

4 Questions for Evaluating Online Health & Nutrition Information

In today's world, there is no shortage of health and nutrition information readily available online for anyone to find and use. However, it's important to determine which of this information is credible and which is contributing to common misinformation and myths. These 4 questions can help you quickly evaluate any online source to determine its validity.

WHO

is writing, reviewing, or displaying the information?



Review the "about us" page and look for credentialed health professionals who you believe have the appropriate scope of practice to provide neutral, accurate information on the topic presented (ex: registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNS) for nutrition information). They should also have an editorial policy for reviewing and validating content to ensure everything is accurate and up to date.

WHAT

is the site's purpose?



The primary purpose should be to provide information and/or education rather than to sell a product, service, or specific viewpoint.

WHEN

was the information written / reviewed?



Information should be reviewed regularly to ensure the most up to date science is incorporated. The date it was created / reviewed should be made readily available with the goal being no older than 2-3 years from the date you access it.

WHERE

does the information come from?



Credible information will be objectively presented and have clearly identified references, ideally relatively recent (within the last 5 years) scientific research publications from reputable, peer-reviewed journals.

References

1. National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health. Finding and Evaluating Online Resources. National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health website. Published Jan 2018. Accessed Nov 4, 2024. <https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/finding-and-evaluating-online-resources>
2. MedlinePlus. Evaluating Health Information. MedlinePlus. Published Feb 2024. Accessed Nov 4, 2024. <https://medlineplus.gov/evaluatinghealthinformation.html>
3. A.D.A.M. Medical Encyclopedia. Online Health Information – What Can You Trust. Published Aug 11, 2022. Accessed Nov 4, 2024. <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000869.htm>
4. Emory University Woodruff Health Sciences Center Library. Assessing Journal Credibility. Updated Oct 22, 2024. Accessed Dec 11, 2024. <https://libraries.emory.edu/health/writing-and-publishing/quality-indicators/assessing-journal-credibility>