Healthy UNH's Guide to Health-Related Information on the Internet

More than ever, people are taking to the internet to access information about their health. With over 70,000 health-related websites available, it is important to know which ones we can trust.

COMMON SEARCHES INCLUDE:
- Alternative Treatments
- Diet, Nutrition, + Vitamins
- Diseases or Medical Problems
- Doctors or Hospitals
- Exercise and Fitness
- Immunizations
- Health Insurance
- Medical Treatments or Procedures
- Medications
- Mental, Physical, + Sexual Health

WHY WOULD I LOOK ONLINE FOR HEALTH-RELATED INFORMATION?
- Lots of information available
- Quick search results
- Anonymous
- Private

AVOID SELF-DIAGNOSIS

Searching for health information on the internet should be used as a tool to gain insight about health questions or concerns.

It is important to avoid self-diagnosis because that can lead to anxiety and stress. When researching symptoms, the internet will offer multiple diagnostic possibilities for a single symptom.

The internet is not a replacement for your healthcare provider.
NAVIGATING WEBSITES FOR RELIABLE INFORMATION

It can be overwhelming and difficult to determine the reliability of the site you are navigating. To help determine a website’s validity, the following questions should be asked:

WHO?
- Who owns the website? Is it a federal agency, medical school, large professional or nonprofit organization?
- Who wrote the information?
- Is the information reviewed? By whom?
- Is there a way to contact the author, sponsor, or owner of the website?

WHAT?
- Is there a mission or goal mentioned on the website?
- Does the website reference trustworthy sources, such as federal agencies, medical schools, large professional or nonprofit organizations?
- Does the website contain believable solutions?
- Is your privacy protected?

WHEN?
- When was the information on the website written, reviewed, or last updated?

WHY?
- Why was the website created?

Use good judgement and common sense when reviewing health information online. Numerous websites exist and many do not have any oversight regarding quality.