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Online Senior Health

1) How to tell if a health website is reliable

Most Google searches provide an enormous amount of information (for example, a search for arthritis provides 76,200,000 results). Some websites are more trustworthy than others. How do you know which websites are reliable?

Remember these four points when searching the Internet:

I. **Accuracy:** Does the website use reliable research? Check numerous sources to see if they contain the same information and to see if the results match.
II. **Authority:** In general, websites ending in **.org**, **.gov**, or **.edu** are the most reliable websites pertaining to health. Make sure the website is written by doctors, nurses, or other health care professionals. It is extremely useful to check the **About Us** portion of the website.
III. **Bias:** Who pays for the website? If a company supports a website, they could have control over the website and provide the wrong information.
IV. **Currency:** When was the information last updated? Make sure the information is no older than 3 years. New discoveries are being made in medical research all the time.

The **National Institute on Aging** provides a useful checklist to help you make sure that the health information you are reading online can be trusted.

- Is the sponsor/owner of the website a Federal agency, medical school, or large professional or nonprofit organization, or is it related to one of these?
- If not sponsored by a Federal agency, medical school, or large professional or nonprofit organization, does the website reference one of these trustworthy sources for its health information?
- Is the mission or goal of the sponsor clear?
- Can you see who works for the agency or organization and who authored the information? Is there a way to contact the sponsor of the website? (Look for a **Contact Us** option on the top or bottom of the home page).
- When was the information written or when was the webpage last updated?
- Is your privacy protected?
- Does the website offer unbelievable solutions to your health problem(s)? Are quick, miracle cures promised?

2) General Senior Health Websites

A: National Institute of Health Senior Health: www.nihseniorhealth.gov/index.html

NIHSeniorHealth makes aging-related health information easily accessible for family members and friends seeking reliable, easy-to-understand online health information.

Exercise 1: Locate information about glaucoma.

- Click the **Health Topics A-Z** tab at the top and then click the letter "G." You can also click the letter G from the alphabetical list in the box on the middle of the Home page. (Or you could type "Glaucoma" in the search box at the upper left).
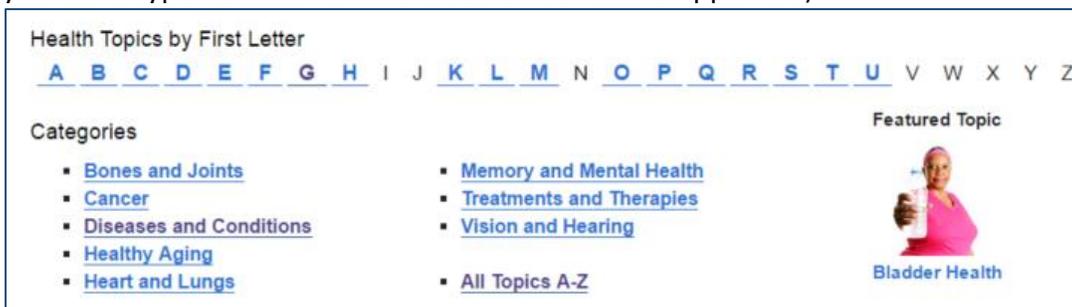
- Click "Glaucoma." You will retrieve a definition of the disease. The page also contains a video and two graphics. Select: *Click for More Information* in the first graphic.
- You can change the text size and contrast at the top. Click the "Resize Text" options and click "Change Contrast."
- You can find more glaucoma information with the links on the left. Click "Causes and Risk Factors" under **In this Topic**. Click the play button on the video in the middle of the page. Then click on the full screen icon.
- Click "Glaucoma Videos" on the left for more videos.
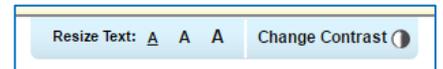
Exercise 2: Find videos on help for quitting smoking.

- Click the **Videos A-Z** tab at the top. You can scroll to browse all videos.
- Click "Quitting Smoking for Older Adults" and click any of the videos to view in "YouTube."

* Is this site trustworthy?
- It is a government site (.gov).
- In **About Us** we find: (*at bottom of site*) the site features authoritative and up-to-date health information from Institutes and Centers at NIH. The American Geriatrics Society provides expert and independent review of some of the material as well.
- The page also has a **Contact Us** link.

