

Key Criteria for Evaluating Health Websites



When searching for reliable health information online, it's crucial to assess the credibility and accuracy of the sources you encounter. Use this checklist to help you evaluate health websites effectively.

Name of website or article: _____

Website URL address: _____

1. Source and Authority:

- Is the website affiliated with reputable medical institutions, organizations or experts?
- Are the authors' qualifications and credentials clearly stated?
- Does the website list references or sources for the information provided?

2. Domain:

- Does the website have a trustworthy domain (.gov, .edu, .org)?
(Be cautious of commercial [.com] sites that prioritize sales over accurate information.)

3. Content Accuracy:

- Is the information presented supported by scientific evidence or research?
- Are medical claims balanced and not exaggerated?
- Are there spelling, grammar or factual errors on the website?

4. Transparency:

- Is there clear and transparent information about the website's purpose and mission?
- Are potential conflicts of interest disclosed, especially in articles about products or treatments?

5. Timeliness:

- Is the content up to date, reflecting current medical knowledge and guidelines?
(Look for publication or revision dates to ensure relevancy.)

6. References and Citations:

- Does the website provide references or citations to reputable sources?
- Are these references hyperlinked, allowing you to verify information easily?

7. Bias and Objectivity:

- Is the information presented objectively, without a clear bias or agenda?
(Be cautious of websites promoting one specific treatment, product or viewpoint.)

8. Peer Review:

- If the website publishes medical research, is it reviewed by experts in the field?
(Peer-reviewed content is generally more reliable and credible.)

9. Design and Usability:

- Is the website well-organized, easy to navigate and visually appealing?
- Are there clear headings, subheadings and sections that aid readability?

10. Privacy and Security:

- Does the website have a clear privacy policy outlining how user data is collected and used?
- Does the website use secure connections (https://) to ensure your data is encrypted?

11. Advertising and Sponsorship:

- Is it clear what is content and what is advertising?
- Are sponsored posts or ads labeled appropriately?

12. User Engagement:

- Does the website allow users to ask questions, share experiences or interact with healthcare professionals?
- Are user comments or reviews monitored to prevent misinformation?

13. Accessibility:

- Is the website design accessible to users with disabilities?
- Are alternative text descriptions provided for images and multimedia content?

14. Contact Information:

- Is there a way to contact the website's administrators?

The ability to critically evaluate health websites will help you make informed decisions about the information you trust and use for your well-being. Remember, online information should not replace professional medical advice. Always consult a qualified healthcare provider for personalized guidance. Your health matters — ensure you're getting accurate and reliable information.



Find trustworthy information using **Consumer Health Complete**,
an EBSCO database available through our library.