



# Surf the Web Wisely

THE INTERNET HAS LOTS OF HEALTH ADVICE  
HERE'S HOW TO FIND OUT WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU

The Internet is the first place many of us look when we're curious about our health or the health of a loved one. Studies show that only 2 out of 10 of us know how to check the quality of the health information we find.

Here are some tips to better help you search and check the quality of the health advice you find online:

## While You Search:

- **Set Aside Plenty of Time** – When it comes to your health, taking the right amount of time to look for advice is the most important thing you can do.
- **Take a Look at Several Sites** – This allows you to verify claims from one website to another.
- **Use Advanced Search Features** – This allows you to make your search as specific as possible, and can eliminate less helpful websites. Most search engines have instructions on how to use their 'Advanced Search Features', so take advantage of it!

## When You Find a Website:

- **Check What Comes After the "dot"** – This is a hint as to who runs the site and what their interests may be:
  - “.com”: usually run by a for profit company
  - “.edu”: usually run by an academic site, like a university or medical school
  - “.org”: usually run by a nonprofit organization
- **Who is the Site For?** It's important to know if this site is meant for either: 1) health professionals or 2) you, a patient or health care consumer. Sites meant for health professionals often use more "medical jargon" than ones meant for the rest of us.
- **How Old Is the Site?** Medicine is a rapidly changing field, so looking at health information that's older than 5 years may not be as accurate as it should be. Look for dates or notices about when the site was last updated.

## So Where Should I Start?

- **kp.org/mydoctor:** Your gateway to your personal physician's homepage - not only a great source for health information (you'll find resources like the Healthwise® Health Encyclopedia), but also a place where you can view your personal health records, refill prescriptions, make appointments, and even e-mail your doctor!

## Here Are Some Sites We Like:

- **healthfinder.org:** US Department of Health and Human Services
- **cdc.gov:** US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- **medlineplus.gov:** National Library of Medicine
- **mayoclinic.com:** Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN

**Always remember – If you have questions about anything you read online or the quality of a website, you can call or e-mail your personal physician for his or her professional advice.**

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult your doctor. If you have questions or need more information about your medication, please speak to your pharmacist. Kaiser Permanente does not endorse any brand names; any similar products may be used. Herbs and supplements are sold over-the-counter. Kaiser Permanente carries only herb categories for which some evidence exists to show that the herbs may be effective to treat certain medical conditions.