Verdict: There is solid evidence that this site is trustworthy.

B: CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention): www.cdc.gov/aging/index.html

The *CDC* has created a healthcare guide specific for seniors. The site covers many senior related topics and includes several interactive data tools.

Exercise 1: Find risk factors and general information on arthritis.

- Click the following link on the upper left of the home page.

Access general health information for older adults.

- Health information is arranged in alphabetical order. Click the link to Arthritis.
- Click "More" under **Basics** and then click "Risk Factors" from the links in the middle. You can view *Non-modifiable* and *Modifiable* risk factors.
- Click the **Back Arrow** twice to go back to the main Arthritis page.
- Click "More" under **Interventions**. Then click the link to **Fit & Strong**.
- Click the link to program at the end of paragraph. Click the link to locations on the right under "About Fit and Strong!"

Exercise 2: Locate the pamphlet on "The State of Mental Health and Aging in America."

- You can view many CDC publications as PDFs. Click **Data & Statistics** on the home page. (Use back arrow to go back to home page).
- Under **Reports** click **The State of Mental Health and Aging in America**.
- Click Download under "Issue Brief # 1." A new window or tab will open with the report.

Exercise 3: Find out how many adults 65+ had the flu shot in the most recent available year.

- Click **Healthy Aging Data Portal** in the **Interactive Data Tool** block on the right.
- In the box "Explore Healthy Aging Data by Location," use the down arrow to select Illinois or click on the state of on the map.
- A page on the overall health of older adults in Illinois will open. Switch **Category** at the top from "Overall Health" to "Screening and Vaccines." Then click **Go** on right.
- The chart of percentages of **older adults who reported having the influenza vaccine** should be first on the left. The bar on the right of the chart is for 65 years and older. Put your cursor on top of the bar for a more exact percentage.

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**C: Medline Plus:** www.medlineplus.gov/

MedlinePlus brings you information about diseases, conditions, and wellness issues in language you can understand! It includes useful interactive tools as well.

Exercise 1: Find information about testing for Shingles.

- First click **Health Topics** at the top and then click "Seniors" under **Demographic Groups** in the upper right.
- Scroll down and click the link to *Shingles*.
- Click the link for "Diagnosis and Tests" in the box at the top of the page.
- Click the link for "Chickenpox and Shingles Test."
- A new page will open containing detailed information about the testing procedure.

Exercise 2: Let's calculate our Body Mass Index and Calcium.

- Go back to the Medline Plus page (You can click the logo in the upper left to go to the home page) and then click **Videos & Tools** at the top.
- Click the button for **Health Check Tools**. Scroll down to "Calculate Your Body Mass Index" under **Body Weight**.
- Fill in the information in the following chart on the right and then click **Compute BMI**.
- Your body mass will show in the box at the bottom. The BMI Categories on the right of the chart will show the BMI Categories.
- Now let's click the link for "The BMI Tables." This way you can view weight and height ranges for numerous BMIs.
- Go back to the **Health Check Tools** page and click the "Calcium Calculator" link. Fill in information and click "Calculate your calcium intake."
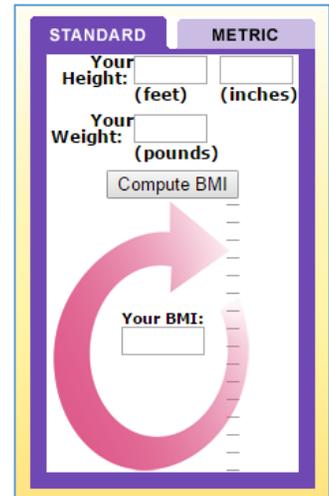
Exercise 3: Suppose we wish to try Echinacea after hearing that it helps to strengthen the immune system. Search Medline for "Echinacea" for precautions or side effects.

- Click **Drug & Supplements** at the top. Then click the link for **All Herbs and Substances.**

All herbs and supplements

- Scroll down to the "E"s (or click "E" at the top) and then click the link to "Echinacea."
- Click the link to "What do we Know About Safety" under *On this Page*.
- This will provide you with access to information about possible side effects. You can also search scientific literature for drug/herb interactions with the link at the end.

