Finding Health Information
You Can Trust

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National Network of Libraries of Medicine Pacific NW Region
Overview

- Introduction
- Health literacy
- Website evaluation
- Health information resources
- Health news
Who We Are

- **NIH (National Institutes of Health)**
  - Nation’s research agency
  - 27 institutes and centers

- **NLM (National Library of Medicine)**
  - World’s largest biomedical library
  - A NIH institute

- **NNLM (National Network of Libraries of Medicine)**
  - Outreach program of the NLM comprised of 8 Regional Medical Libraries (RMLs) and 5 offices

- **PNR (Pacific Northwest Region)**
  - One of the 8 RMLs
  - Serves Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington
What is Health Literacy?

• “Health literacy is the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.”

Why Health Literacy is Important

- Access health care services
- Analyze relative risks and benefits
- Calculate dosages
- Communicate with health care providers
- Evaluate information for credibility and quality
- Interpret test results
- Locate health information
Website Evaluation
How do you search for health information?
Google results

188,000,000 results
Types of Websites

What is the purpose of the Web page?

- Advocacy (American Heart Association)
- Business/marketing (Eli Lilly)
- Informational (National Center for Health Statistics)
- News (CNN)
- Entertainment (Dr. Oz)
ABC’s (+U) of Evaluation

- Accuracy
- Authority
- Bias
- Currency
- Coverage
- Usability
Accuracy

• Is the information accurate?
  - Is the information based on sound medical research?
  - Are endnotes, bibliography or references provided?
  - Are those cited references reliable?
  - Web standards to ensure accuracy don’t exist
WASHINGTON—Highlighting the benefits of brief, infrequent aerobic activity, U.S. surgeon general Vivek Murthy urged Americans Friday to make sure to exercise once every few months during a frenzied moment of panic regarding their health. “It’s important that citizens of all ages, genders, and backgrounds make the time every four to nine months to go for a quick jog or do 15 halfhearted push-ups in the midst of a frantic surge of concern about their physical fitness,” said Murthy, who explained that individuals need not possess a gym membership or their own exercise equipment to engage in twice-yearly anxiety-fueled attempts at working out, and could instead simply perform five to 20 minutes of various calisthenics in their own home during a short-lived fit of worry spurred by an increase in their health insurance premiums or by reading a particularly alarming article in the newspaper.
Authority

• **Is the author an authority on the subject?**
  - Who published the information? What are their credentials?
  - Is the contact information easy to find?
  - What does the About Us section tell you about the purpose of the author/sponsor/organization?
  - Check if the Web page has the backing of a well-established organization, institution, or agency.
  - What is the domain name? (.com, .gov, .edu, .org)
Welcome to AllergicChild!

With over 20 years of experience of dealing with all aspects of food allergies, we are your premier resource for managing food allergies. We truly understand what it takes to live with food allergies and how it affects everyday life. We understand the challenges of being with family, in school, and in all aspects of life. We can help your child be included and stay safe with food allergies.

Our founder, Nicole Smith, started AllergicChild with one goal in mind: Help children live a full life with food allergies. We provide an active blog with posts that contain helpful tips and stories for you and your child. We have multiple articles about allergies that provide both the latest medical research and experience-based suggestions. The information contained within this site is a knowledge base accumulated over 20 years of managing food allergies in school, travel, family, friends, and places of worship.

About Us

AllergicChild.com is the creation of Robert and Nicole Smith. We are the parents of a severely food allergic college age son, Morgan, first diagnosed at the age of 9 months old with life threatening allergies to peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, fish and shellfish came later's and a grown daughter, Michaela, diagnosed with celiac disease and a mast cell mediated disorder. We'd like to share our experiences with you to help you keep your food allergic child safe, healthy and living as close to a normal life as possible.

Get in Touch!

Subscribe to our mailing list

Email Address *

SUBSCRIBE
Bias

- Does the author bring any biases in posting the information?
  - Can you tell if the information is an advertisement?
  - What kind of institution sponsored the webpage? A pharmaceutical company? A non-profit organization?
  - Do the graphics and wording add an emotional “kick” through photographs, exclamation points, huge fonts, etc.?
  - Is the author using data improperly to promote a product or position?
  - Is the information fact or opinion?
Bias Example
Currency

• Is the information current and timely?
  - Is there a date when information was posted?
  - Has the information been revised or updated?
  - Do the links work?
  - Has more recent medical research been published? What was published a year ago may be outdated now.
Skin Cancer Prevention (PDQ®)-Patient Version

ON THIS PAGE

- What is prevention?
- General Information About Skin Cancer
- Skin Cancer Prevention
- About This PDQ Summary

What is prevention?

