

CONSUMER HEALTH WEB SITES

Version 8.0

Compiled by Darlene Fleming on behalf of

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INTRODUCTION

There have been many efforts made to evaluate web sites and you may ask, "Why compile another list?" There are a number of reasons to do this---

First, we felt it was most helpful if the list was arranged by subject and that for each subject a single best site (or maybe two) was chosen. This eliminates unnecessary searching from site to site for accurate information.

Second, we investigated sites that VA librarians had specifically recommended. They have stood the test of reliability by our colleagues and they are focused on the unique needs of our Veteran patients.

Third, we applied a number of criteria to the review and evaluation process for each site to try to guarantee the best sites possible were selected for inclusion in the list. These criteria are:

- -names of the individuals responsible for the content are listed with their credentials as well as any sponsoring agencies,
- -links included on the page are all to other reliable sites
- -contact information is included
- -information is balanced and based on reliable data
- -the site domain is an indication of reliability (i.e. .gov, .edu, .org)
- -the appearance of the site is attractive and easy to use; layout, font size and use of color add to the site's readability
- -information on the site is easy to find and the site is easy to navigate
- -if there is any advertising it is kept to a minimum and is clearly separate from the information on the site; there are not 'pop-up' web sites
- -the date when the site was last updated is clearly indicated
- -all links are current and 'live'
- -there are no financial costs or charges for accessing the site
- -no special software is required to view the site
- -higher level features are kept to a minimum such as java, frames, animation, or used only when necessary
- -a clearly identified Privacy Statement is included on the site
- -the purpose of the site is stated
- -the site is fully 'web accessible'
- -there is a searching capability or a site map
- -help features are available

Fourth, each site was meticulously reviewed and annotated so the user knows in advance what each site has to offer.

This document is only as good as its last review. To maintain its usefulness, the Consumer Health Library Panel will review the document annually and make changes as needed. Similarly, continuing assessment of new sites to consider adding will be done to assure that each subject area remains current and meaningful.

General Health Web Sites

MedlinePlus

http://medlineplus.gov

The National Library of Medicine web site provides quality consumer health information. It includes information on over 900 diseases, illnesses, health conditions, and wellness topics. The topics are regularly reviewed and the links are updated daily. The site also includes a medical dictionary, videos and tutorials on common conditions, tests, and treatments, prescription and nonprescription drug information, health information in Spanish, and links to clinical trials. There is no advertising on the site.

My HealtheVet

http://www.myhealth.va.gov

My HealtheVet, launched in November 2003, is a VHA web site created for veterans, their families, and VA employees. It provides one-stop shopping for healthcare information, online prescription refill ordering, special programs, online tutorials, health maintenance logs, and secure messaging for messaging VHA providers and other VHA health care professionals. There is a registration process with in-person authentication involved to gain full access to all the features and to protect veterans' privacy.

Healthfinder

http://www.healthfinder.gov

Developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Healthfinder is a free guide to reliable health information. The site provides an easy-to-use searchable index of carefully reviewed health information from over 1400 government and nonprofit organizations.

InteliHealth

http://www.intelihealth.com

This web site was created by Aetna Inc. in partnership with Harvard Medical School and Columbia University College of Dental Medicine. The site does include limited advertisements but they are clearly labeled. The content includes health news, disease and condition information, tools and risk assessments. The information is reviewed by leading medical and dental experts.

Mayo Clinic

http://www.mayohealth.org

The Mayo Clinic created this web site. There is some advertising but it is minimal and strictly regulated by the Mayo Clinic. Information at this site includes A-Z listings for symptoms, diseases and conditions, tests and procedures, and drugs and supplements. It also includes a healthy lifestyle section

NetWellness

http://www.netwellness.org

NetWellness is a non-profit consumer health web site that began in 1994. Its content is created and evaluated by medical and health professional faculty at Case Western Reserve University, Ohio State University and the University of Cincinnati. Over 500 health professionals, including physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dieticians, dentists, genetics counselors, optometrists, athletic trainers, and social workers contribute to the

content. Each topic is date-stamped with the latest revision date. Health professionals are also available to respond to specific questions.

<u>Aging</u>

NIH Senior Health

http://www.nihseniorhealth.gov

This site was developed by the National Institute on Aging and the National Library of Medicine to provide easily accessible aging-related health information to the health care consumer. Each health topic includes general background information, open captioned videos, quizzes and frequently asked questions. The site's senior-friendly features include large print, short, easy-to-read segments of information and simple navigation. The text can also be enlarged or a contrast feature is available to make the text more readable. A trainer's toolkit is also available at the site for people interested in helping seniors search for online health information.