- **D: Google:** www.google.com

You can use *Google* to find basic health information quickly. Just make sure to check the source!

Exercise 1: Find information about the Zika virus and check the source.

- Go into Google and search "Zika" or "Zika Virus." As usual, you will receive a long list of search results.
- The graphic at the right contains the information we're looking for. Scroll to read basic information about Zika. At the bottom of the image, you can download a PDF for more detailed information.
- The sources will appear at the bottom of the graphic.

Sources: Mayo Clinic and others. Learn more

- Our source is the Mayo Clinic. This is a trusted source.
- Click the tabs for **Symptoms** and **Treatments** at the top of the graphic.

E: Mayo Clinic. www.mayoclinic.org/

The *Mayo Clinic* contains a wealth of useful information, including information on healthy lifestyle, symptoms, diseases, and drugs and supplements.

Exercise 1: Find some quick information on healthy aging.

- From the Mayo Clinic home page, click the link for **Patient Care & Health Info** at the top. Then select **Healthy Lifestyle** from the drop-down list.
- Click the link to "Healthy Aging" under **Life Stages** on the right (under *Adult*).
- You will link to a page that gives you a basic overview on healthy aging.
- Click the **In-Depth** link at the top of the page.
- Scroll down the list to view topic links that you can explore more in-depth.

3) Find a Doctor, Dentist, or Compare Hospitals.

A: Medicare Physician Compare: www.medicare.gov/physiciancompare/search.html

Medicare.gov is a federal government website managed by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

Exercise 1: Search for general practitioners in (or near) Lake Zurich.

- Type "Lake Zurich, IL" **or** area code "60047" in the box marked **Location**.
- Type "General Practice" in the box marked: **What are you searching for?** Then click the green search button on the right.
- A list of practitioners will appear in the center with options to modify results on right.
- Use the key below to determine if the Physician takes Medicare:
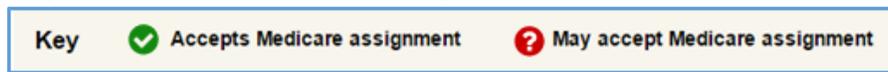
- Within the list, the address and phone number is on the right and the driving distance is on the left.
- For detailed directions, click "Map and Directions" on the bottom and then type the starting address.
- Click the physician's name for additional information about that physician.

Exercise 2: Use the "Search by Body Part" tab to find a physical therapist to help with Sciatica.

- Click the **Search by Body Part** tab on the homepage.
- Choose your gender and then choose a body part (most likely **back**).
- Make sure to add location information in the box above.
- Check "Sciatica" under section 2 in the middle.
- Check "Physical Therapy" under **Select a Specialty** on the right.
- Locations will appear on a map at the right.

B: Web MD Physician Directory: www.doctor.webmd.com/

WebMDdicare.gov is known primarily as an online publisher of news and information pertaining to human health and well-being.

- In the first box you can search for a doctor by name, specialty, condition, or procedure. In the second, choose your location.
- You can also browse the links in the columns below.
- Let's select "Neurologist" under the **Search by Specialty** column.
- Then select "Illinois" from the list of states.
- Click "L." If you can't find Lake Zurich, you will need to select or browse for a city that you know is nearby (Palatine?).

C: ADA Find a Dentist: www.mouthhealthy.org/en/find-a-dentist

The website for the American Dental Association, the oldest and largest dental society in the world.

Exercise 1: Find a dentist within 10 miles of the library.

- In the top box, enter the library address (or your own address, if you prefer).
- Select "all types of Dentistry" under specialty and *10 miles* for distance. Then check Terms of Use and click the **Find a Dentist** button.
- You will get a list of dentists ranked by nearest distance. Click the first one for further details and a map.

Exercise 2: Find a list of healthy dental habits for adults over 60.

- Click the button for **ADULTS OVER 60** in the upper right of the page.
- Click the link to **Healthy Habits** in the middle of the page.
- Note that you can link to other topics on this page, such as *cavities* and *fluoride*.
- You can print, email, or share the information with the icons at the upper right.

Exercise 3: Look for possible tooth issues with the **ADA Dental Symptom Checker**.

