American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists (aapp.org)

Finding Sources for Health Care Information

- Using trusted sources and asking questions are important parts of managing your health.
- The best approach is to use online information to learn more about your condition and then work with a health care professional to make decisions about your care.

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Finding Reliable Health Care Information Online

The internet can be a helpful place to learn about health topics. There are many resources that have information on preventing illness, managing symptoms, and finding treatment options.

It is important to use information from trusted health sources. Reliable websites come from government health agencies and large medical centers. These organizations use scientific research and expert knowledge to provide accurate information.

How to Know if a Website is Trustworthy

Some trusted sources of general health care information are the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For mental health information, the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) are useful resources.

When looking at a website, you can use these tips to decide if the information is trustworthy:

- Websites ending in .gov or .edu are connected to government agencies or schools and are generally more credible, as they use information from scientific research, medical guidelines, and health care experts
- Check the website's "About Us" section to learn who runs the page and its purpose
- Look for information written or reviewed by health care professionals like doctors, pharmacists, nurses, or researchers

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can answer questions and respond to requests in a way that feels like talking to a person. It can be helpful to explain complex information like insurance information, medical conditions, and symptoms. AI programs are designed to provide helpful responses, but they do not think like health care professionals. It is important to know when to stop relying on AI and to seek advice from a health care professional. Some limitations of AI to keep in mind:

- AI can only use the information that you provide and cannot fully understand your medical history or personal situation
- AI may agree with your ideas or assumptions instead of checking if they are correct

Because of this, health care information and advice from AI should only be used as a starting point for learning and should not replace diagnosis or treatment by a health care provider.

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Social Media

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube can also be a source of health care information. However, many posts are based on personal opinions or experiences and may not be supported by scientific research. Creators may promote certain products as "natural" or "homeopathic" without discussing possible side effects, risks, or even if they have been proven to work. Always check health care information from social media with trusted health care professionals.

When to Contact a Health care Professional

You should contact a health care professional if you experience:

- Severe or worsening symptoms
- Side effects from a medication
- Questions or concerns about a medical condition
- Mental health concerns

Information from websites, social media, and AI tools can help you learn more about your health and prepare questions for your health care provider. However, only a health care professional can determine whether that information is accurate, safe, and appropriate for your individual situation.

Examples of Trustworthy Health Care Resources:

- National Institutes of Health (NIH) - www.nih.gov
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - www.cdc.gov/health-topics
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) – www.nami.org
- World Health Organization (WHO) - www.who.int
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) - www.fda.gov
- Mayo Clinic - www.mayoclinic.org
- Cleveland Clinic - my.clevelandclinic.org

Scan the QR code to view this toolkit.

Important Disclosure: This information is being provided as a community outreach effort of the American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists. This information is for educational and informational purposes only and is not medical advice. This information contains a summary of important points and is not an exhaustive review of information about the topic. Always seek the advice of a physician or other qualified medical professional with any questions you may have regarding medications or medical conditions. Never delay seeking professional medical advice or disregard medical professional advice as a result of any information provided herein. The American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists disclaims any and all liability alleged as a result of the information provided herein.