AIDS

AIDSinfo

http://www.aidsinfo.nih.gov

AIDSinfo, a service of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, offers information on prevention, treatment and research. Information at this site includes health topics, clinical trials, fact sheets, and a glossary of HIV/AIDS related terms. The text size can be enlarged and the information is also available in Spanish.

HIV InSite

http://hivinsite.ucsf.edu

This site was developed in 1997 by the Center for HIV Information (CHI) at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF), and is produced in collaboration with the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Consumer health information at this site includes basic information on HIV/AIDS as well as sections on getting tested, newly diagnosed, treatment decisions, and living with HIV/AIDS. There is also a drug dosing toolkit that includes information on dosing schedules, side effects, and tips on taking HIV medications.

Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's Association

http://www.alz.org/

The Alzheimer's Association was founded in 1980, by family caregivers and is the largest donor-supported national voluntary health organization dedicated to advancing Alzheimer's research and helping those affected by the disease. Information at this site includes basic information about Alzheimer's, clinical trials, and information on local chapters. The text size at the site can be increased for easier reading.

Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral Center (ADEAR)

http://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers

ADEAR is a service of the National Institute on Aging, one of the National Institutes of Health. Information at this site includes basic information about the disease, Alzheimer's FAQs, videos, clinical trial information, and a section for caregivers that includes tip sheets and other resources of potential interest.

Arthritis

Arthritis Foundation

http://www.arthritis.org

Founded in 1948, the Arthritis Foundation's site provides basic information on arthritis, a section on living with arthritis, a sign-up for several electronic newsletters on the topic, information on local/regional Arthritis Foundation programs and events, and information on helpful exercises that include short video clips.

National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS)

http://www.niams.nih.gov/hi/index.htm

NIAMS is one of the institutes of the National Institutes of Health. Consumer health information at this site includes an A-Z listing of health topics, clinical trials information, several videos, and publications in Spanish as well as several Asian languages.

Cancer

American Cancer Society

http://www.cancer.org

The American Cancer Society is a nationwide, community-based voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem. Consumer health information at the web site includes basic information on cancer as well as information by specific cancer types, a stay healthy section, information on support programs, and materials in Spanish as well as Asian and Pacific Islander materials.

National Cancer Institute

http://www.cancer.gov

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) is a component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The NCI, established under the National Cancer Act of 1937, is the federal government's principal agency for cancer research and training. The web site includes information on common cancer types as well as general information about cancer, clinical trials information, fact sheets, a cancer dictionary, cancer statistics, and information in Spanish.

Complementary and Alternative Medicine

National Center for Complementary & Alternative Medicine. National Institutes of Health.

http://nccam.nih.gov/health

The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) is one of 27 institutes and centers that make up the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and is dedicated to exploring complementary and alternative healing practices in the context of rigorous science. The web site includes basic information on complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), an A-Z listing of health topics with videos available for a number of the topics, an "herbs at a glance" section, fact sheets, and information in Spanish.

Death and Dying

Caring Connections

http://www.caringinfo.org

Caring Connections, supported by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is a program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization that provides free resources and information to help people make decisions about end-of-life care. Information at this site includes state-specific advance directives, advance care planning, a hospice locator function, information for caregivers, a grief and loss section, and financial planning information. A text size enlargement function is available at the site.

Hospice Foundation of America

http://www.hospicefoundation.org

Hospice Foundation of America is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to assist those who cope either personally or professionally with terminal illness, death, and the process of grief. The web site includes information for professionals as well as consumers. The site includes general information about hospice, locating a hospice, end of life information, pain and palliative care, and caregiver resources.

Dermatology

American Academy of Dermatology

http://www.aad.org/public/

The American Academy of Dermatology is the largest dermatology association, with a membership of over 17,000 dermatologists. Although a large portion of this site is devoted to the professional, there is a "for the public" section that includes an A-Z dermatology guide as well as an A-Z video series.

Diabetes

American Diabetes Association

http://www.diabetes.org

The American Diabetes Association, a nonprofit health organization, was founded in 1940 to provide diabetes research, information and advocacy. Information at this site includes diabetes basics, living with diabetes, diabetes meal planning, recipes, and fitness tips. Information is available in Spanish and there is a text enlargement function at the site.

Joslin Diabetes Center

http://www.joslin.org

Established in 1898 and affiliated with Harvard Medical School, Joslin Diabetes Center is internationally recognized for its work in the treatment and research in diabetes. The web site includes information for the newly diagnosed, managing diabetes, nutrition, exercise, and online classes.