Cancer prevention is action taken to lower the chance of getting cancer. By preventing cancer, the number of new cases of cancer in a group or population is lowered. Hopefully, this will lower the number of deaths caused by cancer.

To prevent new cancers from starting, scientists look at risk factors and protective factors. Anything that
Coverage

• The information may be accurate but important information may be left out.
  
  ▪ Is the information appropriate and relate to your health information needs?
  
  ▪ How does this information compare with other sources on the same topic?
  
  ▪ Is a better source available?
  
  ▪ Are sources/links provided for additional information?
Family Health Guide

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

Overview

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is an unexplained death usually during sleep of an otherwise healthy baby under a year old. SIDS is a subcategory of SUID, which stands for Sudden Unexpected Infant Death. Other subcategories of SUD include hypothermia or hyperthermia, metabolic disorders or accidental suffocation. If an infant death is investigated and reported, and no explanation is found, it is classified as SIDS.

Here are the facts about SIDS:

- It is the leading cause of death in children between the ages of one month and one year.
- The current official total of deaths specifically attributed to SIDS was 2,327 in 2006, yet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) agrees that as many as 1,154 additional seemingly healthy babies under a year will also die unexpectedly.
- The deaths peak between the ages of 2 and 4 months.
- Ninety percent occur before 6 months of age.
- The condition hits boys more than girls, particularly Native American and African-American babies.
- Another vulnerable population is prematurity/low birth weight babies and infants whose mothers did not have prenatal care, or any smokers.
- SIDS is not caused by smothering or choking.
- SIDS is not caused by diphtheria, pertussis, hepatitis B (HBV) vaccines or other immunizations.
- SIDS is not the result of abuse, neglect, or accidents.

back to A to Z guide
Evaluate Resources for Usability

- Font size
- Clear organization
- “White” space
- Short sentences
- Jargon-free, definitions of medical terms included
- Information in short segments
- Meaningful images
Usability Example
Trust It or Trash It?

1. Who said it?

2. When did they say it?

3. How did they know?

Trust It or Trash It website
Online Health Information: Is It Reliable?

On this page:

- How Do I Find Reliable Health Information Online?
- How Do I Navigate Health Websites?
- Where Can I Find Reliable Health Information Online?
- Questions to Ask Before Trusting a Website

Many older adults share a common concern: "How 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?
Google results

188,000,000 results
MedlinePlus results

713 results

Autism health topic page
MedlinePlus

- Links to reliable, authoritative health websites
- Easy-to-read articles
- Lab test information
- Medical encyclopedia
- Social media presence
- Clinical Trials
- Links to local services
- English, Spanish and other languages
- MedlinePlus Magazine
- No Advertisements!

MedlinePlus
https://medlineplus.gov/
Diabetes means your blood glucose, or blood sugar, levels are too high. With type 2 diabetes, the more common type, your body does not make or use insulin well. Insulin is a hormone that helps glucose get into your cells to give them energy. Without insulin, too much glucose stays in your blood. Over time, high blood glucose can lead to serious problems with your heart, eyes, kidneys, nerves, and gums and teeth.

You have a higher risk of type 2 diabetes if you are older, have obesity, have a family history of diabetes, or do not exercise. Having prediabetes also increases your risk. Prediabetes means that your blood sugar is higher than normal but not high enough to be called diabetes. If you are at risk for type 2 diabetes, you may be able to delay or prevent developing it by making some lifestyle changes.
MedlinePlus- health topic search

Diabetes Mellitus

- A1C
- Blood Glucose see Blood Sugar
- Blood Sugar
- Children and Diabetes see Diabetes in Children and Teens
- Diabetes
- Diabetes and Pregnancy
- Diabetes Complications
- Diabetes in Children and Teens
- Diabetes Medicines
- Diabetes Mellitus see Diabetes
- Diabetes Prevention see How to Prevent Diabetes
- Diabetes Type 1
- Diabetes Type 2
- Diabetic Diet
- Diabetic Eye Problems
- Diabetic Foot
- Diabetic Heart Disease
- Diabetic Kidney Problems
- Diabetic Nephropathy and Diabetic Kidney Problems
- Diabetic Nerve Problems
- Diabetic Retinopathy see Diabetic Eye Problems
- Gestational Diabetes see Diabetes and Pregnancy
- Glucose see Blood Sugar
- Hemoglobin A1c see A1C
Diabetes Type 2
also called: Type 2 Diabetes

