HEALTH ONLINE: Finding Information You Can Trust

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Greater Midwest Region

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Today we will talk about:

- Searching for health information that can be trusted
- How to read a webpage – finding quick facts and key points
- How to tell if the information you found is from a reliable source
- Finding websites in other languages
- Local places to use the internet

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IMPORTANT:

Information you find on **any** website does **not** replace what your medical provider recommends.

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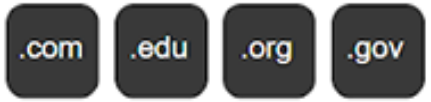
Common Web Terms

URL		Search bar	
Browser		Domain	
Social Media		Scroll	
Spam		Hyperlink	Example

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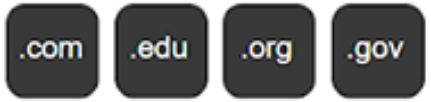
Browser		Domain	
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How can using online resources for health be helpful?

Find information quickly

Check your health symptoms

Research diseases

Communicate with your doctor or nurse

Look for wellness tips

Track your health conditions

Much more...

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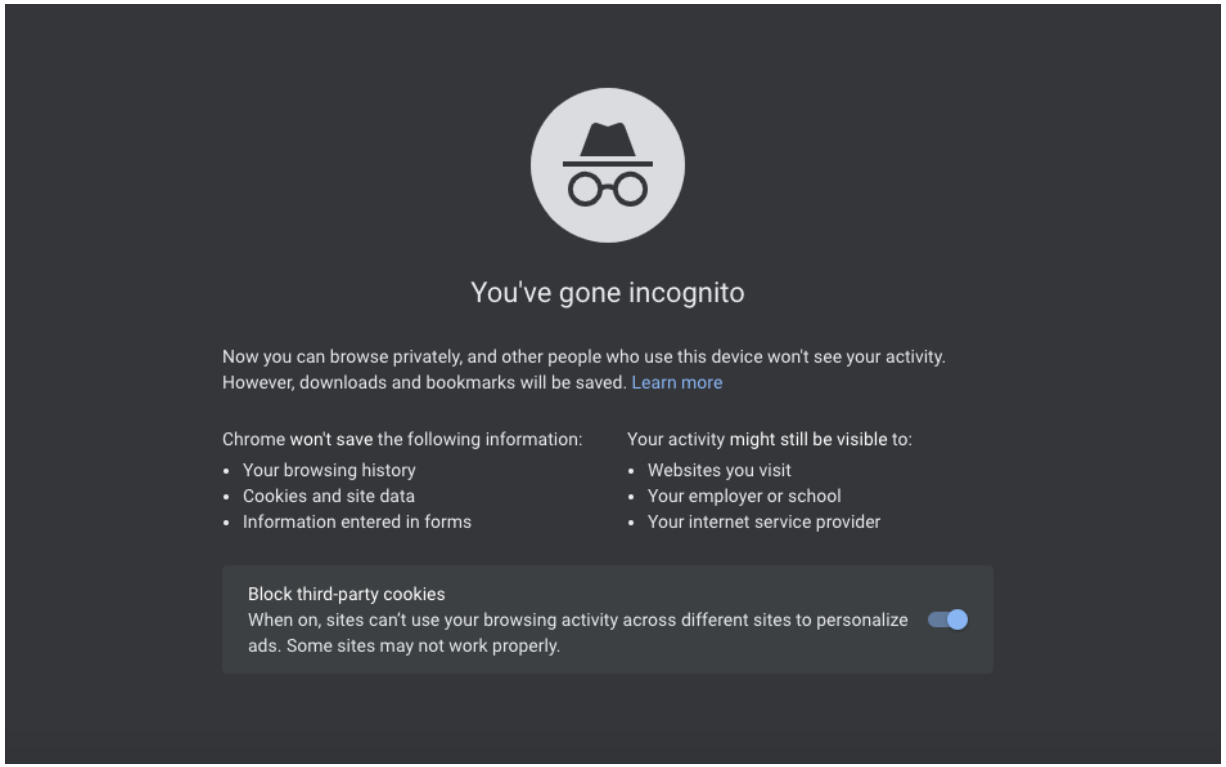
Search for health information

- Different Search Tools:
- Search engine:
  - Google
  - Bing
- Search bars on websites
- Search tools for privacy:
  - DuckDuckGo
  - Google Chrome Incognito Browser



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Tips for doing a search:

- List multiple symptoms
- Use full disease name
- Be gender specific
- Be age specific