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases See under topic, Kidney

Diet and Nutrition

Food and Nutrition Information Center

http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/

The Food and Nutrition Information Center (FNIC) is a leader in on-line global nutrition information. Established in 1971, the FNIC is located at the National Agricultural Library and is part of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. The FNIC web site contains over 2500 links to current and reliable nutrition information. Information at the site includes an A-Z topics listing, interactive tools for planning your diet, an "all about foods" section, eating for health, and nutrition assistance programs.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity

http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/index.htm

CDC's Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity, and Obesity takes a public health approach to address the role of nutrition and physical activity in improving the public's health and preventing and controlling chronic diseases. The web site includes healthy weight information, nutrition topics, information on physical activity, and a BMI calculator.

Disability

National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD)

http://www.ncpad.org/index.php

The mission of the NCHPAD is to help effect change in health promotion and obesity management among people with disabilities. Their primary focus is to collaborate with leading advocacy and disability organizations. The site includes a "browse the site by

disability" section and a "14 weeks to a healthier you" section where one can register and then be provided with a 14-week nutrition and exercise plan.

Drug Information

U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Information for Consumers.

http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/default.htm

The Food and Drug Administration provides consumer health information that includes basic drug information, an alphabetical list of resources, information on how to use medications safely, tips for seniors, tips for parents, information on prescription drug advertising, and a section in Spanish.

Ear, Nose and Throat

American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery (AA)-HNS)

http://www.entnet.org/HealthInformation/patients.cfm

The American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery represents more than 12,000 otolaryngologists and is the world's largest organization representing these specialists. Although targeted to the health professional, consumer resources on this site includes numerous fact sheets related to the ears, nose, throat, mouth, head and neck. Information is also available in Spanish.

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

http://www.asha.org/public

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the professional, scientific, and credentialing organization for more than 130,000 members and affiliates. The Public Health subsection links to information on hearing and balance, speech, language and swallowing, advocacy and outreach. The site includes some information in Spanish.

Gastrointestinal

American College of Gastroenterology

http://patients.gi.org/

The American College of Gastroenterology was founded in 1932 to advance the scientific study and medical practice of diseases of the gastrointestinal tract. The College promotes the highest standards in medical education and is guided by its commitment to meeting the individual and collective needs of clinical GI practitioners. The Patient Information section includes a GI health centers section that highlights conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome and colorectal cancer. Each condition includes basic information, FAQs, podcasts and videos, as well as additional resources. The site also includes an A-Z list of GI procedures with videos available here as well and an A-Z list of GI topics. Spanish language materials are also available at the site.

American Gastroenterological Association

http://www.gastro.org/patient-center

The American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) was founded in 1897 and its members are comprised of gastroenterology physicians from throughout the world. The Patient Center can be entered from the home page. Information in the Patient Center includes common digestive conditions and procedures, a section on diet and medication, and a section that compares web sites containing GI information.

National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse (NDDIC)

http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov

A branch of the National Institutes of Health, the NDDIC web site contains an A-Z list of topics. These can be printed as PDFs. Brochures of the topics are also available for ordering, with a maximum of 10 copies free and minimal charges for additional copies. Spanish language materials are also available at the site and a text enlargement function is also provided.

Head Injury

Brain Injury Association of America

http://www.biausa.org/

The Brain Injury Association of America was founded in 1980 with the mission of improving the quality of life of those who have sustained brain injuries. The Association acts as a clearinghouse of community service information and resources, facilitating prevention awareness, hosting educational programs, encouraging research, and participating in legislative advocacy. Information at this site includes basic information about brain injuries, brain injury FAQs, living with brain injury, and family and caregiver information.

Heart

American Heart Association

http://www.hearthub.org/

The mission of the American Heart Association is to reduce disability and death from cardiovascular disease and stroke. HeartHubTM is the Association's patient portal and includes health centers on broader topics such as cholesterol and stroke, heart health tools, risk assessments, videos, and podcasts. Some information is available in Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese.

National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute

http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/index.htm

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), part of the National Institutes of Health, provides leadership for a national program in diseases of the heart, blood vessels, lung, and blood. The consumer health information available at this site includes an A-Z list of diseases and conditions, information on tests and procedures, health assessment tools, recipes, videos, and information for selected audiences. There is some information available in Spanish.

Hepatitis

CDC. Division of Viral Hepatitis

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/

The Centers for Disease Control web site includes consumer health information on Hepatitis A, B, C, D and E. Information for each disease includes frequently asked questions, patient education resources and other related links and fact sheets.

