

**HSIS**

## Health Sciences Information Service

### Alaska's Medical Library

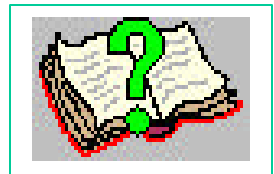
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**Q:** I find a lot of information on the Web--how do I know if it's reliable?

**A:** Ask yourself the following questions:

- Content: Is the information believable? If claims are made, are they backed up with evidence to support them or with references?
- What is the purpose of the site? Is it informational or promotional? Sites which sell may offer valid information as well, but beware of a possible bias in that information. An URL which ends in .com indicates a commercial site
- Is there more glitz than substance? A flashy site with lots of graphics may disguise the fact that there is, in fact, very little information imparted.
- Does the site offer unique information? Can this information be found just as easily in other resources, such as books?
- Is there a charge for the information? What are the qualifications of the person or persons offering to sell the information?
- A contact person is usually located in the footer of a web page. Is a person or organization listed as content provider for the web site? There should be a way to contact the webmaster through an e-mail link.
- Are the author's qualifications given? If so, do they make this person qualified to give this information?
- If an organization is hosting the site, is it a legitimate organization, or just a front for a commercial enterprise?
- Look for a mission statement or some other indication of why the site exists. Is it for promotion, information, or persuasion?
- Many web sites rely on advertising for their support. Does the site itself appear to be an advertising site? Does the presence of advertising seem to affect the information given? Note any biases.
- How often is the site updated? Remember that in medicine, change is constant and frequent. Are links current, or do they lead to a lot of dead ends?



*adapted from Consumer and Patient Health Information Section web site <http://caphis.mlanet.org/resources/>*



The National Library of Medicine has posted a new clinical alert: [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/databases/alerts/estrogen\\_progestin.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/databases/alerts/estrogen_progestin.html)

The alert was issued in response to findings from the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) study; the study findings are to be published in the July 17, 2002, issue of *The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*. The full text of the article is now available free to all at: <http://jama.ama-assn.org/>



Rush literature searches of health-related databases are available 24/7: Loretta Andress, beeper 269-5520 x1426. Emergencies only please.

University of Alaska Anchorage - Consortium Library

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(907) 786-1870 Fax (907) 786-1608 Toll free: 1-888-997-7878 [ayhsis@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:ayhsis@uaa.alaska.edu)

For more information regarding HSIS services: <http://www.lib.uaa.alaska.edu/hsis/>