

Can I trust this information?



With endless amounts of information on the internet, it's important to be able to identify trustworthy, high quality content.

Online information

Health and medical research is an important part of care. It can help us to understand why and how often certain diseases, conditions, or symptoms occur. It can also help us learn about the best ways to treat diseases and manage illnesses.

Many of us are now looking for health information online. The Digital Health Authority reports that around 80% of us have a smartphone and that one in 20 searches on Google in Australia are health related.

Having access to information when you need it can be very comforting. We are also used to technology and use it for many other parts of our daily life so using it to find out about a symptom or a treatment seems quite natural.

However, one of the important things we need to think about is whether you can trust what you find online and how you can judge the quality of the advice being provided.

Indicators of quality online resources

The most common things you should check are:

- A clear statement of what it is about and why it was developed
- Easily identifiable and credible authors
- A 'Contact Us' option
- Balanced information supported with references or links to other sites
- Information that has been written or updated recently
- A site that is well presented and easy to navigate
- Clear distinction between information and advertising

When looking for health information you should always be cautious of what you find. Check if other sites are suggesting the same thing. Be careful, if the site is trying to get you to buy a product or a service. And remember to talk to your health professional about any health concerns.

Endorsed sites

There are several respected authorities that have established guidelines for the quality of websites. Checking if the online resource is compliant with such agencies means the site developers follow rigorous quality processes.

The HONcode, developed by the Health On the Net Foundation, is a code of ethics that guides website operators in setting up mechanisms to provide quality, objective, and transparent medical information tailored to the needs of the audience.



Sites who are registered and include a HONcode certificate on their site have been quality checked.

Healthdirect Australia works with a group of leading Australian health organisations that provide trusted content. An information partnership with Healthdirect reflects a shared vision to provide relevant and reliable health and related information to Australian consumers.

CarerHelp is registered with both [HONCode](#) and [Healthdirect](#).

Useful resources

Healthdirect has produced an infographic with practical tips and advice which can help you assess health information online. You can find it [here](#).

The Better Health Channel has a webpage on [finding reliable health information](#).

CareSearch has a page for Patients, Families, and Carers on [using online information](#).

CarerHelp is here when you need it
www.carerhelp.com.au