

Doctor www.

A brief Internet guide for patients

It's hard to overlook the flood of health information available on the Internet. Although it's beneficial to find out as much as possible about your own illness and therapy, how do you know if the information on the World Wide Web is correct, complete or indeed reliable? The following 7 tips will help you find information on medical questions without any risks or adverse effects.

1. Transparency

The website operator and/or author of an article on the Internet should always identify themselves. Are you dealing with a trained medical practitioner, an independent author, a chemical company or a health insurance company? Generally, the relevant information is found under headings such as «imprint» or «contact».

2. Distrust

You should generally distrust any sensational promises of curing/healing, superlatives or unique positioning.

3. Cross Reference

Always cross reference special medical information against a number of other sources in order to establish possible contrasting opinions.

4. Relevance

Establish how up-to-date the information is. Pay attention to any publishing dates, author and source details.

5. Content

The following questions will help you check the quality and reliability of the content:

- Is the information comprehensible and clear?
- Are the suggested therapies described in detail?
- Is there reference to the benefits and disadvantages of the therapy?
- Is there reference to possible alternative examinations and/or treatments?
- Are there details regarding the source of the information?
- Is there reference to other sources?
- Have you answers to all your questions?

6. Confirmation

If you should find medical information that is unsettling or you would like to consult your doctor about its content, then print out the information and take it with you to your next appointment.

7. Not an alternative

The Internet can help you find information or prepare you for a doctor's appointment; it cannot, however, replace a consultation with a doctor you trust!