

Nutrition on the Net... Sorting through the Facts and the Fiction

The Internet can be a powerful tool in your search for quality healthy eating and curriculum information; however, it can also be a source for unreliable, misleading information. To help you find credible information and choose reliable sites, ask yourself the following questions:



Who?

- Does the author of the site clearly state his/her nutrition qualifications?
- Is the author from a credible organization (eg, Dietitians of Canada, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, or the Canadian Cancer Society)?
- Is the site reviewed and updated regularly by nutrition researchers?
- Does the author tell you the source of the information and nutrition claims?
- Can you contact the author through alternate ways (eg, organization name, street address and phone number)?

What?

- Does the author supply research evidence or testimonials and miraculous claims?
- Is the information consistent with our national nutrition recommendations and the messages in *Canada's Food Guide*?
- Does the author remember to tell you that no one food or product can cause or cure diseases?

Where?

- Do you check the links from each website? A link to a different website does not mean that the new site will be reliable. Ask the same questions to see if each new link is reliable (eg, Where has your search taken you? Do you know where you are now?).

When?

- Is the site updated regularly?
- Does the website refer to recent research to back up claims?
- Can you find the website on a regular basis?

Why?

- Does the organization or author clearly state a mission or purpose?
- Is advertising material clearly marked?
- If it is a commercial website, can you tell where the reliable information ends and the 'sales pitch' begins?

How?

- Can you get all the information you need from a website without having to have special computer software?
- If you disregard any sound, video or music, is the information presented still good information?

It may be useful to get a second opinion on the nutrition and health information that you find online. If you have questions, contact a registered dietitian at your public health unit/department.

Source: Sudbury & District Health Unit, 2003

**For More Information,
Call the Health ACTION Line 1-800-660-5853 or 613-345-5685
or visit our website at www.healthunit.org**



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