Medical Library Association

"Top Ten" Most Useful Consumer Health Websites

Cancer.gov (http://www.cancer.gov/) is the official Website for The National Cancer Institute (NCI), a component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), one of eight agencies that compose the Public Health Service (PHS) in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The NCI, established under the National Cancer Act of 1937, is the Federal Government's principal agency for cancer research and training. NCI coordinates the National Cancer Program, which conducts and supports research, training, health information dissemination, and other programs with respect to the cause, diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of cancer, rehabilitation from cancer, and the continuing care of cancer patients and the families of cancer patients.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (http://www.cdc.gov/), an agency of the Department of Health and Human Services, is dedicated to promoting "health and quality of life by preventing and controlling disease, injury, and disability." Of special interest to the consumer are the resources about diseases, conditions, and other special topics arranged under "Health Topics A-Z," and "Travelers' Health," with health recommendations for travelers worldwide. There are also sections on health topics in the news and health hoaxes. Information is also available in Spanish.

familydoctor.org (http://familydoctor.org/) is operated by the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), a national medical organization representing more than 93,700 family physicians, family practice residents and medical students. All of the information on this site has been written and reviewed by physicians and patient education professionals at the AAFP.

Healthfinder® (http://www.healthfinder.gov/) is a gateway consumer health information Website whose goal is "to improve consumer access to selected health information from government agencies, their many partner organizations, and other reliable sources that serve the public interest." Menu lists on its home page provide links to online journals, medical dictionaries, minority health, and prevention and self-care. The developer and sponsor of this site is the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Department of Health and Human Services, with other agencies that also can be linked to via the site. Access to resources on the site is also available in Spanish.

HIV InSite (http://hivinsite.ucsf.edu/) is a project of the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) AIDS Research Institute. Designed as a gateway to in-depth information about particular aspects of HIV/AIDS, it provides numerous links to many authoritative sources. Subjects are arranged into "Key Topics" and the site may also be searched by key words. Many items are provided in full text, and information is available in English and Spanish.

Kidshealth® (http://www.kidshealth.org/) provides doctor-approved health information about children from before birth through adolescence. Created by The Nemours Foundation's Center for Children's Health Media, KidsHealth provides families with accurate, up-to-date, and jargon-free health information they can use. KidsHealth has been on the Web since 1995—and has been accessed by more than 170,000,000 visitors.
MayoClinic (http://www.mayoclinic.com/) is an extension of the Mayo Clinic's commitment to provide health education to patients and the general public. Editors of the site include more than 2,000 physicians, scientists, writers, and educators at the Mayo Clinic, a nonprofit institution with more than 100 years of history in patient care, medical research, and education. The Website has added interactive tools to assist consumers in managing their health. This site supersedes the previous site, Mayo Clinic Health Oasis.

Medem (http://medem.com/) is a project of the leading medical societies in the United States. Some of the founding societies include the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. The site was developed to provide "a trusted online source for credible, comprehensive, and clinical healthcare information, and secure, confidential communications." The "Medical Library" is divided into four major categories: Life Stages, Diseases and Conditions, Therapies and Health Strategies, and Health and Society.

MEDLINEplus (http://medlineplus.gov/) is a consumer-oriented Website established by the National Library of Medicine, the world's largest biomedical library and creator of the MEDLINE database. An alphabetical list of "Health Topics" consists of more than 300 specific diseases, conditions, and wellness issues. Each Health Topic page contains links to authoritative information on that subject, as well as an optional link to a preformulated MEDLINE search that provides journal article citations on the subject. Additional resources include physician and hospital directories, several online medical dictionaries, and consumer drug information available by generic or brand name.

NOAH: New York Online Access to Health (http://www.noah-health.org/) is a unique collection of state, local, and federal health resources for consumers. NOAH's mission is "to provide high-quality, full-text information for consumers that is accurate, timely, relevant, and unbiased." Information is arranged in alphabetical "Health Topics" which are then narrowed to include definitions, care and treatment, and lists of information resources. Information is available in both English and Spanish, and the majority of items are provided in full text.