn more about who and what they do in the “About Us” section.

### **QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE TRUSTING A WEBSITE:**

#### **Provider**

- Who is in charge of the website? -----
- Why are they providing the website? -----
- Can you contact them? -----

#### **Funding**

- Where does the money to support the site come from? -----
- Does the site have advertisements? Are they labeled? -----

#### **Quality**

- Where does the information on the site come from? -----
- How is content selected? -----
- Do experts review the information that goes on the site? -----
- Does the site avoid unbelievable or emotional claims? -----
- Is it up-to-date? -----

#### **Privacy**

- Does the site ask for your personal information? -----
- Do they tell you how it will be used? -----
- Are you comfortable with how it will be used? -----

**\*\*\* Best health care decisions are made when you work with your healthcare provider. Please share your concerns and questions with your healthcare team. \*\*\***

Original Source: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/webeval/webeval.html>

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