


Finding Good Quality Health Information on the Internet

Health Information Websites



We put our patients first by working as one team, leading and listening, and striving for the best. Together, we make the difference.

Musgrove Park Hospital is part of
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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. The URL (uniform resource locator) will also give clues. See below for examples:

- .au = Australia
- .ca = Canada
- .de = Germany
- .com or .org = an organisation
- .ac = an educational site
- .gov = a government site

Here are some sites you might like to explore on the subject of sourcing reliable information:

Staying safe online

<http://www.nhs.uk/aboutNHSChoices/aboutnhschoices/staying-safe-online/Pages/find-health-information-online.aspx>

MedlinePlus Guide to Healthy Web Surfing

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/healthywebsurfing.html>

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For translation into other languages or in Braille, large print or audio, please contact Medical Photography.

Introduction

During your treatment journey you will have been given information from your health care professionals. The purpose of this booklet is to help you to find quality and trustworthy sources of health information on the internet. You can then choose 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 found on it is trustworthy, accurate, reliable or up to date. Anyone can put information on it but there is no editor, checking for inaccuracies or out of date information.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. So how can you decide what to trust?

Quality Standards

There are two quality standards found on health websites which are a clear indication 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 Information Standard

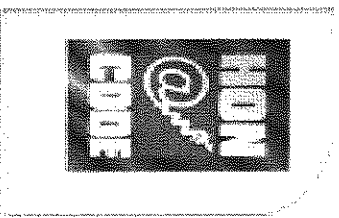
This is an independent certification programme commissioned by NHS England. It is awarded to organisations producing clear, accurate, up to date, evidenced health information.

The Information Standards website has a list of all bodies it has given certification to. For more information about the scheme and a list of those organisations who have been awarded a certificate see: <http://www.england.nhs.uk/tis/>



Health on the Net Foundation

HON is a Non-Governmental Organization, internationally known for its work in the field of health information ethics and was founded to encourage the dissemination of quality health information.



Please note that the "Health On the Net" logo may appear on sites that are not certified. To check certification, click on the HON logo. You should be directed to a page that includes the HON code number for the site. www.hon.ch

General Health Websites

These websites have general health information and life style topics.

NHS Choices

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. NHS Choices ensures its content is evidence-based and includes the best scientific

knowledge available. It is accredited by

The Information Standard.

The NHS Choices website:

<http://www.nhs.uk/>

Patient.co.uk

Patient.co.uk is the UK's leading

independent health site, established for over 15 years. With more than 8 million visits a month, it is a trusted source of information for both patients and health professionals nationwide.

The site contains over 4000 health information leaflets, a wellbeing centre, a free health check, and thousands of discussion forums. It is accredited by The Information Standard and HON
The patient.co.uk website:
<http://www.patient.co.uk/>

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

When you are looking at a website, remember W W W

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?