- Click the green "Check Now" button on the left in the ADA Dental Symptom Checker box.
- Select your *gender* and *age range* on the top. Choose *Mouth* on the bottom and then click **Next Step**.
- Select *tooth* from the scroll bar on the bottom. (You can also click on the teeth in the drawing above).
- Check the box next to *toothache*, choose *severe* under pain level, and then click **See possible conditions** on the bottom.
- You will retrieve a list of possible conditions. Click *Chipped Tooth* for more details and look on the bottom of the entry for suggested *Action to Take*.
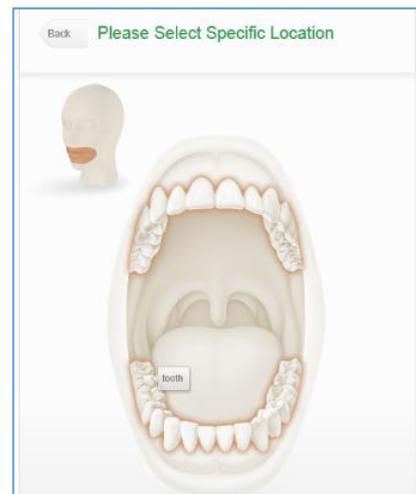
D: Medicare.gov Hospital Compare: www.medicare.gov/hospitalcompare/search.html

Compare hospitals based on their overall star rating, summarizing up to 64 measures of quality shown on Hospital Compare.

Exercise 1: Find hospitals within 50 miles of Lake Zurich.

- From the main Hospital Compare page, type "Lake Zurich, IL" or the zip code (60047) in the *Location* box under **Find a Hospital**.
- On the right side of the page, use the arrow under location to change distance to 10 miles and click **Update Search Results**.
- Then change the distance to 50 miles.
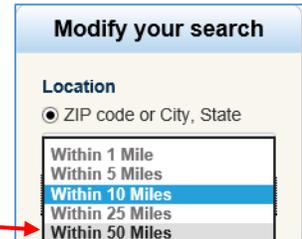
*Exercise 2:* Compare three of the hospitals from your search results.

- From the list of 50, click the green **Add to Compare** button at the top or bottom. The button will turn red.
- After you have selected the three, click **Compare Now** at the top.
- The hospitals will appear next to each other in columns with comparative information. You can access the following tabs on the top for different types of information:

General information	Survey of patients' experiences	Timely & effective care	Complications	Readmissions & deaths	Use of medical imaging	Payment & value of care

- If you click "Print all information" on the top, you can print or view all the columns at once.

Exercise 3: View a graph comparing Pneumonia Care at the three hospitals on a graph.

- Click the tab for **Timely and effective care.**
- Click **Pneumonia Care** in the middle of the list.
- Click the green **Show Graphs** button. You will open a graph comparing your three hospitals to the Illinois and National average pertaining to whether patients received the appropriate initial does of antibiotics.
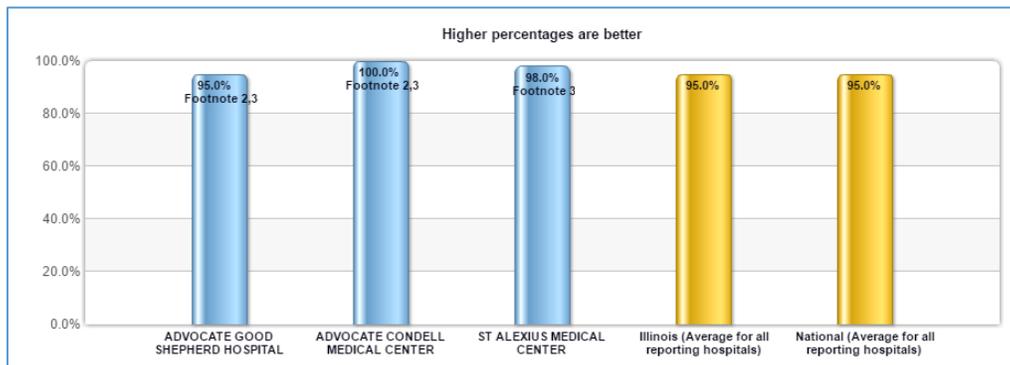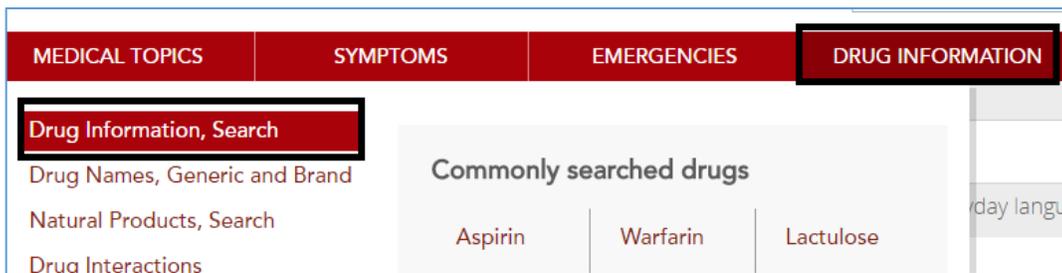
4) Prescription Drugs.

