

Getting quality medical information online

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When it comes to medical and cancer information – like nearly all other subjects – the Internet provides a vast, unlimited number of sources and articles.

But just as consumers weigh the opinions of articles in the magazines and ads they read everyday, so should they consider the source when obtaining medical information on the Internet.

There are many excellent online sources of medical information today, and the various cancer research groups are a great place to start.

The American Cancer Society (www.cancer.org) has a wealth of information on all types of cancers along with the group's cancer prevention efforts: The Great American Smokeout, The Great American Health Check and The Great American Weigh In.

The Great American Health Check is a quick and informative question-and-answer about your individual health/lifestyle. Take a few minutes to fill in the online form and it provides you with a personalized action plan, based on your age, gender, eating habits and exercise/fitness level, which you can then take to your physician.

The American Institute for Cancer Research (www.aicr.com) provides a easy-to-understand look at recent cancer research studies and is an excellent online resources for cancer patients.

Probably the most comprehensive web site for cancer information, from prevention to the most recent treatment options, is the National Institute for Cancer (www.cancer.gov). The site has reports on the thousands of clinical studies being conducted, included the initial report of STAR (Study of Tamoxifen and Raloxifene) of which Hematology and Medical Oncology Consultants (HMOC) patients participated.

To read the news release on the initial STAR findings, visit: <http://www.cancer.gov/newscenter/pressreleases/STARresultsApr172006>

Locally, both Genesis (www.genesishealth.com) and Trinity (www.trinityqc.com) have excellent cancer resources. The Genesis site gives links to more than 100 cancer-related web sites, while Trinity has more than 4,000 medical articles online and searchable.

Another trusted and comprehensive online source is the Mayo Clinic. Its online medical portal, www.mayoclinic.com, provides a thorough look at diseases (including cancer), various drugs and supplements, treatment decisions and lifestyles for healthier living. Its "Ask a Specialist" feature provides answers to many routine questions on various medical conditions/issues.

When researching any topic, determining the reliability of the information is vital. And, even the best online resources should not be a substitute for consulting with your physician if you have questions about your health or wellness.

For a list of the web sites mentioned in this article, visit our web site (www.hmocpc.com) and click on the resources link.