Finding Accurate and Reliable Health Information on the Internet
Website Demonstration Guide

This training guide will help you become familiar with the consumer health information resources covered in the Finding Accurate and Reliable Health Information on the Internet workshop. This guide will give a brief overview of some of the main features of each the three websites covered in the workshop: MedlinePlus, NIH Senior Health, and Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality: Questions are the Answer. It will point out the key features of each site that you can demonstrate to workshop participants dependent upon their information needs.

Keep in mind that while some of the websites’ content may change to highlight different information, their main features are fairly static. You are encouraged to explore the websites further so that you become more familiar with how each site functions and so you can accommodate any changes that have been made to the site.

MedlinePlus
http://www.medlineplus.gov

MedlinePlus is a consumer health information website developed by the National Library of Medicine. MedlinePlus provides over 18,000 links to carefully selected Web resources on over 800 health topics. Information gathered from over 1,350 government agencies and health-related organizations, and all resources must meet quality guidelines. MedlinePlus also includes a medical encyclopedia, a medical dictionary, information on drugs and supplements, and interactive tutorials.
MedlinePlus: Homepage Tour

Top of page
- Espanol button
  - Click on the orange “Espanol” button to see the companion site, MedlinePlus en Espanol, which provides information in Spanish.
- Search box
  - Type in your search in the Search MedlinePlus box in the upper right hand corner of the page.

Rotating banner with information on timely issues
- Click on the banner for more information on the topic.

Main links under the banner
- Health Topics
  - Information on over 800 health and wellness issues.
- Drugs & Supplements
  - Information on prescription and over the counter medications, herbal and dietary supplements.
- Videos & Cool Tools
  - Links to interactive tutorials, anatomy videos, surgery videos,
| Lower left hand column | Medical Dictionary  
- Search Merriam Webster Medical Dictionary.  
Popular Searches  
- Lists top 100 MedlinePlus searches in search cloud format.  
Featured Site  
- Highlights a timely health related topic and links to more information. |
| Lower center column | About Your Health  
- Quick links to popular Health Topics pages organized by population groups.  
NIH Senior Health link  
- Website for health and wellness information for older adults.  
ClinicalTrials.gov link  
- Registry of clinical trials conducted in the United States and worldwide.  
Directories link  
- Directories to help find health professionals, services, facilities, and libraries. |
| Lower right hand column | Health News link  
- Lists news articles and videos.  
Stay Connected  
- Visitors can sign up to receive MedlinePlus e-mail updates.  
Magazine link  
- View current and previous issues of the NIH MedlinePlus Magazine.  
Easy to Read link  
- Links to all materials in MedlinePlus that are labeled as Easy-to-Read, which indicates that materials are written at the 5th – 8th grade reading level.  
Multiple Languages link  
- Links to all materials in MedlinePlus that are available in different languages. |
MedlinePlus has Health Topics pages on over 800 diseases, illnesses, health conditions and wellness issues.

Access the Health Topics by clicking on the **Health Topics** link on the MedlinePlus homepage. This link can also be found across the top banner of most pages within MedlinePlus.

Search for a Health Topics Page by: First Letter, Body Location/Systems, Disorders and Conditions, Diagnosis and Therapy, Demographic Groups, Health and Wellness.
You will find the topic listed at the top of the page.

Below the topic heading you will often see an “also known as” section. This section gives alternative terminology for the topic.

Each Health Topic page will give a general overview of the topic at the top of the page, seen in the blue box.

Under the general overview there is the option to sign up for email updates. MedlinePlus will send an email notification when new material is available on the topic.
The rest of the Health Topic page organizes links to outside organizations. All links to outside resources will open up in either a new window or a new tab.

The “start here” section provides links to general information.

The remaining links are divided into the following sections: Basics, Learn More, Multimedia & Cool Tools, Research, Reference Shelf, and For You.

Each link will display the title of the page it is linking out to, and in parenthesis you will find the name of the organization that MedlinePlus is linking out to.

All of the resources that MedlinePlus links out to have been evaluated by a medical librarian.

You may see other labels, including:

- Easy to Read: identifies material written at the 5th – 8th grade reading level.
- Video: identifies video materials.
NIH: identifies the site as a National Institutes of Health website.
NIH Senior Health: identifies the link as a NIH Senior Health resource.

Along the right hand side of the page you will find links in the following categories:

- **Medical Encyclopedia**: based on the health topic you are looking at, MedlinePlus will provide links to encyclopedia entries that are relevant to your health topic search. Click on the “+” button to expand the view and see all related encyclopedia entries.
- **Related Topics**: These are links to other Health Topics pages that are related to the health topic you are looking at.
- **National Institutes of Health**: Lists the primary National Institutes of Health organization that is responsible for research in the field of the health topic you are looking at.
- **Languages**: MedlinePlus links out to information in a number of different languages. If a resource in another language exists for the health topic you are looking at, they will be listed here. Click on the language you are looking for, and a new page will open up with available resources.

