

## Technology Panel Presentation: HCEA 2008 Conference “Untangling the Web: Finding Credible Health Information on the Internet”

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### Untangling the Web

There is a lot of information available on the internet. It can be overwhelming and difficult to know if the information you've found is accurate, appropriate or up to date. It's helpful to start with a few, trusted sites and evaluate the quality of the information you find.

### Evaluating Health Websites: Things to Consider

#### Who is providing the information?

The source of the information or the sponsor of the website may help you determine whether or not the information is accurate.

Look for websites from organizations (websites ending in .org), the government (websites ending in .gov) or educational institutions (websites ending in .edu).

Websites from businesses (ending in .com) may provide information, too, but be aware that they may have commercial interests or be trying to sell you something.

Sometimes websites will also list the name and credentials of the author or members of an advisory board.

#### Does it provide facts? Is it believable?

Read carefully to determine whether the information is someone's opinion or backed up by facts. Testimonials, people telling their own stories, may be persuasive and powerful.

However, you want to look for information that is linked to medical research and evidence. Find and compare with other sources of similar information. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

#### Is the information up to date?

Health information changes quickly. Look for information that has been written or reviewed within the past few years. Many websites list the date of the last update at the bottom of the page.

### Some Good Places to Start

#### General Health Information

American Academy of Family Physicians [www.familydoctor.org](http://www.familydoctor.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

HealthFinder [www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov)

HealthyRoads [www.healthyroadsmedia.org](http://www.healthyroadsmedia.org) (many languages)

KidsHealth [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

MedlinePlus [www.MedlinePlus.gov](http://www.MedlinePlus.gov)

National Institutes of Health [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov)

New York Online Access to Health [www.noah-health.org](http://www.noah-health.org)


SeniorHealth <a href="http://www.nihseniorhealth.gov">www.nihseniorhealth.gov</a>
Top 100 consumer health websites: <a href="http://caphis.mlanet.org/consumer/index.html">http://caphis.mlanet.org/consumer/index.html</a>

Condition-specific websites	
Alzheimers Association	<a href="http://www.alz.org">www.alz.org</a>
Arthritis Foundation	<a href="http://www.arthritis.org">www.arthritis.org</a>
American Diabetes Association	<a href="http://www.diabetes.org">www.diabetes.org</a>
American Heart Association	<a href="http://www.americanheart.org">www.americanheart.org</a>
American Lung Association	<a href="http://www.lungusa.org">www.lungusa.org</a>
Food Guide Pyramid	<a href="http://www.mypyramid.gov">www.mypyramid.gov</a>
National Cancer Institute	<a href="http://www.cancer.gov">www.cancer.gov</a>
National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute	<a href="http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov">www.nhlbi.nih.gov</a>
SmokeFree	<a href="http://www.smokefree.gov">www.smokefree.gov</a>

For more information: National Health Information Center	
	<a href="#">List of Federal Health Information Centers</a>
	<a href="#">Toll-free numbers for health information</a>

## References

### To Help Find and Evaluate Internet Health Information

- Health on the Net Foundation: <http://www.hon.ch/>

  1. **Authoritative:** Indicate the qualifications of the authors
  2. **Complementarity:** Information should support, not replace, the doctor-patient relationship
  3. **Privacy:** Respect the privacy and confidentiality of personal data submitted to the site by the visitor
  4. **Attribution:** Cite the source(s) of published information, date and medical and health pages
  5. **Justifiability:** Site must back up claims relating to benefits and performance
  6. **Transparency:** Accessible presentation, accurate email contact
  7. **Financial disclosure:** Identify funding sources
  8. **Advertising policy:** Clearly distinguish advertising from editorial content
- Medical Library Association: <http://www.mlanet.org/resources/userguide.html>
- MedlinePlus Evaluating Health Information: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/evaluatinghealthinformation.html>
- MedlinePlus Healthy Websurfing: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/healthywebsurfing.html>
- National Library of Medicine: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/services/guide.html>
- National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine: <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/webresources>