Reliable (and free) Websites for Consumer Health Information

Consumer and Patient Health Information Section of the Medical Library Association (CAPHIS) has a website that was compiled by librarians who are members of the Medical Library Association and who help the general public to locate reliable health care information. It is a list of the top 100 consumer health websites, broken down by subject: women's health, men's health, kids health, etc., and is at:

http://caphis.mlanet.org/consumer/index.html.

eMedicine Health is a site that provides health, medical, lifestyle and wellness information for all ages. In addition, there is information to prepare consumers for medical emergencies, injuries, minor medical conditions and basic first aid. There are more than 5,500 pages of content written by physicians for the general public, at:

http://www.emedicinehealth.com/.

FamilyDoctor.org, sponsored by the American Academy of Family Physicians, features comprehensive consumer health information in both English and Spanish. Some of its interesting features include a "Smart Patient Guide," helping people to advocate effectively for their own health care; a guide to OTC (over the counter) medications; and Health Tools, a section that includes physician referral searching, a medical dictionary, and searching by symptom. It is located online at:

http://familydoctor.org/.

Kidshealth.org is put out by the Nemours Foundation. It is the largest and most visited site on the Web, providing doctor-approved health information specifically targeted to three age groups: kids, teen and their parents. It includes thorough overviews of hundreds of health-related topics, and provides places to go to obtain additional information. It includes information in Spanish and English, and can be seen at:

www.kidshealth.org.

Medline Plus was developed by the National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health, and is the premier database for finding health care information for the general public. It includes information from all the national major health care organizations, like the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Mayo Foundation and the American Academy of Family Physicians. It includes a dictionary, encyclopedia, directory, and online tutorials. It includes information in Spanish as well as English. It can be access at:

www.medlineplus.gov.

An easy-to-read section can be found at:

http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/easytoread/easytoread_a.html.

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) has a site that provides in-depth and reliable information about treatments and practices that are not currently considered to be part of conventional medicine. NCCAM's role is to provide reliable information to the public and to explore these practices within the context of science. The site focuses on herbs and dietary supplements including side effects and drug interactions, practices such as acupuncture and homeopathy, and research and clinical trials. It is located at:

http://nccam.nih.gov/health/.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development site provides information on a broad range of topics. It includes an A to Z site on children's health topics, information on clinical trials and research, links to information on major national health campaigns, and access to free health care newsletters and fact sheets at:

http://www.nichd.nih.gov/.

PubMed is the "health care professional" counterpart of MedlinePlus. This is the site that doctors, nurses, medical librarians and other health care professionals use to look up articles in the medical literature. PubMed contains over 16 millions articles written in 37 languages published since 1949. Although doctors are the primary audience for PubMed, it is free and available to the public. You can find it at:

www.pubmed.gov.

Compiled by Linda DeMuro
Director of Library Services and International Scholars Program
Nationwide Children's Hospital
Linda.DeMuro@NationwideChildrens.org