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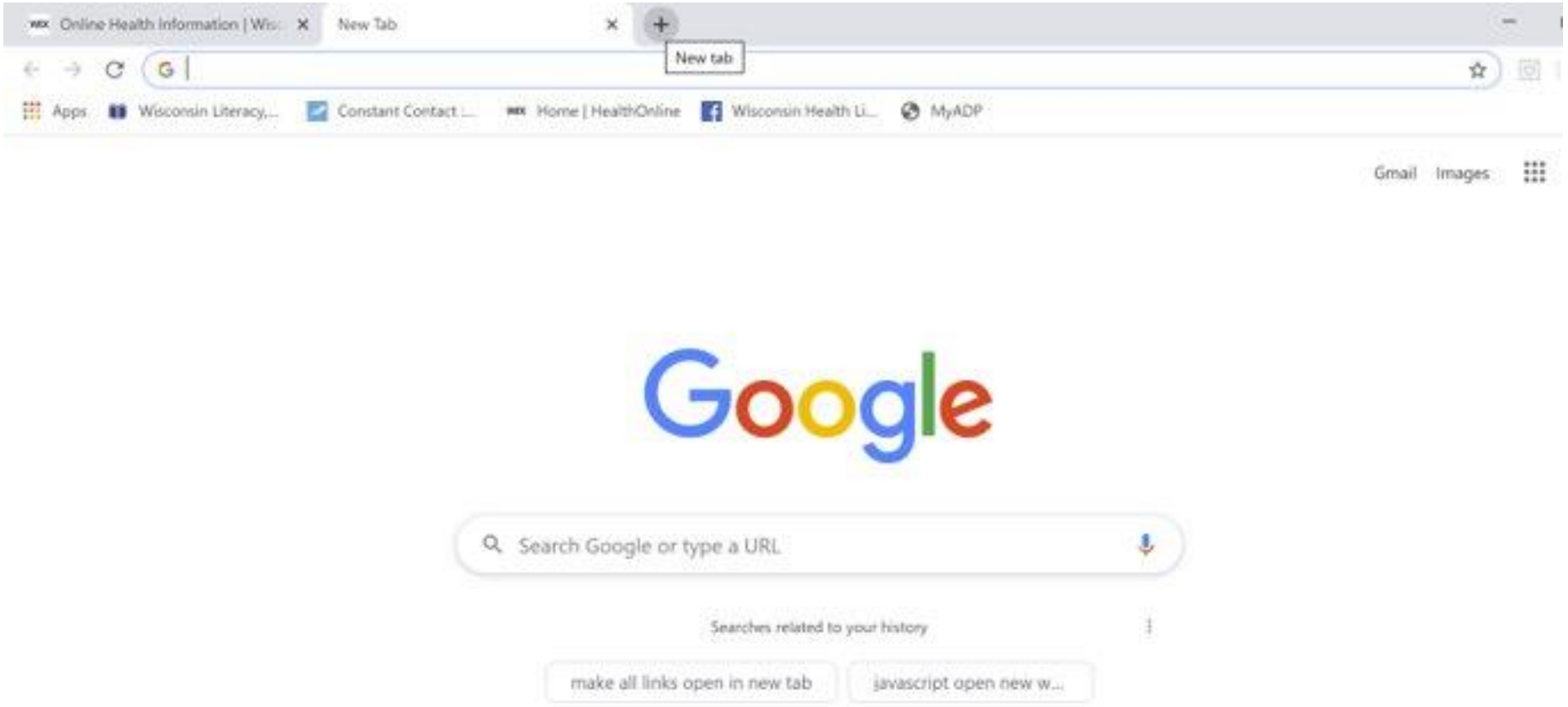
Try a search

You just saw the doctor about your symptoms. They told you it sounds like an upper respiratory infection. You are given papers before you leave, called an after-visit summary. You want to learn more about your diagnoses. On the papers you see the following words:

- upper respiratory infection
- cold
- URI

Using a search engine, search the words listed above (one at a time). What differences do you see from your search results?

Open a new tab



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How to read a webpage

Scanning makes for a quick and easier way to find what you are looking for.

Scanning tips:

- Start with bigger, bolder words
- Read left to right
- Use left tool bar and top menu bar to find topics
- Read content before clicking on hyperlinks

When scanning search results:

- Scan multiple results, not only the top two results
- If you don't find what you want, start over with new words in search box. Don't continue to add words to what you already searched.

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How to tell if information is good or harmful

Credibility = Proof that information is reliable and from a trusted source.