VA National Hepatitis C Program

http://www.hepatitis.va.gov/patient/index.asp

Sponsored by the VA's National Hepatitis C Program, this web site is designed to be an informational and educational resource on viral hepatitis for health care providers, veterans, and the general public. The **Veterans and Public Home page** provides basic information on viral hepatitis for patients, their families, and the general public. It includes basic information on Hepatitis A, B, and C, liver basics, liver complications, and information on living with hepatitis.

Homelessness

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans

http://www.nchv.org/

The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV) was founded in 1990 by a group of community-based homeless veteran service providers. Its mission is to end homelessness among veterans by shaping public policy, promoting collaboration, and building the capacity of service providers. Information at this site includes a toll-free number, obtaining immediate help, a step-by-step guide, information on seeking federal benefits, and information for special Veteran populations.

Kidney

American Association of Kidney Patients

http://www.aakp.org/

The American Association of Kidney Patients was founded in 1969 to serve the needs, interests and welfare of all kidney patients and their families. Information at this site includes a resource library that includes information on kidney transplantation, chronic kidney disease, and renal diseases, FAQs, and myHealth, a personal health tracker.

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) http://www.niddk.nih.gov

A branch of the National Institutes of Health, the NIDDK web site contains a **Health Information** section for consumer health information and includes the Kidney Disease Information Clearinghouse for locating fact sheets, booklets, and diagnostic tests related to the kidney. Information is also available in Spanish.

National Kidney Foundation

http://www.kidnev.org/

The National Kidney Foundation is a voluntary health organization that seeks to prevent kidney and urinary tract diseases, improve the health of people affected by these diseases, and increase the availability of organs for transplantation. The Patient Information Center includes a patient and family resource section, recipes, information on dialysis and chronic kidney disease, and a peer support section. Spanish language materials are also available.

Laboratory Tests

Lab Tests Online

http://www.labtestsonline.org/lab/index.html

Lab Tests Online is a public resource on clinical lab testing from laboratory professionals who do the testing. Produced by the American Association of Clinical Chemistry, the site is a collaboration of professional societies representing the laboratory community. The site is peer reviewed, non-commercial, and patient-centered. Information here includes a section on understanding your tests with A-Z lists of tests and conditions.

Mental Health

Mental Health America

http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net

Mental Health America is the country's oldest and largest nonprofit organization addressing all aspects of mental health and mental illness. It is dedicated to promoting mental health, improving and preventing mental illness disorders through advocacy, education, research and service. Information at this site includes sections on living well, finding help, and an A-Z list of mental health topics. Information is available in Spanish.

Mental Help Net

http://www.mentalhelp.net/

Mental Help Net was launched in 1995 to provide mental health information to professionals as well as laypeople. The site includes information on a number of mental health topics, with basic information, FAQs, testing instruments, videos, blogs, and book reviews.

Neurology

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/disorder_index.htm

Established in 1950 by the U.S. Congress, the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), a division of the National Institutes of Health, is the nation's leading supporter of biomedical research on disorders of the brain and nervous system. Its mission is to reduce the burden of neurological disease through basic and clinical research on the normal and diseased nervous system in an effort to better

understand the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of neurological disorders. Information at this site includes an A-Z listing of neurological disorders that includes information on clinical trials and organizations of interest. A ReadSpeaker is available for the hearing impaired and information is also available in Spanish.

National Multiple Sclerosis Society

www.nationalmssociety.org.

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society and its network of nationwide chapters promote research, educate, advocate, and organize a wide range of programs for individuals with multiple sclerosis. Information at this site includes an About MS page, a Living with MS page, FAQs, an online community, information for family and friends, a symptom search function, and video webcasts. Information is available in Spanish and there is also a text enlargement function at the site.

National Parkinson Foundation

http://www.parkinson.org/

The National Parkinson Foundation was established in 1957 with a mission of finding the cause and cure of Parkinson's Disease. The foundation supports researchers, physicians, occupational, physical and speech therapists and psychological counselors. It also provides educational and medical information for Parkinson patients, their families, neurologists and general medical practitioners. Information at the web site includes "PD 101, for basic information concerning symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, and living with Parkinson's and a PD Library for a list of articles, checklists, books, DVDs, video webcasts, local resources, discussion forums, and clinical trials. A text enlargement function is available at the site.

