

## THE TOP 10

# Health sites you can trust

Bookmark these, so you know right where to go when symptoms strike

Doing a random Internet search to gather info on a disease, drugs, or other medical concerns can quickly lead you to one of the many sketchy health sites out there. What's the harm? It might lead you to make some bad decisions about your health. Google's new health search tool should help—it's checked by doctors at the site and at the Mayo Clinic. But don't stop there. Lots of other sites have solid info, too; you just have to know where to look. That's where we come in, with our list of 10 must-bookmark health sites.

The list includes one of our own, at [ConsumerReports.org/health](http://ConsumerReports.org/health), which is loaded with info you can trust—and no ads. In addition, you can trust sites sponsored by national medical professional societies, such as the American Diabetes Association ([diabetes.org](http://diabetes.org)).

Don't raise your blood pressure by clicking on the wrong info.

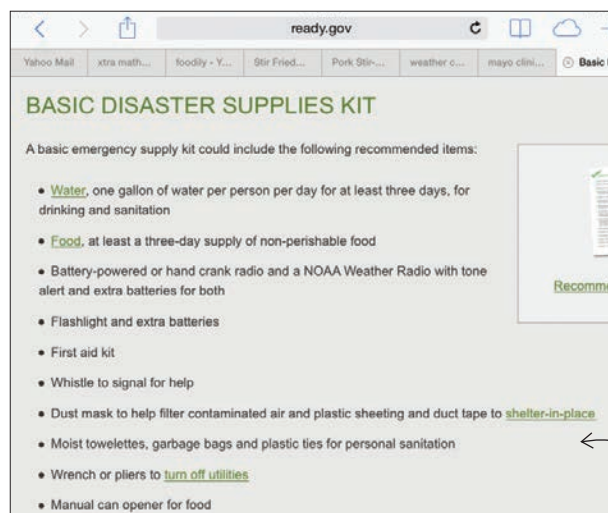
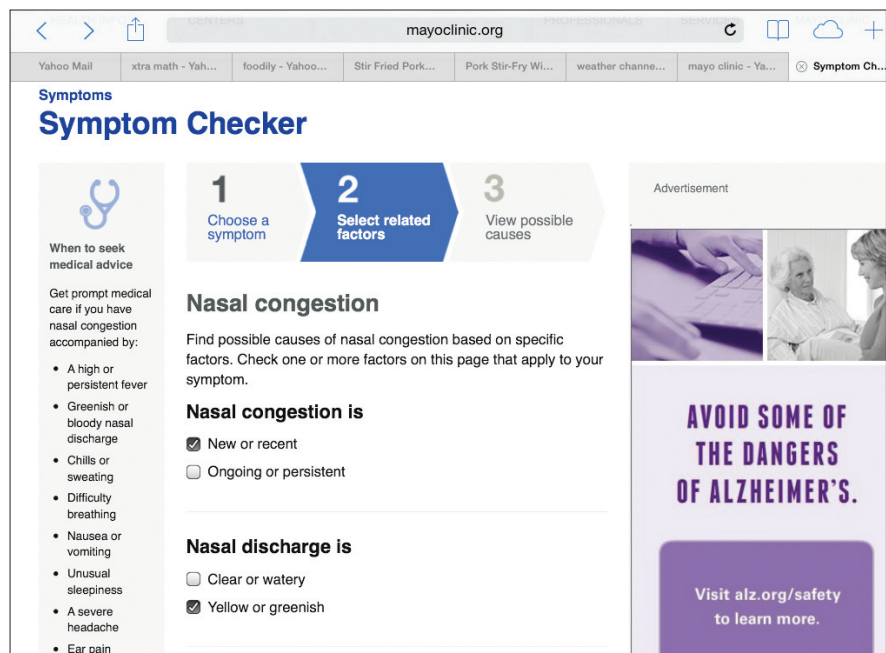


## Check your symptoms

GO-TO SITE [mayoclinic.org](http://mayoclinic.org)

Sudden back pain? Plug it into the symptom checker (click Symptoms A-Z under Patient Care & Health Info) to find out what might be causing it. You'll also learn what you can do to feel better and when to see a doctor. Click around the Healthy Lifestyle section (also under Patient Care & Health Info) for info on weight loss, aging, and more. **DON'T MISS** Check out the recipes for special diets, including heart-healthy and low-sodium. To find them, click on Site Map, then Healthy Recipes.

Maybe it's just allergies, not a deadly virus!



## Prepare for the worst

GO-TO SITE [ready.gov](http://ready.gov)

This is the ultimate guide to worst-case scenarios, such as drought, earthquake, tornado, and even volcanic eruptions. (The only thing missing is plagues of locusts!) This site can tell you what to do before, during, and after a catastrophe. And it's all surprisingly simple. Get handy lists of what to stock in your home, car, even your office, under Build a Kit.

