

# How to Evaluate Online Health Information

When you need health information, websites can be helpful resources. However, not all information on the internet is reliable or accurate. When you find a site, blog or social media group with health information, ask yourself these questions:



## Who is responsible for the website?

Websites run by government agencies, non-profit universities or colleges, and medical organizations are usually more reliable than for-profit businesses.



## Who approves the information that is posted?

Look for information that has been reviewed and approved by medical experts or medical organizations.



## Is the website trying to sell you something?

If a website is selling products or services, or has many advertisements, it may give biased information to make a sale.



## Is the health information up-to-date?

Certain health information, such as screening or treatment options, change over time. Information on the website should be reviewed or updated at least every few years.



## Does the information seem balanced and believable?

If the site makes health claims that seem too good to be true or promises quick and amazing results, be cautious.



## Is the same information on other websites?

Visit more than one website and compare what you find. If information is reliable, it shouldn't vary greatly between reputable websites.

Turn over for more helpful tips →



## Things to Remember:

- Ask for recommended websites from your healthcare provider.
- Discuss any information you find online with your healthcare provider before starting, changing or stopping a treatment.
- The MaineHealth Learning Resource Center has health educators who can help you find reliable health information. Email [HealthQuestions@MaineHealth.org](mailto:HealthQuestions@MaineHealth.org) or call 866-609-5183.
- Websites, blogs, and social media posts may contain misinformation. Talk about what you read with your healthcare provider.



## These sites are great places to start:

- [MedlinePlus.gov](http://MedlinePlus.gov)- Health conditions, treatments and medicines
- [CDC.gov](http://CDC.gov)- Diseases and health conditions
- [HealthFinder.gov](http://HealthFinder.gov)- Interactive health tools and information
- [MaineHealth.org](http://MaineHealth.org)- Search tools and health information resources



## Recommended sites for you:

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