

Healthfinder

The US Department of Health and Human Services, in co-operation with government and professional agencies, has developed a federal website called Healthfinder. This website is located at <http://www.healthfinder.gov>. It is maintained by the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP) and its National Health Information Center. It has been in existence since 1997 and has won several awards for being a significant resource for finding government and non-profit health and human services information on the Internet. It serves to link health information and websites from over 1500 health-related organizations and is provided primarily for the consumer. This site provides information in English, Spanish and also has a section for children.

According to the website's selection policy the resources listed in <http://www.healthfinder.gov> provide just basic information on topics and the more detailed information is available in the primary resources that are listed. Any resources that are listed must be able to respond to information requests, whether via Internet or traditional information and referral service, from across the Nation. The resources come primarily from U.S. government agencies, national voluntary, non-profit, and professional organizations serving the public interest, universities, other educational institutions and libraries. There are a few commercially based resources such as online journals and news websites. (<http://www.healthfinder.gov/aboutus/selection.asp>).

The home page of the website provides several useful areas for the consumer. These areas include the following headings:

- 1) *Prevention and Wellness*: This section allows the consumer to locate a health topic either through a list of topics or alphabetically through a health library. Each letter provides a window with hundreds of topics.
- 2) *Drug Interaction Checker*: This section gives information on hundreds of prescription and over-the-counter drugs. This drug digest offers items such as a drug library, a comparison window, treatments and conditions, risk assessments and the ability to check interactions of drugs, just

to name a few. There are also sections on drugs and herbs, conditions and news and reviews about drugs.

- 3) *Organizations*: This provides links to many professional and governmental organizations. It is also a clearinghouse for health and human services. It provides lists of many federal and state agencies.
- 4) *Online Check-ups*: This section gives health information in the form of a check up on topics such as physical activity, osteoporosis, hearing impairment and heart disease, just to name a few. There are over 50 health check-ups in this section.
- 5) *Consumer Guides*: This section helps to identify providers and health facilities. The information is provided by sections according to the disease or condition identified. It also provides consumer information about such topics as Medicare, Medicaid, Nursing Homes, Privacy Policies, etc.
- 6) *Health News*: It provides the latest news on health topics. The consumer can browse the archives and also view health news highlights for the week. In addition, there is a list of current FDA approvals and current research trials information.
- 7) *Subscribe*: It provides information on subscribing to the newsletters in the form of email newsletters or LISTSERVS.
- 8) *Newsletter*: This last section allows consumers to view past newsletters according to topic headings.

This website is very consumer friendly and is a good resource for patients and also for the professional seeking for general information about a health topic. It allows the consumer to get reliable information about many topics without having to search through hundreds of websites on the Internet.

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