



Library & Knowledge Service
Broadening your Horizons

NHS
East Cheshire
NHS Trust

Patient Information



**Finding
quality health
information
on the
internet**

Last updated: March 2017



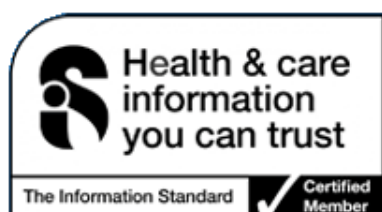
A wealth of health-related information is available on the Internet. However, not all of it is reliable and accurate. This leaflet aims to guide you through the maze of resources so you find good quality, evidence-based information.

How can I assess the quality of information I find on the internet?

There are a number of criteria you can use to gauge the quality of a website:

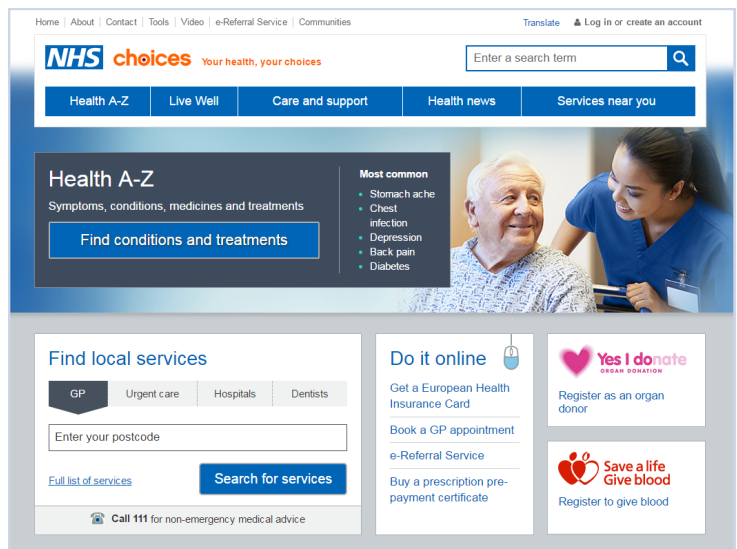
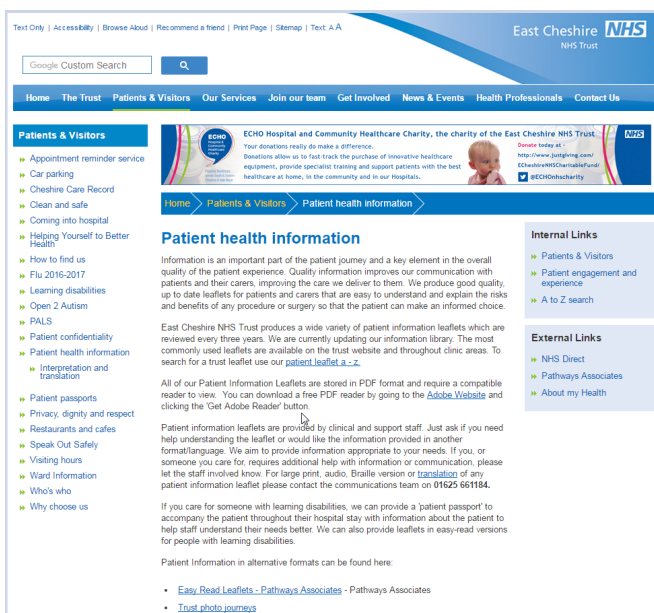
- ⇒ **WHO:** has written or published the website? What are their credentials? What are their reasons for publishing information? For example, are they an organisation providing information or a commercial company selling a product? Are there any conflicts of interest? Are there contact details?
- ⇒ **WHAT:** information is on the website? Does it seem accurate and similar to information you have found on other sites? If information or claims made on the website sound too good to be true they usually are! Is it up-to-date? Each page or site should have a 'last updated on ...' date. Do they provide links to the evidence to back up their information, or tell you where the information has come from? What links are there to other websites? Are they linking to other quality sites?
- ⇒ **WHERE:** is the website based? Information on treatment options will often be different in different countries. Look at the website address (URL) for an indication of where the website is based. For example: .nhs.uk (NHS) .gov.uk (UK government) .ac.uk (UK university) .org.uk (UK organisation) .co.uk (usually a UK commercial company).

Also look out for **The Information Standard** certification logo or the **Health on the Net Foundation** (HoN) logo which some quality assessed sites will display.



