Online

- Quality health and wellbeing content online can help you make informed decisions.
- In what formats is health information available online? Text, images, audio, videos, animations, tools and apps.
- 78% of Australians say they looked for health information online in the past year.
- How can you consume it? Via computers, laptops, tablets, mobile phones and social media.
- Why do people use the internet to seek health advice? They have limited time, want a second opinion, or they might be looking for information for family or friends.

Can you trust it?

- Who wrote it?
  - What are the qualifications of the writer?
  - Who publishes the content?
  - Tip: Check the ‘About us’ page.
- Is it clear?
  - Is this information easy to find and understand?
  - Are images or video used to help explain the text?
  - Tip: Browse the site or use any available search features.
- Is it up to date?
  - When was it written?
  - When was it last reviewed?
  - Tip: Look for this information at the bottom of each page.
- Is it accurate?
  - Is the information based on research?
  - Are information sources provided?
  - Tip: Look for NIOSH certification – a global standard for quality and transparent health information online.
- Is it balanced?
  - Are risks and benefits explained?
  - Is the website selling something?
  - Is there advertising on the site?
  - Tip: Commercial interests can mean the information is biased.
- Is it yours?
  - Is your privacy respected?
  - Is there a privacy policy on the site?
  - If the site collects personal information, is it secure and private?
  - Tip: Ask if your personal information be used for?
  - Tip: Look for a ‘Privacy statement’ or ‘Privacy policy’.

Look for clues about the quality of information

- Use the information provided.
- Tip: Look for references at the end of the page.

What to do?

If in doubt, call healthdirect on 1800 022 222 to speak with a registered nurse 24/7.

Remember, your doctor is the best person to make a diagnosis and answer questions about your health.

Self-care

Visit a pharmacy

See your doctor

Call triple zero (000)

Notes for parents

Parents and guardians should check that websites are appropriate for children.

There are sites that have been developed specifically for the information needs of young people.

Some health information sites may also have a section especially for children.

References
You might find our sources for these tips helpful for further reading:
- Staying safe online - www.tbi.ahs.gov.au/about/456choices/about/456choices/staying-safe-online/People/find-health-information-online.aspx
- Health on the Net Foundation - www.hon.ch/10462/Codes/Condit.html