Start Here
- Diabetes Mellitus Type 2: Overview (Beyond the Basics) (PubMed)
- Facts about Type 2 (American Diabetes Association)
- Type 2 Diabetes (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)

Symptoms
- Symptoms (American Diabetes Association)

Diagnosis and Tests
- A1C Test and Diabetes (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)

Prevention and Risk Factors
- All About Your Risk for Prediabetes, Type 2 Diabetes, and Heart Disease (American Diabetes Association)
- Exercise and Type 2 Diabetes (National Institute of Aging)

Treatments and Therapies
- Choosing a Type 2 Diabetes Drug: Why Generic Metformin is Often the Best Choice (Consumers Union of U.S.)
- Diabetes and Dietary Supplements (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health)

Reference Desk
- Diabetes: Glossary of Terms (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Find an Expert
- American Diabetes Association
- Find a Diabetes Educator (American Association of Diabetes Educators)
- National Diabetes Education Program
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Men
- Male (American Diabetes Association)

Women
- Diabetes Fact Sheet (Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women’s Health)
- Women and Diabetes: Frequently Asked Questions (American Diabetes Association)
- Women at High Risk for Diabetes (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Seniors
- Diabetes in Older People (National Institute of Aging)
- Diabetics: Unique to Older Adults (AAG Foundation for Health in Aging)

Patient Handouts
- A1C Test (Medical Encyclopedia)
- Diabetes Type 2 - meal planning (Medical Encyclopedia)
- Taking an insulin injection (Medical Encyclopedia)
- High blood sugar (Medical Encyclopedia)
MedlinePlus - videos & tools
MedlinePlus - videos & tools examples
MedlinePlus tutorials

Understanding Medical Words: A Tutorial from the National Library of Medicine

This tutorial teaches you about medical words. You'll learn about how to put together parts of medical words. You'll also find quizzes to see what you've learned.

You will need Flash Player to view the program.

Download the Flash Player for free.

Note for users of assistive technology: This tutorial is a Flash movie that contains changing content and interactive quizzes. You may be required to use additional keyboard commands to navigate the content depending on the software you use to browse the Web.

Use the controls on the bottom left of the screen to adjust the volume or to turn off the sound.

Evaluating Internet Health Information: A Tutorial from the National Library of Medicine

This tutorial teaches you how to evaluate the health information that you find on the Web. It is about 16 minutes long.

You need the Flash plugin, version 6 or above, to view it. If you do not have Flash, you will be prompted to obtain a free download of the software before you start.

The tutorial runs automatically, but you can also use the navigation bar at the bottom of the screen to go forward, backward, pause, or start over.

Learn how you can download a version of the tutorial for use when no Internet connection is available. Read the transcript of the tutorial.
Genetics Home Reference

- Health conditions
- Genes
- Chromosomes & DNA
- Educational resources
- Help Me Understand Genetics
National Institutes of Health (NIH)
NIH- 27 institutes and centers
Health Information

A-Z Diseases and Disorders

- Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD)
- Amblyopia
- Anophthalmia and Microphthalmia
- Astigmatism
- Behçet’s Disease of the Eye
- Bietti’s Crystalline Dystrophy
- Blepharitis
- Blepharospasm
- Catarract
- Clinical Studies
- Coloboma, Uveal
- Color Blindness
- Cornea and Corneal Disease
- Diabetic Eye Disease
- Dry Eye
- Floaters
- Glaucoma

Search for NEI Publications
National Institute of Mental Health

Mental Health Information

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), the lead federal agency for research on mental disorders, offers basic information on mental disorders, a range of related topics, and the latest research.

It is not the intention of NIMH to provide specific medical advice, but rather to provide information to better understand their health and their diagnosed disorders. Consider health care provider for diagnosis, treatment, and answers to your personal questions. Please Note: Links to other websites are provided for informational purposes only and not as an endorsement by NIMH.