A: Merck Manual: Consumer Version: www.merckmanuals.com/home

Find information on medical topics, symptoms, drugs, procedures, news and more, written in everyday language.

Exercise 1: Find information on the Glaucoma medication: Lisinopril.

- Click the link for **Drug Information** on the top of the page. Then click *Drug Information, Search* from the menu.

MEDICAL TOPICS	SYMPTOMS	EMERGENCIES	DRUG INFORMATION
Drug Information, Search		Commonly searched drugs	
Drug Names, Generic and Brand			day langu
Natural Products, Search		Aspirin Warfarin Lactulose	
Drug Interactions			

- Type "Lisinopril" in the search box and then click **Search**. Click the red link for "Lisinopril" under Patient Education – Adult Medication.
- You will receive a page of information about the drug, including brand names, drug use, and side effects.
- Click the blue Open in Drug Identifier link at the top. On the top you have the option to search a drug by shape, imprint, or color.
- Scroll down the page for different images of this drug.

Exercise 2: Check if there is an interaction between two drugs.

- Click **Drug Information** at the top and then click *Drug Interactions*.
- Type "Zoloft" in the search box and then hit the enter key. Then type "Zelapar" in the box and then click the **Find Interactions** button.
- Click the link under *Drug Drug* for interactions of these two drugs together.

Exercise 3: Use the *Pill Identifier* to try to identify a specific pill.

- Click **Drug Information** at the top and then click *Pill Identifier*.
- Choose "3 sided" for shape and "blue" for color. Then click the red **go** button for drug identifier results.
- You can click the name of drug in red for specific information on that drug.
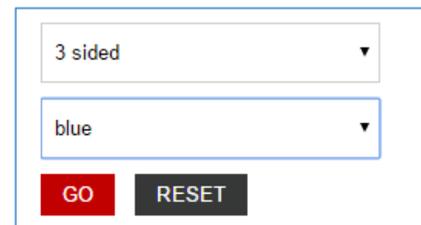
5) Medicare and Health Insurance.

A: Medicare: www.medicare.gov

Exercise 1: Find out whether (or to what extent) x-rays are covered with Medicare.

- Type "X-rays" in the search box at top and click **Go**.
- You will receive a list of different results, all pertaining to x-rays. Click the first one which reads "X-rays".
- A new window opens which tells you about who is eligible (all with part B) and some information about cost and percentage paid.

Exercise 2: Examine the **Your Medicare Costs** tab for information on Medicare Part A.

- A menu pops up when you put your cursor on the **Your Medicare Costs** tab at the top. You can click one of the menu items if it has the information you are interested in but we will simply click the tab itself.
- A list will display pertaining to the costs of different parts of the Medicare program. Click *Part A* costs to examine information on part A.
- You can click the back arrow to go back to the main list. However, the other links should show on the left. Click *Medicare 2016 Costs at a Glance* to access a brief two-columned chart of costs. Below the chart are links in which you can view more detailed information on parts A-D.

Exercise 3: Find available Health and Drug plans in the area.

