

Is there a way of interacting with the producers of the website?

You should be able to contact a website host (Web Manager) to note any queries or problems found. Email the Web Manager with your feedback or questions and you should expect a prompt reply.

SIGNS OF UNRELIABLE INFORMATION

- The site uses only case histories or personal testimonies as proof.
 - The site uses only one study as proof.
 - The site claims that the treatment works for everyone with that condition.
 - The site claims that the treatment works immediately and permanently with no medical intervention required.
 - The site claims to have a cure for a condition.
 - The site promotes self-diagnosis and self-prescription.
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WHERE DO I START?

Gateways

There are a number of highly regarded health 'gateway' sites, which contain links to other pages. . These sites are government-hosted, and their content must go through a rigorous assessment and editorial process.

- Healthdirect www.healthdirect.gov.au
- Better Health Channel www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au
- Health on the Net Foundation (HON) www.hon.ch has a specialised search engine and directory to locate reliable sources of information

Search engines

You may also use a generic web search engine, such as Google www.google.com or Bing www.bing.com. You just type a few words in the search box, and a list of websites is offered in seconds.

There are ways of using a search engine that save you reading hundreds of pages to find the precise facts you need. In most cases, you can specify .on your search page whether you want to search all of the internet or just local pages. Another way of doing this is to add 'Australia' to the words you type in the search box. To ensure it is the latest information, type in the current year.

It also helps to be specific in your search criteria to reduce the number of pages that come back and to improve the quality of websites found. Pages appearing first on a list of results might not be the most relevant. Organisations can pay to have their web page appear high on results lists. These are usually shown as sponsored links.



family members, which will build a family health archive for use by your children in the future. You can even schedule SMS text reminders so that you'll never miss an appointment or forget to renew a prescription!

SOCIAL MEDIA

A growing number of social media applications are focusing on the topic of health. A blog (a blend of the terms web and log) is a type of website. Blogs contain regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material, such as graphics or videos. Most blogs are interactive, allowing visitors to leave comments and even message each other.

An internet forum, or message board, is an online discussion site where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages. Depending on the forum's settings, users can be either anonymous or registered with the forum, and then subsequently logged-in, to post messages. On most forums, users do not have to log in to read existing messages.

Social networking areas like Facebook are also homes for various online support groups. Patients comment about their struggle with a particular disease or condition, sharing their stories with friends, family and others with similar issues.

If you are using a social media application, always refer to the terms of reference and code of conduct for using the service. This should be clearly defined on the website. You may also want to find out if the forum is 'moderated' or controlled and if so, by whom and why.

For more information about Menopause health, please visit www.healthdirect.org.au, www.jeanhailes.org.au or www.menopause.org.au to access free health literature.

This is intended as a general introduction to this topic and is not meant to substitute for your doctor's or health professional's advice. It should be noted that each person's experience is individual and that variations do occur in treatment and management due to personal circumstances, the health professional and the country one lives in. Should you require further information always consult your doctor or health professional.

Acknowledgement: ***Adapted with permission from the Kidney Health Australia fact sheet 'Using the internet to research kidney health information', Kidney Health Australia, Melbourne, 2015. July 2018***