Mental Disorders and Related Topics

- Anxiety Disorders
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD, ADD)
- Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)
- Bipolar Disorder (Manic-Depressive Illness)
- Borderline Personality Disorder
- Depression
- Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder
- Eating Disorders
- HIV/AIDS and Mental Health
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Coping with Traumatic Events

Overview

A traumatic event is a shocking, scary, or dangerous experience that affects someone emotionally. These situations may be natural, like a tornado or earthquake. They can also be caused by other people, like a car accident, crime, or terror attack.

How individuals respond to traumatic events is an important area of research for the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). Researchers are exploring the factors that help people cope as well as the factors that increase their risk for problems following the event.

Warning Signs

There are many different responses to potentially traumatic events. Most people have intense responses immediately following, and often for several weeks or even months after, a traumatic event. These responses can include:

- Feeling anxious, sad, or angry
- Trouble concentrating and sleeping
- Continually thinking about what happened

For most people, these are normal and expected responses and generally lessen with time. Healthy ways of coping in this time period include avoiding alcohol and other drugs, spending time with loved ones and trusted friends who are supportive, trying to maintain normal routines for meals, exercise, and sleep. In general,
**MedlinePlus - Drug Information**

**Drugs:**

**Oxycodone**

**Proven as (to) first dose**

**Why is this medication prescribed?**

**How should this medicine be used?**

**What other uses for this medicine?**

**What special precautions should I follow?**

**What special dietary instructions should I follow?**

**What should I do if I forget a dose?**

**What side effects can this medication cause?**

**What should I know about storage and disposal of this medication?**

**In case of emergency/overdose**

**What other information should I know?**

**Brand names**

**Arms names of combination products**

**Important:**

Cocaine use can cause severe or life-threatening breathing problems, especially during the first 2 to 72 hours of your treatment and any time your dose is increased. Your doctor will monitor you closely during your treatment. Tell your doctor if you have had or have ever had heart disease, stroke, heart attack, or a breathing disorder. Your doctor may also need to change the dose or frequency of your medicine.

**Special dietary instructions should I follow?**

Your doctor may tell you to take oxycodone only by mouth. Do not use more or less of this medicine than is prescribed by your doctor. Do not break, crush, or chew the tablets. Oxycodone is used to treat pain.

**What should I do if I forget a dose?**

If you are taking oxycodone on a regular schedule, take the missed dose as soon as you remember it. However, it is almost time for the next dose, you should skip the missed dose and continue with your regular schedule. Do not take extra medicine to make up the missed dose.

**What side effects should I watch for?**

If your symptoms do not improve or if they become worse, tell your doctor.

**What special precautions should I follow?**

Tell your doctor if you have or have ever had any of the following medical problems:

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Heart attack
- Breathing disorders
- Liver disease
- Kidney disease
- Cushing syndrome
- Seizures
- Glaucoma
- Head injuries
- Diabetes

**What should I do if I forget a dose?**

If you are taking oxycodone regularly, take the missed dose as soon as you remember it. However, it is almost time for the next dose, you should skip the missed dose and continue with your regular schedule. Do not take extra medicine to make up the missed dose.
MedlinePlus- herbs and supplements
National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH)

- Health topics
- How to make health decisions
- Herbs at a Glance
- Finding a practitioner
- Know the Science
NCCIH- Herbs

Herbs at a Glance

Herbs at a Glance is a series of brief fact sheets that provides basic information about specific herbs or botanicals—common names, what the science says, potential side effects and cautions, and resources for more information.

- Acai
- Alfalfa
- Asian Ginseng
- Astragalus
- Bilberry
- Bitter Orange
- Black Cohosh
- Bromelain
- Butterbur
- Cat's Claw
- Chamomile
- Chasteberry
- Cinnamon
- Cranberry
- Dandelion
- Echinacea
- Epimedium
- Ginkgo
- Ginseng
- Goldenseal
- Grape Seed Extract
- Green Tea
- Hawthorn
- Hoodia
- Horsetail
- J pared Chestnut
- Kava
- Lavender
- Licorice Root
- Milk Thistle
- Nettles
- Pau D'Arco
- Peppermint Oil
- Pomegranate
- Red Clover
- Rhodiola
- St. John's Wort
- Saw Palmetto
- Soy
- Saffron
- Selenium
- Turmeric
- Valerian
- Yohimbine

How might herbs interact with medicines?

