



Identifying Credible Website Information



The internet provides unlimited information on just about anything, and much of it is unfiltered. When we search for something, the results that we get, unfortunately, are not filtered between what is true or untrue.

This can make it challenging to know what to trust or believe. When it comes to our health and nutrition, the information that we find is often very different from one website to another.

So, how can you be sure that what you are reading is accurate and credible?

- Look at the source

Credible websites should cite the source of where the information is coming from.

- Look at the author

Information on the internet that has the author information available can be an indication of a credible site. Some authors should have credentials to indicate credibility. Not all authors are experts in what they write, but the information provided should be cited from a credentialed expert or national organization.

- Look at the website domain

Some domains (.com, .org, .net) can be used by any individual. The domain .edu is exclusively for educational institutions, while the .gov domain is exclusive for government websites. Many .org websites are credible, however, think critically about if the website is pushing a specific agenda or persuasion rather than education.

- Look for possible bias

When reading through a website, think about the information being presented and if it seems factual or more opinionated. Look at emotions used that try to capture your attention instead of provide accurate information. Ask yourself if the website is trying to sell you something, if the website is criticizing the medical or science community, or if claims and testimonials are used that seem unrealistic.

- Look for the same information on other websites

The information on one website should be consistent on other websites. If the information is hard to find anywhere else, there is a good chance that the website is not credible.

While these are tips to help you decide between true and untrue information, it is important to use critical thinking to determine if the information you are reading is credible.



Credible Health and Nutrition Websites

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The CDC is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The CDC helps to protect the health of Americans through science, surveillance, and health promotion. The CDC website provides statistics and basic information on disease and conditions that affect Americans.

<https://www.cdc.gov>

- Center for Science in the Public Interest

The CSPI website provides advice and advocacy for a healthier food system. CSPI is known as the organized voice of the American public on nutrition, food safety, and health. CSPI published the Nutrition Action Health Letter and manages NutritionAction.com, which provides unbiased advice to help you eat healthfully.

<https://cspinet.org>

- Nutrition.Gov

The Nutrition website is a USDA sponsored website offering credible information to make healthful eating choices. The website provides reliable information on nutrition, healthy eating, physical activity, and food safety.

<https://www.nutrition.gov>

- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the world's largest organization for food and nutrition. The academy provides scientific information, research, news, and education printouts for consumers.

<http://www.eatright.org>

- USDA Food Database

The Food Database houses nutrition information on over 8,000 foods. This database was developed by the USDA Nutrient Data Laboratory and the National Agricultural Library. Users can search for foods and beverages, filter items by food group and manufacturer, and select nutrients to populate a report.

<https://ndb.nal.usda.gov/ndb/>

- Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

The ODPHP sets national health goals and objectives and supporting programs, services, and education activities that improve the health of all Americans. The ODPHP also manages 2 independent health websites; HealthyPeople.gov, and healthfinder.gov.

<https://health.gov>

- Choose My Plate

MyPlate is part of the USDA Food Guidance System. It takes information from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and makes it consumer-friendly. The MyPlate website contains customizable nutrition information and tools for consumers, including SuperTracker, a free diet and exercise tracker.

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov>

- U.S. Food and Drug Administration

The FDA website provides information on food, drug, and dietary supplement regulations. Information can be found on popular topics, news, policies, and food recalls.

<https://www.fda.gov/default.htm>

- National Institutes of Health

The NIH is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and is the nation's medical research agency that serves to improve health and save lives. NIH also manages MedLinePlus.gov, which provides health and drug information, health news, and education printouts.

<https://www.nih.gov>