Ways to find credibility:

- Look at "About Us" section of the site
- Look for unbiased research (supported by facts)
- Check bottom of webpage for dates, sponsors, crediting, and other details

Domain differences

- .com - most likely owned by commercial business
- .gov - government owned website
- .org - most likely owned by non-profit organization
- .edu - owned by school

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Credible things to look for:

Medical providers writing articles about topics in their practice

Contact information

Clear, straight forward information – does not hide any information

Content reviewed by a medical professional (MD, DO, PHD, RN)

Evidence-based: based on credible research findings

Privacy policy

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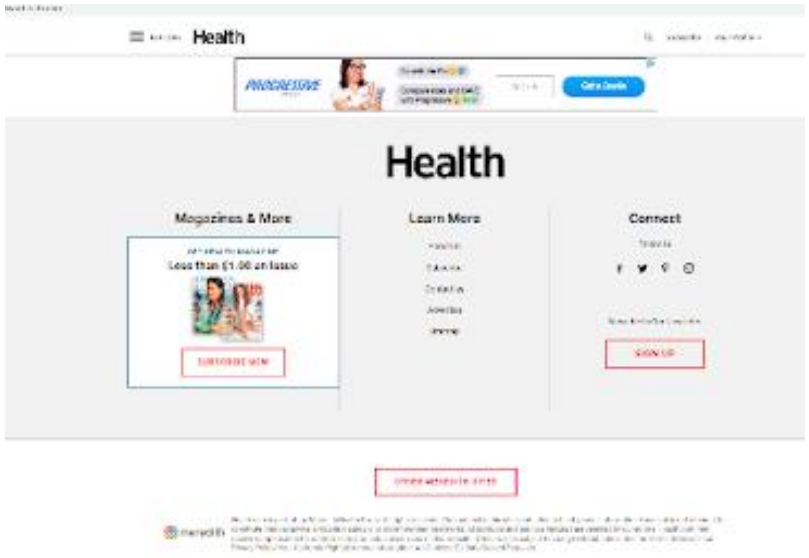
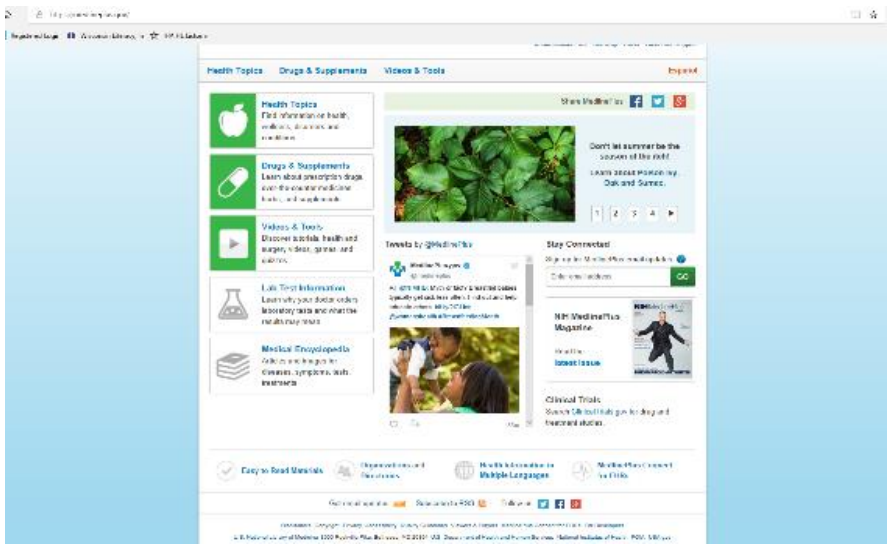
Be careful of:

- Certain brand names or products being credited - may be trying to sell you on something
- Content reviewed by “medical experts”
- Opinion-based: based on someone's opinion

Compare websites for credibility:

Compare health.com to medlineplus.gov





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Websites to visit for health information 1

Basic consumer health information:

- medlineplus.gov
- cdc.gov
- mayoclinic.org/patient-care-and-health-information
- familydoctor.org
- healthline.com
- pillbox.nlm.nih.gov
- healthcare.gov
- medicare.gov
- mlanet.org/page/top-health-websites

Websites to visit for health information 2

For people living in Wisconsin:

badgerlink.dpi.wi.gov

dhs.wisconsin.gov/medicaid

patientpartnerships.org

What about Wikipedia?

Can be an okay source to get a general idea, b
you should do more research.

