



HOW TO FIND TRUSTWORTHY HEALTH INFORMATION ONLINE

If you have just received a cancer diagnosis, you may have many questions. Like many people, you may look online for answers. It is important to be able to tell the difference between information that is trustworthy and information that is outdated, wrong, or changed to advertise a product.

It is always best to talk to your treatment team first. Below are tips to help you find online health information that you can trust.

• **DO look at the website's web address, or URL.**

The last three letters can tell you who is running or funding the website.

- .gov websites are funded by the US government
- .org often means information is coming from a non-profit organization
- .edu websites are funded by educational institutions, such as a university
- .com websites are for commercial (for-profit) purposes or businesses

• **DO be careful of what search terms you use.** Be as specific as possible when you are typing in what you want to look up. Your search results will depend on the words you use.

• **DO look for citations.** Trustworthy websites will always cite the medical or scientific research behind the material they post. They should also provide information about the health professionals and scientists who reviewed and approved the research or information.

• **DON'T rely on medical information that is more than a year old.** Cancer research and treatment is changing at a fast pace. Many types of cancer are treated much differently than they were in the past with the introduction of targeted therapies and immunotherapies. The outlook (prognosis) for many cancers is different than it was even a few years ago.

• **DON'T change medical treatment.** Don't change your treatment on your own. Talk with your treatment team about any medicines, vitamins, supplements and herbal products you read about online or that you are considering taking. This is important because they may interact with medicine you are already taking.

• **DON'T give out your personal information.** A trustworthy site will not ask for your personal information such as social security number, credit or debit card information, or driver's license. Before giving out any information, look for the website's privacy policy to learn about how your information may be shared. The information you provided might be used or given out to other places or websites without you knowing it.

Examples of websites with cancer information you can trust

• **American Society of Clinical Oncology:** cancer.net
Publishes up-to-date patient information approved by ASCO oncologists about cancer research, policy, and clinical trials

• **National Comprehensive Cancer Network:** nccn.org
Non-profit that hosts trustworthy guidelines and information for patients

• **National Cancer Institute:** cancer.gov
A branch of the U.S. National Institutes of Health, NCI offers reliable information sorted by cancer type

• **Medline Plus:** medlineplus.gov/cancer
An information and research database hosted by the U.S. National Library of Medicine

• **American Cancer Society:** cancer.org
Offers information about cancer treatments and support services, searchable by U.S. state and cancer type.

If you have questions about information you find online, **always ask your treatment team.** Don't be afraid to print out information from the web and bring it to your doctor.