**DON'T MISS** Under Make a Plan, see instructions about special preparations for kids, seniors, and pets.

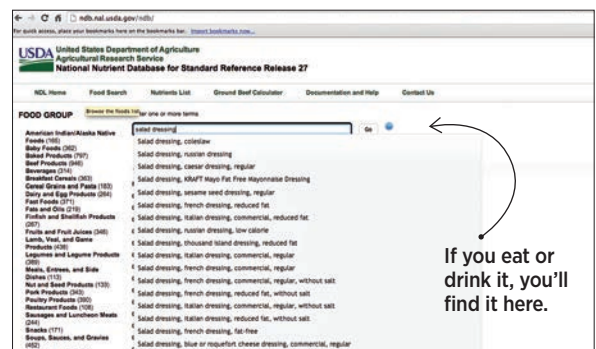
Get your kit ready before you need it!

## Count those calories

GO-TO SITE [ndb.nal.usda.gov](http://ndb.nal.usda.gov)

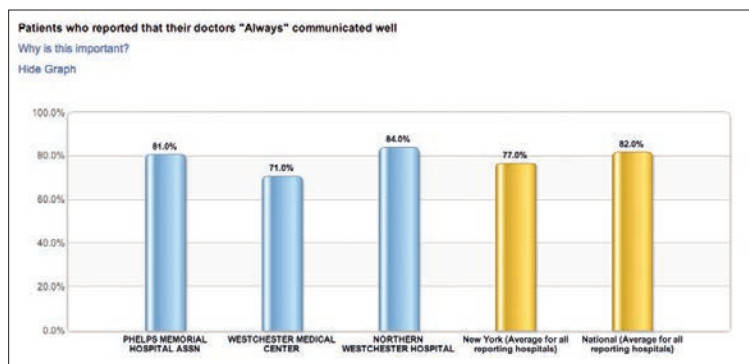
Want to know how many calories are in that hunk of Brie you just sliced for yourself? Maybe not, but if you did, you could find out at the Nutrient Data Laboratory's website. In addition to calories, you'll also find nutrient info, such as fiber, carbs, and vitamins and minerals, for more than 8,000 foods, including certain brand-name and fast-food items. The source is the Department of Agriculture, and the site isn't splashy, but its bare-bones presentation contains ultrareliable info. Begin by clicking on "Start your search here."

**DON'T MISS** If you're following a special diet—trying to eat more fiber or potassium, or cut back on sodium or carbs, for example—you can click on Nutrients List and sort by nutrient to find foods that are high (or low) in what you want (or don't).



If you eat or drink it, you'll find it here.

See how local hospitals stack up.



## Find a hospital fast

**GO-TO SITE** [hospitalcompare.hhs.gov](http://hospitalcompare.hhs.gov)

Picking a hospital for a medical procedure is a big decision. The Hospital Compare site, from the Department of Health and Human Services, lets you compare the quality of care at more than 4,000 Medicare-certified hospitals. Type in your ZIP code and you'll be able to analyze three hospitals at a time on measures such as patient satisfaction and how their death rates compare with the national average. Our sister site, at [ConsumerReports.org/hospitalratings](http://ConsumerReports.org/hospitalratings), is an even more comprehensive tool to help you find top hospitals in your area, but you'll need to subscribe to access the info. (See page 53.)

**DON'T MISS** Compare nursing homes and other facilities under Tools and Tips.

Try not to be squeamish! Tutorials can teach you about what ails you.

## Research a disease

**GO-TO SITE** [medlineplus.gov](http://medlineplus.gov)

If you want to know anything and everything about a disease, condition, or medication, you can find it at this site sponsored by the National Institutes of Health. The Health Topics section provides basic overview information in clear, easy-to-understand language. For a deeper dive into any topic, click on one of the dozens of links to outside websites. You'll also find a medical encyclopedia and medical dictionary; tutorials on common conditions, tests, and treatments; extensive information on supplements and herbs; and links to clinical trials.

**DON'T MISS** Click Videos & Cool Tools, then Understanding Medical Words for a tutorial on how to translate doctor-speak.



## HOW TO SPOT A LEGIT SITE

Before you put your trust in a site, ask three questions to tell whether it's legit.

1. Who created it? Look for sites that end in .gov, .edu, or .org, or from a major hospital such as the Mayo Clinic. They are known for containing objective, credible info. But if a site is run by a company or an organization trying to sell you something, don't rely on it alone—or just skip it.
2. Where does the info come from? A good site discloses research, sources, and any medical advisers it relies on, including their credentials. Also look for the HONcode certificate at the bottom of the site or under About Us. It shows that the site meets standards set by the objective Health on the Net Foundation; you can also look up sites at [hon.ch](http://hon.ch).
3. How is my privacy protected? As a general rule, don't share your health details online. Before you reveal anything, look for a privacy policy that spells out what info the site collects and how it is used.



## Get product-safety info

**GO-TO SITE** [householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov](http://householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov)

If you want to see the ingredients in the bug spray you're about to use in your kitchen, as well as what to do if it gets in your eyes, who makes it, and the phone number to contact the manufacturer, the Household Products Database gives you the 411. There are several ways to navigate: You can browse by category, such as auto, personal-care, or pet-care products, or just plug in the name of the item you want to learn about.