Information on the site can change at any tim
anyone in the world. Wikipedia has paid worke
who review edits and correct if edits are false.

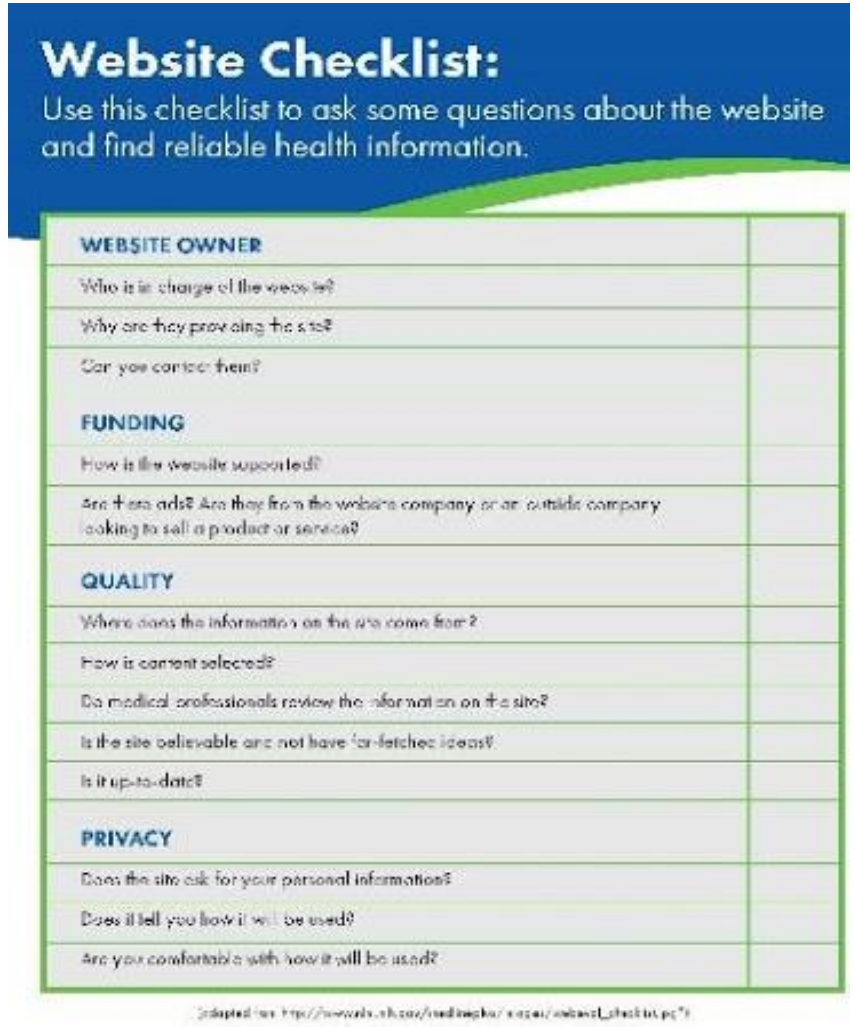
Websites to search for recommendations

You may be looking for a new doctor, caregiver, health insurance or need to find another service. Here are websites that show reviews, customer feedback, and finder tools:

- healthgrades.com - healthcare rating website to find doctor or hospital
- care.com - website to find caregiver, childcare, home cleaning
- medlineplus.gov/directories - list of websites to find different health services

Evaluate a website

Use the checklist on the handout to evaluate the website familydoctor.org



Website Checklist:

Use this checklist to ask some questions about the website and find reliable health information.

WEBSITE OWNER	
Who is in charge of the website?	
Why are they providing the site?	
Can you contact them?	
FUNDING	
How is the website supported?	
Are there ads? Are they from the website company or an outside company looking to sell a product or service?	
QUALITY	
Where does the information on the site come from?	
How is content selected?	
Do medical professionals review the information on the site?	
Is the site believable and not have far-fetched ideas?	
Is it up-to-date?	
PRIVACY	
Does the site ask for your personal information?	
Does it tell you how it will be used?	
Are you comfortable with how it will be used?	

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Websites with multiple languages

medlineplus.gov/languages

medlineplus.gov/spanish

medicare.gov/about-us/other-languages/information-in-other-languages

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Differences between using a computer or mobile device

Computers, tablets and phones can be used to access online information and resources. You may prefer one over the other.

