

Finding Reliable Medical Information on the Internet

Educating yourself about health and medicine can be a huge task – there’s so much information out there! This pathfinder is designed to help you get started.

When you’re searching the Internet, be discriminating with the websites you choose – not everything you’ll find on the Internet is true! Make an effort to find out *who* publishes the websites you use, what sort of *qualifications* they have, what their *purpose* is (are they trying to sell you something?) and whether or not the website you’re using contains *current* information.

Information on Specific Diseases, Medical Conditions and Drugs

If you need facts on specific medical conditions and their usual means of treatment, the following are good places to start:

Healthfinder

www.healthfinder.gov

This site is published by the National Health Information Center, which is part of the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. It is very easy-to-use site. It contains a “Health Library” with online medical reference articles on wellness, diseases and conditions, medicines, etc. It also has links to health-related articles, other health resources on the web and a list of health questionnaires you can take.

MedlinePlus

www.medlineplus.gov

Published by the National Library of Medicine and the National Institute of Health, MedlinePlus contains a wealth of health information. You can find information on specific diseases and conditions, medicines, a medical encyclopedia with photos and diagrams, plus articles on current health news.

The Mayo Clinic Website

www.mayoclinic.com

Contains searchable databases of information on medical conditions and prescription and non-prescription drugs as well as seasonal general health information . The medical condition database includes color photos, descriptions of usual treatment options and recommendations on when to see your doctor.

WebMD

www.webmd.com

Includes a medical condition database, a function where you can enter your specific symptoms, information about clinical trials, drugs and herbs and much more.

Drug Digest

www.drugdigest.org

This nonprofit website has a database of over 5,000 different drugs. It includes an interaction database, where you can check to see whether a drug you’re taking may interact with another drug, a page that compares different drugs that are used for the same ailments, plus pictures of pills to help you identify them.

PubMed

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?

The PubMed website is a publication of the National Library of Medicine. It is a free, research-oriented site with a database of medical articles you can search by keyword.

Genetics Home Reference

<http://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/>

This site, which is also published by the National Library of Medicine, provides information on many different genetic conditions as well as providing a starting point for those who wish to learn the basics of how genetics work. The site also contains information on The Human Genome Project.

ClinicalTrials.gov

www.clinicaltrials.gov

This site provides information about where clinical trials are being conducted around the nation. You can search for trials by condition and by geographical location.

Medical Terms

Here are a few online medical dictionaries. Because medical terminology can be difficult to understand (even in medical dictionaries!), it may be a good idea to ask your doctor for further explanations of terms you don’t understand.

Stedman's Online

www.stedmans.com

While the primary purpose of this website is to sell print version's of Stedman's medical books, it also offers a free, online dictionary.

The Merck Manual of Medical Information – Second Home Edition, Online Version

www.merckhomeedition.com

This website allows you to search the Second Home Edition of the Merck Manual.

Legal Regulations on Doctors, Hospitals and Health Insurance Companies:

Texas Department of Insurance – File a Complaint

www.tdi.state.tx.us/consumer/cportal.html

The Texas Department of Insurance website offers a page where you can file a complaint about an insurance company or healthcare provider online and find out how the TDI can help you resolve disputes with insurance companies and health providers.

Texas Statutes

www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/hs.toc.htm

This is the main page for Texas Statutes. For laws relating to healthcare, click on the link to "Health and Safety Code."

Health Privacy Project

www.healthprivacy.org

This site provides information about laws and regulations relating to the privacy of your medical affairs.

Find Information on Specific Doctors, Hospitals and Nursing Homes

Texas State Board of Medical Examiners Website

www.tsbme.state.tx.us/

From the main page of the Texas State Board of Medical Examiners website, choose "Check on Your Doctor" from the menu on the left in order to view a profile of a specific doctor, including his/her specialties, educational background, contact information, malpractice information, and whether or not he/she has received any disciplinary action from the State Board. This website also includes information about how to file a complaint with the Board about a doctor.

American Medical Association Physician Select

<http://dbapps.ama-assn.org/aps/amahg.htm>

This site allows you to search for doctors by name, city and specialty.

Quality Check

www.jcaho.org/quality+check/index.htm

Provides Quality Check reports of hospitals, nursing homes, laboratories and mental health care and substance abuse programs in your geographic area.

American Hospital Directory

www.ahd.com

This site provides financial and statistical information on hospitals across the nation.

Local Medical Facilities

Mainland Medical Center

www.mainlandmedical.com

UTMB

www.utmb.edu

From the main UTMB webpage, click on "Health Care" to access articles and information about diseases and conditions, find contact information for departments of UTMB, email a nurse your medical questions or find a doctor who works at UTMB.

MD Anderson Cancer Center

www.mdanderson.org

Find information about cancer and the resources available at MD Anderson.