**MedlinePlus: Medical Encyclopedia**

MedlinePlus provides access to material from the A.D.A.M. Medical Encyclopedia, which contains over 4,000 articles on: Diseases, Tests, Symptoms, Injuries, and Surgeries/Procedures.

Encyclopedia entries can be accessed through the links on the right hand side of the Health Topics page, or through the Encyclopedia link found at the bottom of the MedlinePlus homepage.

When linking to the Encyclopedia from the homepage, you will search for the topic by first letter.
There are many types of entries in the encyclopedia, including diseases, tests, symptoms, injuries, and surgeries/procedures.

Entries on diseases include information on: causes, symptoms, exams and tests, treatment, outlook (prognosis), possible complications, when to contact a medical professional, prevention, alternative names, and references.

Entries on tests include information on: how the test is performed, how to prepare for the test, how the test will feel, why the test is performed, normal results, what abnormal results mean, risks, considerations, and alternative names.

Entries on symptoms include information on: considerations, causes, home care, when to contact a medical professional, what to expect at your office visit, alternative names, and references.

Entries on injuries include information on: considerations, causes, symptoms, first aid, what not to do/DO NOT, when to contact a medical professional, prevention, alternative names, and references.

Entries on surgeries/procedures include information on: description, why the procedure is performed, risks, before the procedure, after the procedure, outlook (prognosis), alternative names, and references.
Some entries contain videos on related topics.

At the bottom of the page, all entries will show when the article was last updated, and who it was updated by.

Along the right hand side of the encyclopedia entry you will find:

- **MedlinePlus Topics**: Quick links to related Health Topics pages.
- **Images**
- **Read More**: Quick links to related encyclopedia entries.
- **Patient Instructions**: Information on pre-operative and self-care instructions, and questions to ask your doctor on related topics.
MedlinePlus: Drug & Supplement Information

Click on the **Drugs & Supplements** link from the homepage. This link can also be found across the top banner of most pages within MedlinePlus.

**Drug Information** provides monographs (information sheets) on prescription and over-the-counter medications from the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists.

**Herb and Supplement Information** provides information on herbal remedies and dietary supplements from the Natural Standard.
Click on the first letter of the drug you are looking for. Monographs are listed under the generic name, but you can search for either generic or name brand name.

If you search for a brand name drug, there will be a “see” reference, which will inform you of the generic name and provide a direct link to the appropriate monograph. The generic name of the drug will be listed at the top. Below the name you will find a pronunciation guide.

Information in the monograph includes the following: important warnings, why is this medication prescribed?, how should this medicine be used?, other uses for this medicine, what special precautions should I follow?, what special dietary instructions should I follow?, what should I do if I forget a dose?, what side effects can this medication cause?, what storage conditions are need for this medicine, what to do in case of an emergency/overdose, what other information should I know?, brand names, and brand names of any combination products.

Each drug information monograph includes a “last revised” date at the bottom of the page.
From the **Drugs & Supplements** page, click on **All Herb and Supplements** button, click on the herb or supplement that you are looking for.
The drug or supplement name will be located at the top of the page. If it is an herb, the botanical name will be listed in parenthesis.

The monograph contains the following information: background information, synonyms, evidence, dosing, safety, interactions, methodology, and selected references.

Presenter Note: Encourage people to follow dosing information on the bottle if they are taking a prepared herb or supplement.

Presenter Note: Many people do not realize that herbs and dietary supplements can have serious interactions with prescription and over the counter medications.

MedlinePlus: Videos and Cool Tools

Click on the Videos & Cool Tools link from the homepage. This link can also be found across the top banner of most pages within MedlinePlus.

The Videos & Cool Tools section includes: Interactive tutorials, Anatomy videos, Surgery videos, Calculators and Quizzes, Health related games.
Linked from the Videos & Cool Tools page, Interactive Health Tutorials includes over 170 health related tutorials from the Patient Education Institute.

Tutorials include animated graphics, optional audio, and are written in an easy to read language. They are organized by: Diseases and Conditions, Tests and Diagnostic Procedures, Surgery and Treatment Procedures, and Prevention and Wellness.

Click on title to begin.
Each tutorial offers the following options:
- Interactive tutorial: You control the pace of the tutorial, includes interactive features.
- Self Playing Tutorial: Tutorial automatically plays.
- Text summary: Opens a PDF with the text and images from the tutorial.