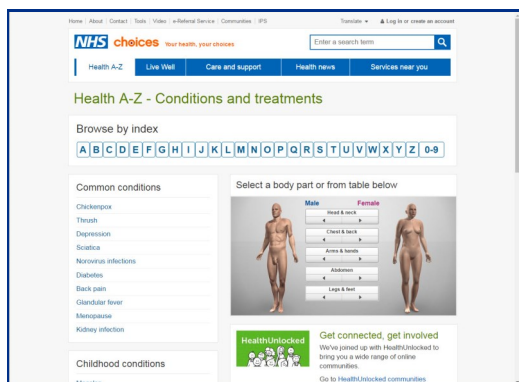
www.eastcheshire.nhs.uk

A good place to start looking is on the Trust website. It contains information on all aspects of the services offered by the Trust. It also includes links to the **Patient Information Leaflets** written by the hospital staff. All the information in the leaflets is based on sound medical evidence and is regularly reviewed.



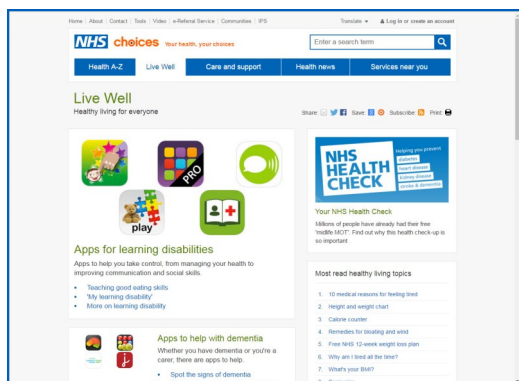
www.nhs.uk

NHS Choices has been developed to help you make informed choices about your health, from lifestyle decisions about things like smoking, alcohol and exercise, through to the practical aspects of finding and using NHS services when you need them. The website includes information on a variety of conditions and treatments, explained in an easy and comprehensive way. All the information has been checked to ensure it is accurate and based on solid, scientific evidence. It also includes a '**Behind the Headlines**' service which provides unbiased and evidence-based analysis of health stories in the news.



Health A-Z

Information on conditions, treatment options, vaccinations and answers to common health questions.



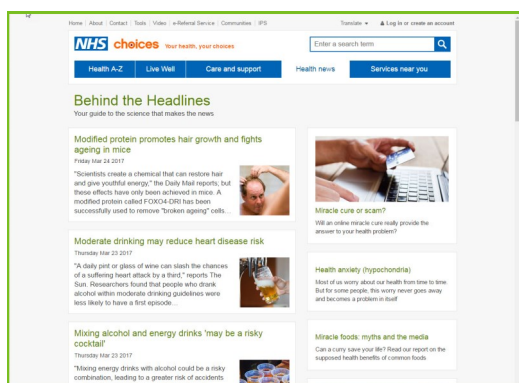
Live Well

Information, guides and apps on healthy living.



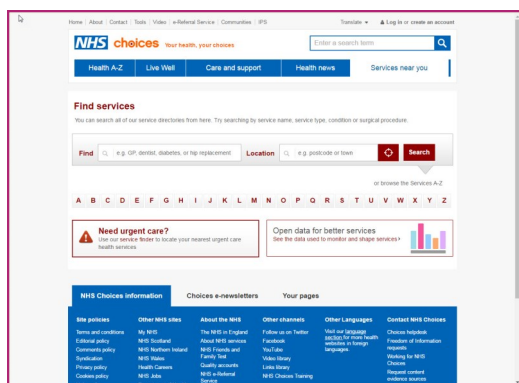
Care and Support

A guide to social care, including information for carers, money and benefits, and services available to you.



Health News

Want to know the science behind the headlines? This section explains the research and its findings in easy to understand language.



Services Near You

Local NHS services are all detailed, and you can compare services across your local area, to help you find the right service for you.

www.patient.info

Patient UK is a comprehensive website, similar to NHS Choices. It includes information on conditions and medicines, forums to discuss issues with other people, and a variety of health hubs. It is not run by the NHS but has been accredited with the NHS England 'Information Standard'.



www.gosh.nhs.uk

For information on children's health a good resource is the **Great Ormond Street Hospital** website. They have hundreds of information leaflets on a variety of common and rarer conditions and treatments, all specific to children.



www.easyhealth.org.uk

EasyHealth is a compilation of health information (leaflets, videos, organisations) that are all 'accessible' for people with learning disabilities - they all use easy words and pictures.

www.evidence.nhs.uk

If you want to find more in-depth, evidence-based information about a condition or treatment you could look at **NICE Evidence**. Some of the site is restricted to NHS staff but a lot of the high-quality evidence is freely available. It includes **Clinical Knowledge Summaries** and NICE **Guidelines** and **Guidance**. As it is written for healthcare professionals it uses complex medical terminology, but for some patients this will give you the depth of information you will be looking for.

For information on particular conditions and treatments specialist websites will be a useful resource. These are often run by charities, for example: British Heart Foundation, Macmillan, Age UK. The advice and information offered by mainstream, national organisations should be fairly reliable and accurate. Be cautious of smaller organisations, especially any sites which are promoting you purchasing from them.

You should **always** discuss information you have found online with the healthcare team who are looking after you. **NEVER** start or stop a course of medication or treatment without talking to your doctor first.

For more help finding health information online contact your local public library.