

# Finding good quality health information on the internet

Information for  
patients



Adapted from a leaflet by Carol-Ann Regan, Clinical Librarian,  
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The purpose of this booklet is to help you to find quality and trustworthy sources of health information on the internet.

## Introduction

During your treatment journey you will have been given information from your health care professionals. You can use the internet to add to the information you have already been given and research health related issues for yourself.

(If you do not have a computer or mobile device you can use your local public library. If you take this booklet with you, they can help you access the websites listed).

The internet is a wonderful resource but not everything on it is trustworthy, accurate, reliable or up to date. Anyone can put information on it, but there is no one checking for inaccuracies or out of date information. It is up to the user to decide how relevant the information is and to determine the reliability of what they find. AI-based technology can be a useful aid when using the internet, but you may see false outputs or inconsistent results.

## So how can you decide what to trust?

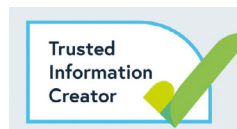
### Quality Standards

There are two quality standards found on health websites which show you that the information they contain should be trustworthy.

Many good sites do not have these but these standards are one way for you to judge the reliability of a website.

## **The PIF Tick**

The PIF TICK (Trusted Information Creator Kitemark) is the new UK-wide Quality Mark for Health Information.



The PIF TICK on leaflets, websites, apps or videos shows an organisation's health information has been gone through a professional and robust production process. To be awarded the PIF TICK an organisation must show its health information production process meets certain criteria.

<https://pifonline.org.uk/pif-tick>

## **Health on the Net Foundation**

Health on the Net (HON) is a Non-Governmental Organisation, internationally known for its work in health information ethics. It was founded to encourage the dissemination of quality health information.



## **General Health Websites**

These websites have general health information and life style topics.

### ***NHS website - [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)***

This site is funded by the Department of Health. It is committed to providing trustworthy information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare. The NHS website ensures its content is evidence-based and includes the best scientific knowledge available.

### ***Patient.info***

Patient.info is a leading independent health site, established for over 20 years. The site contains a symptom checker, healthy living articles, support forums, videos and quizzes. It is accredited by HON.

The patient.co.uk website: [www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

A further list of sources of health information can be found on our website at: [www.leedslibraries.nhs.uk/resources/health-information-for-patients-the-public](http://www.leedslibraries.nhs.uk/resources/health-information-for-patients-the-public)

## What about health websites that do not have a quality standard?

When you are looking at a website, remember **WWW**

**Who:** who is the author or publisher of the site and what are their credentials?

Are they fair in what they say? What are their reasons for publishing, for example, are they trying to give you information or sell you something? Do other websites link to them?

Look at the "About Us" section on the site. This should give you some of this information.

**What:** what is on the site?

Does the information seem accurate? Is it relevant and up to date? Do they link the information to evidence? Do they tell you where the information has come from?

Look at the last updated information (usually at the bottom of the web page). This will tell you when the information was added. Look for references or links to the evidence. Also check if the links to other information/sites work, are they broken? Too many of these may indicate the site is no longer being maintained.

**Where:** what part of the world is the website coming from? Statistics and treatment information may not be relevant to the United Kingdom.

Look at the web address information as this will often indicate the country of origin and type of organisation. See below for examples:

.au = Australia

.com or .org = an organisation

.ca = Canada

.ac = an educational site

.de = Germany

.gov = a government site

## Further information on finding reliable information

- **Improving your health online**

[www.learnmyway.com/subjects/improving-your-health-online](http://www.learnmyway.com/subjects/improving-your-health-online)

- **MedlinePlus - Guide to Healthy Web Surfing**

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/healthywebsurfing.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/healthywebsurfing.html)







## What did you think of your care?

Scan the QR code or visit [bit.ly/nhsleedsfft](https://bit.ly/nhsleedsfft)

*Your views matter*



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