*Presenter Note: Tutorials require Flash 8.0 or above.*

Both the interactive and self-playing tutorials provide audio of the text written on the screen.

Navigation features, including volume control, can be found at the bottom of the screen.

The sections of the tutorial are listed along the left hand side of the screen. You can jump to a different section by clicking on the section title.
Anatomy Videos are linked from the Videos & Cool Tools page. This feature contains over 70 animated videos on the effect of diseases and conditions on the body. The videos have audio as well as closed captioning at the bottom of the video screen. A brief text summary is included underneath the video.

*Presenter Note: Videos require QuickTime.*
MedlinePlus: Videos of Surgical Procedures

This feature contain recorded webcasts of over 100 surgical procedures are available to view.

*Presenter Note: Videos require Adobe Flash Player.*
Search for medical terms from the MedlinePlus homepage. The Dictionary will list all entries that include the term searched for. It includes a pronunciation guide, as well as an option to listen an audio clip of the pronunciation.
Search the entire MedlinePlus website using a keyword search. Type in your search in the Search MedlinePlus box in the upper right hand corner of the page.

The results page will list all MedlinePlus resources that match the keywords searched. If your search term matches a health topics page, a tabbed box will appear at the very top of the search results page. This box will link directly to the complete Health Topic page. Below the tabbed box is the full list of results.

The Refine by Type box located in the upper left hand corner can help narrow your search results by picking out results by: Health Topics, External Health Links, Drugs and Supplements, Medical Encyclopedia, Videos and Tutorials, News, MedlinePlus Magazine, Other Resources, and Multiple Languages.

The Refine by Keyword box also helps to narrow your search.
NIH Senior Health

http://www.nihseniorhealth.gov

NIH Senior Health is a consumer health information website from the National Institute on Aging and the National Library of Medicine. NIH Senior Health provides background information, open-captioned videos, quizzes and frequently asked questions on 43 aging-related health topics. Special senior-friendly features include adjustable text size, a contrast function to make text more readable, and a talking function that will read aloud the text on the screen.

NIH Senior Health: Home Page Tour

At the top of every page within NIH Senior Health, there is the option to increase/decrease the text size, turn on/off the contrast feature, or turn speech on or off.
You can search for Health Topics by first letter or by category from the homepage. Each Health Topic page will display a Table of Contents. You may start from any section.

The table of contents will appear on the left hand side of every page within the Health Topic. Click on the Next Page button in the lower right hand corner to advance to the next screen within the section.

At the end of each section, there is the option to take a short quiz or go directly to the next section.

Each health topic has the option to link to MedlinePlus for more information.

Note that the last reviewed date is shown in the bottom left hand corner of the page.
The Exercise Stories section highlights the different activities that seniors enjoy. Click on the Full Story link to read more about the individual and their exercise story.
Health videos are available on many aging-related health topics and are organized by topic. There is the option to watch the video or view a transcript of the video. The videos have audio as well as closed captioning at the bottom of the video screen. Navigation buttons, including volume control, are located at the bottom of the screen.
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ): Questions Are the Answer

http://www.ahrq.gov/questionsaretheanswer

The Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research (AHRQ) has developed a website to help patients take an active role in their health are by asking questions, understanding their condition, and evaluating their options. The AHRQ Build Your Question List feature allows you to create a custom list of questions to print off and take with you to your next appointment. This site also provides helpful tips on becoming a more active participant in your health care by asking questions and communicating with your healthcare team.

AHRQ: Homepage Tour

The AHRQ site provides helpful tips on becoming a more active participant in your health care by asking questions and communicating with your healthcare team. AHRQ provides tips on: reducing medical errors, talking with your clinician, getting medical tests, planning for surgery, and getting a prescription.
AHRQ also provides a list of additional patient safety resources and a glossary of some of the medical terms used throughout the website.

**AHRQ: Build Your Own List of Questions**

The Build Your Own List of Questions tool allows patients to easily create a list of questions that they would like to ask at their next health care visit.

The link to the **Build Your Own List of Questions** tool can be found in the menu at the top left hand corner of the page, or at the bottom of the Did You Know section in the lower right part of the screen.
The Build Your Question List tool allows you to create a custom list of questions based on a number of different scenarios, such as getting a new prescription or having a medical test.

Clicking on the topic heading will jump down to that section of the page.
Check the boxes next to the questions you want to make sure to ask. You can check boxes from any section.

Once you have selected all of the questions you want to ask, click on the Create a List option, which is available at the bottom of each section.

A new page will open up with the questions you selected. Click Print Questions at the bottom of the page. The printed page will have the list of questions and space to write notes under each question.
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Additional health literacy resources are available from the Minnesota Health Literacy Partnership Website at: http://www.healthliteracymn.org

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