**DON'T MISS** In the Health Effects section you can type in an ailment—headache, for example—and get info about all of the products that can cause it.

You might be surprised to learn what's really in that bottle.



## Demystify menopause

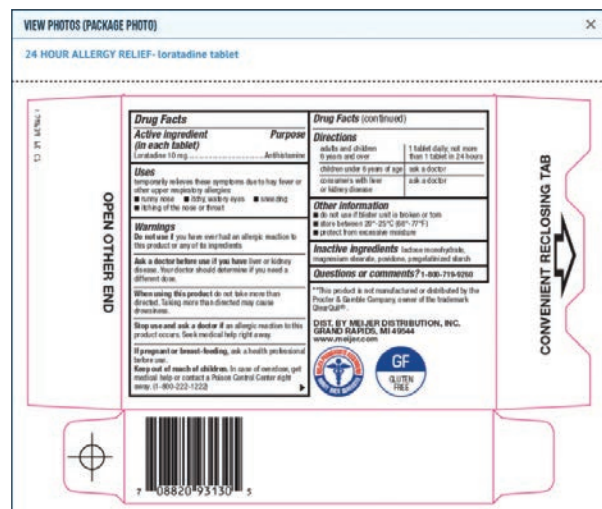
**GO-TO SITE** [menopause.org](http://menopause.org)

This site, from the North American Menopause Society, is all about helping women navigate that life stage. Under the For Women tab, click on Expert Answers to Frequently Asked Questions About Menopause. If you've thought it, they probably have an answer. That goes for younger women who are curious about perimenopause, too.

**DON'T MISS** See Related Websites, also under the For Women tab, for reliable info on other health topics.

Don't worry if you threw out the box; get your Drug Facts here.

Got questions? This site has answers.



## Learn more about the drugs you take

**GO-TO SITE** [dailymed.nlm.nih.gov](http://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov)

Wondering about the side effects of a prescription medicine? Just plug the name—brand or generic—into the DailyMed search tool and see everything that's on the insert, including what the drug is used for and any warnings. You can find labels for certain over-the-counter drugs, too, handy if the fine print is too small to read without a magnifying glass.

**DON'T MISS** To make sure your pharmacist gave you the right pills (they sometimes make mistakes), click on the Tablet/Capsule ID Tool and search for the drug name.

Get some customized advice here.

## Make better choices

**GO-TO SITE** [healthfinder.gov](http://healthfinder.gov)

If you are relatively healthy and trying to stay that way, or if you want to take better care of yourself, it's worth spending some time at Healthfinder.gov. Start by browsing the list of health topics, whether you have a specific health goal or concern or not. For example, you can learn about steps to take to prevent various diseases, get advice about screening tests, and even find tips for safe bike riding.

**DON'T MISS** Click on myhealthfinder, where you can plug in your age and gender and get recommendations for preventive services to consider, based on guidelines from various government agencies.



You can count on our experts' unbiased advice.

## Pick the right drugs

**GO-TO SITE** [ConsumerReports.org/health](http://ConsumerReports.org/health)

We couldn't find a better tool for researching drugs than our own, which recommends meds based on effectiveness, safety, and price. Our site also offers some doctor and insurance ratings, our take on the latest health news, and a lot more. All of the info is free, except for product and hospital ratings. To get those, you'll need to subscribe (\$6.95 per month or \$30 per year).

**DON'T MISS** If you're pregnant, or hoping to be, check out "What to reject when you're expecting." (Go to [ConsumerReports.org/maternity](http://ConsumerReports.org/maternity).) Also learn about medical tests you might want to skip at [ConsumerHealthChoices.org](http://ConsumerHealthChoices.org) (see page 57 for our report on radiation tests, too!).

## What about health apps?

Some of the 10 sites listed here have apps, so you can access their information on phones and tablets. Many big health authorities, such as the American Heart Association, and national drugstore chains also offer helpful apps. (Turn the page to find out more about store apps that help you do things like track your prescriptions and save money when you shop.) Some doctors are even using "prescribing" apps that work with patient portals, where you can log on and see your lab results, get instructions, and report your blood pressure, weight, and other health information. Those are all smart innovations. But be leery of apps that are claimed to fulfill a medical function, such as diagnosing a problem or otherwise replacing a doctor visit. Here are three new apps to check out:



### HDSCORES

See results of health inspections of restaurants and food stores.

Works on Apple; free.



### MY HEALTH CARE WISHES PRO

Store your advance directive, which captures your

preferences should you become very sick or incapacitated, or that of family members. It's from the American Bar Association's Commission on Law and Aging.

Works on Android, Apple; \$3.99.



### ZOCDOC

Find a local doctor or dentist, read user reviews, and book appointments.

Works on Android, Apple, BlackBerry; free.