Learn about herb-drug interactions.

Download the HerbList app today:

- Apple App Store
- Google Play

Subscribe to get dietary supplement updates by email:

Email Address:

Submit

NIH National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health

Put an herb database in the palm of your hand

Download HerbList™ - NCCIH's app for research-based information about the safety and effectiveness of herbal products.

How to use HerbList:

- Put the herb into the search bar.
- Tap the herb to see the main screen.
- Tap the herb again to see the detailed screen.
- Tap the herb a third time to see the interactive chart.
- Tap the herb a fourth time to see the summary screen.
- Tap the herb a fifth time to see the reference screen.

Get the facts about herbs from a trusted source—the National Institutes of Health. Download HerbList to your phone or tablet.
Health News
National Vodka Day: Why Drinking Vodka May Be Healthier Than A Glass Of Wine

Not all drinks are created equal. And National Vodka Day is a good time to take a closer look at this staple of every corner bar.

Vodka may have some virtues. Clear liquor contains fewer congeners, compounds besides alcohol produced during fermentation and may contribute to the severity of hangovers. Many drinkers look to vodka as a lower calorie option that could be healthier than drinking "antioxidant-rich" red wine.

Vanessa Risotto, a registered dietitian and nutritionist in Hoboken, New Jersey, says that vodka may be healthier than wine. "If you want antioxidant benefits [from wine], you’d have to take a lot of..."
Health News Tips

- Sound too good to be true? It probably is.
- Does the story only claim the benefits? Does it quickly run through the list of side effects?
- What about the cost of the procedure, product or treatment?
- Does the story report about a "simple screening test"? If it does, that should raise a red flag as there are no "simple screening tests".
- More is not always better. Newer is not always better when it comes to health care.
But also watch for...

- Headlines are intended to draw attention to an article, not summarize conclusions.
- Look for the names and affiliation of the scientists responsible for research.
- Does the article mention where and when the study has been or will be published?
- Who funded the study? Do you see a potential bias? (This is important).
- Are the results from animal studies?
- Reports from medical conferences- be cautious! "At conferences, researchers often present preliminary findings that can be quite tantalizing, but that may or may not pan out"
Understanding Medical Research

Summary

It seems to happen almost every day - you hear about the results of a new medical research study. Sometimes the results of one study seem to disagree with the results of another study.

It’s important to be critical when reading or listening to reports of new medical findings. Some questions that can help you evaluate health information include:

- Was the study in animals or people?
- Does the study include people like you?
- How big was the study?
- Was it a randomized controlled clinical trial?
- Where was the research done?
- If a new treatment was being tested, were there side effects?
- Who paid for the research?
- Who is reporting the results?

NIH: National Institutes of Health

Start Here

- Clinical Research and Clinical Trials (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)
  Also in Spanish

Related Health Topics

Evaluating Health Information
Understanding the Science

Why is it important to know the science of health? Simply put, because there is a lot of misinformation out there—from alternative treatments disguised as evidence to excessive claims made by supplement manufacturers to TV doctors touting the latest “miracle cure.”

On this page you’ll find tools to help you better understand complex scientific topics that relate to health research so that you can be discerning about what you hear and read and make well-informed decisions about your health. Know the Science features a variety of materials including interactive modules, quizzes, and videos to provide engaging, straightforward content. Learn more about how the Know the Science initiative got started.

So, what are you waiting for? Dive in, and get to know the science.

Interactive Modules

- Know the Science: 9 Questions To Help You Make Sense of Health Research
  - Understanding the basics of scientific studies to help you make better health decisions.

- Know the Science: How Medications and Supplements Can Interact
  - Find out if the drugs and supplements you take may interact in a harmful way.

- Know the Science: The Facts About Health News Stories
  - Find out how to tell if a news story is reliable or has missing, misleading, or conflicting information.

- Know the Science: 6 Commonly Misunderstood Words About Complementary Health Approaches
  - Do you know the difference between holistic and homeopathic? Take this 6-question quiz to find out.
Webinars and Online (synchronous and asynchronous)

- NNLM Resource Picks (NLМ resources)
- PNR Rendezvous (various topics)
- Improving the Health, Safety, and Well-being of LGBTQ+ Populations
- Evaluation Basics

NNLM Training Schedule
Go to your public library or hospital library
Thank you!

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