How to tell if health information is up to date and based on facts

Asking questions can help you check if health information is likely to be true. The answers can help you decide whether you can trust the information.

Here are 3 questions to help you decide if health information can be trusted.

Is it based on facts?

Show moreShow less

Some health information is NOT based on facts. Information that is NOT true is sometimes shared:

- on social media, like on TikTok or Instagram
- in real life, like when you hear something from a friend
- by AI, like ChatGPT
- in books, like something you find in the library
- any other way you get information.

Good information:

- is true and has been checked
- is not made up or guessed
- does not spread rumours or false ideas.

For example, some health information has a section at the end called “sources” or “references”. This section says where the information has come from and can be a sign that the information is based on facts.

Is the information up to date?

Show moreShow less

Health information can change over time. Good information tells you when it was made or checked.

Look for:

- a date on the page
- words like “last updated”.

This helps you know if the information is likely to be current and still useful.

Do links and buttons work properly?

Show moreShow less

Good information is easy to use.

For information that you find online, this means:

- links open the right pages
- buttons work when you select them
- videos play properly.

Websites with broken links and other problems might be old. The information might be out of date. Or the information might be low quality.

It is also important to know who made the website and why they made it.

Health information should be helpful and made by people with good knowledge.

This resource is part of a series

How to check if health information is good and right for you

Everyone needs health information that is good and meets their needs, but it can be hard to know what information you can trust.

One of the ways you can get health information is from health resources. Health resources can be things like:

- fact sheets about a health problem
- guides that teach you how to do something good for your health
- videos that explain something about health
- apps that help you take care of your health.

Researchers asked people with intellectual disability, family members and health professionals what makes health resources good to use.

Together, they made a list to help people check health resources.

Resource Quality and Accessibility Checklist for People with Intellectual Disability and Their Supporters

We have used ideas from the Checklist to write about how you can check if health information is good and right for you. In the links below, you will find examples and practical advice to help build your knowledge and skills.

Often, the best information comes from a person who knows a lot about health and knows things about you too. For example, GPs and other health professionals give good health advice.

The advice we give here should be helpful to most people, but it is not specific to you. Talk to a health professional if:

- you are worried about your health
- you can't decide if some health information is good and right for you.

Show more

This resource was made by

National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health

The National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health (the Centre) works to improve health services and the health system so people with intellectual disability can live their best, healthiest lives.

The Centre was funded by the Australian Government. It is part of the National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability.

- Visit website