<u>PTSD</u>

National Center for PTSD

www.ncptsd.va.gov

The National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was created within the Department of Veterans Affairs in 1989, in response to a Congressional mandate to address the needs of veterans with military-related PTSD. Its mission is to advance the clinical care and social welfare of veterans through research, education, and training in the science, diagnosis and treatment of PTSD and stress-related disorders. The Public portal includes general information on PTSD, treatment, coping skills, information for friends and families, videos, and apps (smoking cessation, insomnia, PTSD Coach). PTSD Coach Online provides 17 tools for managing stress after trauma. Some information is available in Spanish.

Rare Diseases

Office of Rare Diseases Research

http://rarediseases.info.nih.gov

The Office of Rare Diseases Research (ORDR) was established in 1993 within the Office of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). A rare disease, also called an orphan disease, is a disease or condition affecting fewer than 200,000 persons in the United States. This web site contains information on approximately 6,800 rare diseases. The site provides an A-Z list as well as a search function, a resource center page, a patient and family support page, and genetics testing information. Some information is available in Spanish.

This site is targeted to the professional and the sophisticated consumer.

Respiratory

American Lung Association

http://www.lungusa.org/

The American Lung Association was established in 1904 to fight tuberculosis and is the oldest voluntary health organization in the United States. Today, its mission is to prevent all forms of lung disease and to promote lung health. The site includes information on the lungs, an A-Z listing of lung diseases, an online tutorial of the respiratory system and how it works, a smoking cessation page, and a healthy air page. Some information is available in Spanish and a text enlargement feature is also available.

Substance Abuse

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)

http://www.niaaa.nih.gov

NIAAA is one the institutes that comprise the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Its mission is to support and conduct biomedical research on the causes, consequences, treatment and prevention of alcoholism and alcohol-related problems. **Material for both the patient/consumer and the health care professional are intermixed**. Information at this site includes general information on alcohol and health, easy-to-read brochures and fact sheets, with some available in Spanish, and information on ordering publications.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) http://www.samhsa.gov/

SAMHSA is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. Its mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. Professional and consumer health information is intermixed at the site. Although the site appears to be undergoing beta testing at the time of this edit, information available includes issues, conditions, and disorders related to substance

abuse, substances, and substance abuse treatment, prevention and recovery. Also available is a section on military families.

<u>Surgery</u>

While there is not a single all-encompassing site devoted to surgical procedures that meets the criteria established for this document, the following sites have sections devoted to surgery. Depending of the site, information is provided on procedures, preand post-care, and general information.

MedlinePlus

http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorial.html

Interactive Tutorials contains a section entitled Surgery and Treatment Procedures that provides multimedia presentations on a number of surgical procedures and related pre and post op care.

Ohio State University Medical Center

http://medicalcenter.osu.edu/patientcare/patient_education

*Choose Surgery/Procedure from Health Topics

A clearly written black and white handout is provided here and includes some illustrations. Material is copyrighted by the Ohio State University Medical Center.

Urology

American Urological Association. Urology Care Foundation

http:/www.urologyhealth.org

The Urology Care Foundation is the official foundation of the American Urological Association. Information at the site includes a Urology A-Z page, webinars, resources for caregivers, and an order form for free brochures. A text enlargement feature is available at the site.

National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse http://kidney.niddk.nih.gov/

Information at this site includes an A-Z listing of urologic diseases, easy-to-ready booklets, Spanish language publications, and order forms (single copies of most titles are free of charge).

VA Sites

These VA Sites are all available on from the VA-Internet site. The sites contain information on VA programs of interest to Veterans:

Agent Orange

http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/

Center for Women Veterans

http://www1.va.gov/womenvet/

Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships

http://www.va.gov/cfbnpartnerships/

Federal Benefits for Veterans and Survivors (2013 online edition)

http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp

Geriatrics and Extended Care

http://www1.va.gov/geriatricsshg/

Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses

http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/gulfwar/

Homeless

http://www1.va.gov/homeless/

National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/

Public Health

http://www.publichealth.va.gov

VA National Transplant Program

http://www1.va.gov/transplant/

Vet Center

http://www.va.gov/rcs/

Viral Hepatitis

http://www.hepatitis.va.gov/

War Related Illness and Injury Study Center (WRIISC)

http://www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/

Women's Health

Women's Health.gov

http://www.womenshealth.gov/

This site is a service of the Office on Women's Health in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and provides of variety of women's health-related information in English and Spanish from federal agencies, and private sector resources. The site includes an A-Z listing of health topics, information on fitness and nutrition, and a health headlines section. Information is available in Spanish and a text enlargement feature is also available.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following bibliography contains two types of references:

- 1. Other lists of web sites that are well respected in the health field. These were used as sources of sites to review.
- 2. References that offer helpful hints on how to evaluate the usefulness and reliability of health related web sites.

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