Mobile device (phone or tablet):

- smaller screen
- less visuals and text
- drop-down icon
- easier to access and take with you
- takes longer to scroll through information
- may lose track of place on webpage when clicking on new pages or hyperlinks

Differences between using a computer or mobile device - continued

Computer device (desktop or laptop):

- larger screen
- full page views making it easier to see more information at a time
- more navigation tools and tabbed selection bar
- usually more visuals and information
- easier to search and scroll through information on webpage

Local places to use the internet

Internet is not always available or reliable, especially in rural areas.

- Mobile devices can help if…
- you do not have Wi-Fi but have smart-phone data. Phone data can be used to access the internet.
- you visit a local cafe or business that offers free Wi-Fi.

Places to use a computer:

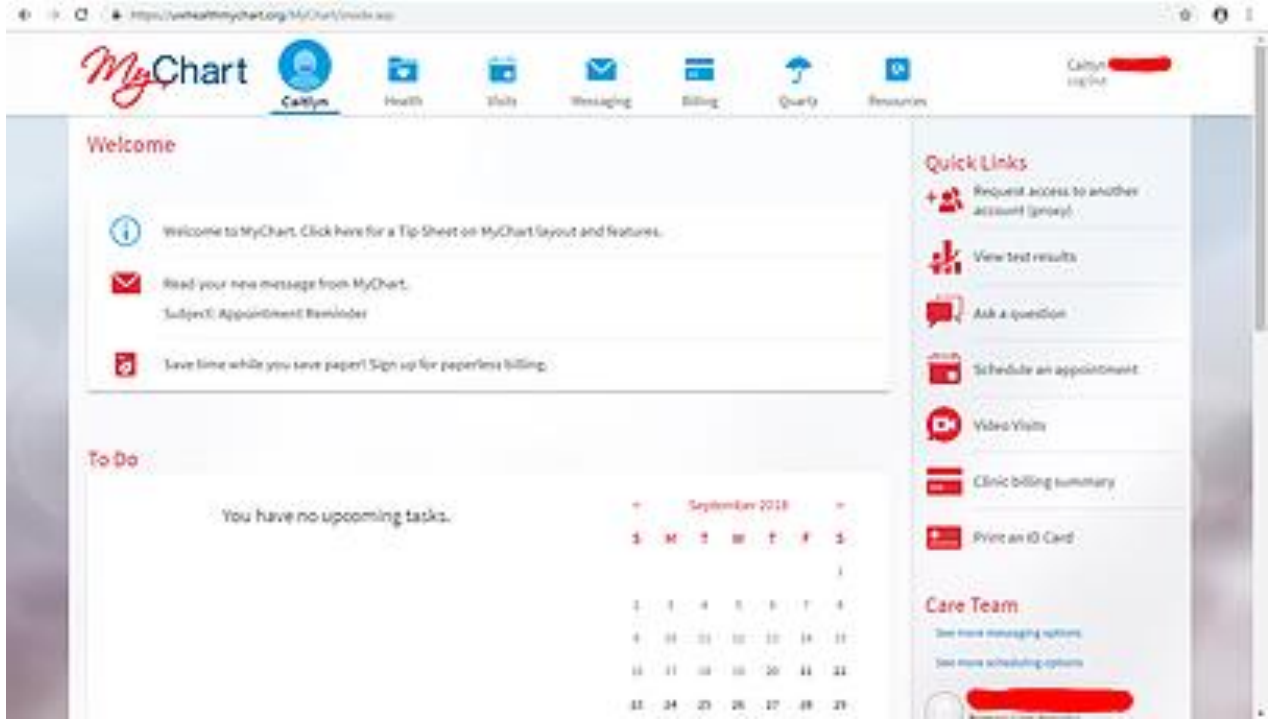
- Library
- Hospital
- County health departments
- Community centers or senior centers
- Schools (for students)

Other online resources - 1

Ask **Siri, Alexa, Google Assistant** about a health question – it is like searching "Google"

Health portals through healthcare providers:

- After visit summaries
- Medications
- Communication with providers
- Prescription requests
- Health news



Other online resources - 2

Wearables: track your health vitals, such as heart rate, steps walked or run, sleep pattern, diet

Apps: provides online health resources for mobile devices

Examples:

- Medicare "What's Covered"
- Mayo Clinic

NLM Mobile Resources:

- nlm.nih.gov/mobile

Other online resources – 3

Sign-up for health newsletter

- Looking for a printed or e-mail version of information?
  - Sign up for reliable health news by subscribing to newsletters from credible websites
  - Some are free
  - Can be age and gender specific

Thank you!

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