- Select **Drug Coverage (Part D)**. Then choose *Find Health and Drug Plans* from the link on the left, the bottom, or from the pop-up menu.
- We will do a general search by typing in the zip code of Lake Zurich. If you have Medicare, you can do a personalized search below.
- Begin to fill out the form (we can make up information). Type "Lisinopril" on the second page.
- On the third page, select the first pharmacy option and then click **Continue to Plan Results**. Check the first option and then click **Continue to Plan Results**.
- Check two of the results and then click **Compare Plans**. You can then scroll down for information on these two plans.

6) Assisted Living

A: Aging Care: https://www.agingcare.com/

Aging Care is one of the best healthcare resources for information and a community for elderly patients and their caregivers. It provides the essential information and health tools, such as caregiver support, elder care, money and legal advice, senior living, and a caregiver community.

Exercise 1: Look for assisted living housing options in Lake Zurich.

- The home page has a search box (*Housing and* Care) in the upper right. Check *Assisted Living* (most likely, it is the one already checked).
- Type Lake Zurich, IL in the box (or the zip code) and then click **See My Results**.
- The location(s) will display with the phone number. You can access reviews, pricing information and you can click a button for **More Information**.
- If you scroll down below the search, you will have links to towns close to Lake Zurich. Click the link for "Barrington" and then scroll through the results.
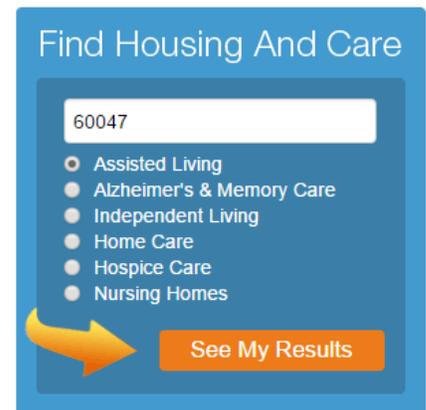
Exercise 2: Download a guide about Moving into Senior Housing.

- From the links at the top, click **Care Guides**.
- Scroll down to the link for *Moving into Senior Housing*. Click the blue *Download Now* button.
- This will not actually download the guide, but it will ask for your email address. Enter your email address.
- You will soon receive an email from Agingcare.com. It will contain a link to the document. You can click the link and download it to your computer.

Exercise 3: Examine the Long Term health care options on the site.

- Click the link to **Find Care** and scroll down the page to view different options.
- Go back up to the top and click the link *In-Home Care*.
- You will obtain a great deal of information that you can view by scrolling down the page (including links).
- Type "60047" in the box marked *Find Care in your Area*. You will obtain a list similar to that of the first exercise.

Recommended Additional Resources:

Other technology classes
Go to http://www.eapl.org/events to view and signup for other computer classes.

Class handouts
Go to http://eapl.org/events/computer-programs/class-handouts to download copies of class handouts and exercise files.

Librarian and computer aide assistance
We are glad to help you out at the second floor reference desk as best we can while helping others.

Help appointments
Ela Library cardholders can schedule one-on-one appointments with librarians for further help. We can help with our Digital Media Labs or with general technology questions in our areas of expertise. Appointments last up to one hour. Paper appointment request forms are available at the 2nd floor reference desk. You can also request appointments online:
- Go here http://www.eapl.org/DMLhelp to sign up for a Digital Media Lab appointment.
- Go here http://www.eapl.org/computer-programs/one-one-technology-help-appointment-request to request a general tech help appointment.

Tech Tutoring
The last Wednesday of some months, a tech savvy librarian is available for six 30 minute tech tutoring appointments. Bring a list of questions and we'll help with as many as possible. Limit one tutoring appointment per month per patron. First registered first served, no library card required. Go to http://www.eapl.org/events to register for a session.

Databases
The Library offers card holders access to many premium databases. These include two which can help you learn more about technology.
- Gale Courses offers a wide range of highly interactive, instructor led courses that you can take entirely online. As an Ela Area Public Library card holder in good standing, you are entitled to these courses at no cost. Courses run for six weeks and new session begin every month.
- Lynda.com offers technology training with over 20,000 training videos on over 300 topics with exercise files included. The Library pays for you card holders in good standing to access this resource, however you will be required to create a free account. *Please remember to log out when you are finished.*

Access both of these databases from the library Research page: http://www.eapl.org/resources