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URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/about/using/criteria/>

Guidelines for Links

MedlinePlus [<https://medlineplus.gov/about/>] is a website with high-quality health information that is easy to understand. It includes links from the National Library of Medicine, the National Institutes of Health, and other U.S. federal government agencies.

MedlinePlus also links to selected non-government websites. Staff decides whether to link to a given resource using the following criteria as a guide:

Website Content

- The website offers a description of the organization, including its mission, structure, governance, and policies. The organization's mission must align with the mission of MedlinePlus to provide accurate health information and the intended audience of MedlinePlus (patients and their families and friends).
- The organization provides accurate, science-based information that complements or enhances the health information found on MedlinePlus.
- The source of the content is trustworthy and transparent. The organization publishes a list of advisory board members or consultants with health-related expertise.
- The primary purpose of the website is educational, and the information is unbiased. MedlinePlus does not link to websites whose purpose is to sell or promote a product, service, or belief.
- The information provided is easy to understand, easy to navigate, and well organized.
- The website has original content. MedlinePlus will not link to pages that were reproduced from other websites.
- The website links only to reliable sources that meet MedlinePlus guidelines for links or other clearly stated guidelines established by the website. Links are properly maintained.

Website Advertising

- Preference is given to pages with no advertising. In the few cases where MedlinePlus links to a page with advertising, the advertising must not suggest commercial influence on the health content.
- If the website has advertising, it displays an advertising policy. There must be a clear separation between educational content and advertising or sponsorship. Advertisers or sponsors must not play a role in selecting or editing health information.
- MedlinePlus will not link to organizations and web resources whose presentation or content suggests or implies that MedlinePlus endorses the products or services.

Website Availability and Maintenance

- The website is consistently available.
- The website includes contact information for customer support or staff who maintain the website.
- Information is current. In most cases, this means that a last updated or last reviewed date is included.

- The website does not require users to register (even if registration is free), become a member of the organization, or pay a fee to view health information.

Videos

In addition to the criteria for websites listed above, videos should meet these guidelines:

- Videos are in a format that is playable on most desktop and mobile devices.
- Videos do not auto-play when a webpage is opened.
- Videos do not have flashing lights or strobe effects.
- Preference is given to videos that include closed captioning or transcripts, and on-screen text or graphics that don't overlap with captioning.

User Privacy

- If a website collects personal information using email, forms, or surveys, it clearly displays a privacy policy that explains how information collected from users remains private and confidential.
- If a website displays advertising, it should prevent advertisers and sponsors from collecting any personally identifiable information from users.