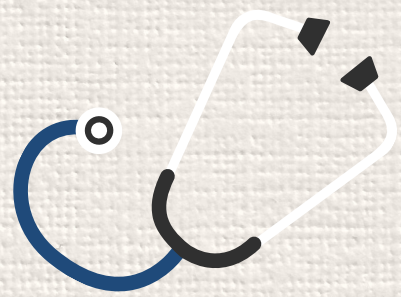


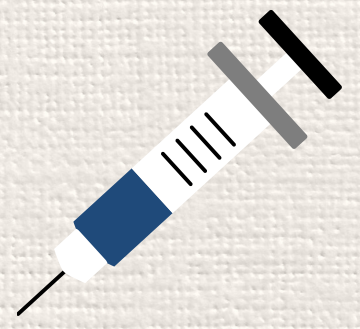
A GUIDE TO RESEARCHING YOUR DIAGNOSIS



A medical diagnosis of any kind can be frightening. Fortunately, we live in a time where all medical information is at our fingertips. This guide will help you learn more about your diagnosis while avoiding misinformation and stress.

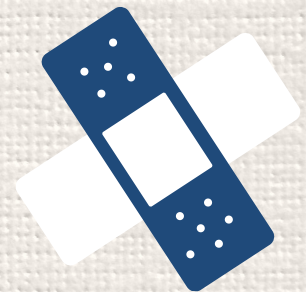
1 ASK YOUR DOCTOR

Your doctor is a great place to start your research. If you don't know **what to ask** right away, that's okay. You can take some time to process the diagnosis, conduct your own research, and make a list of questions for your next appointment. If your doctor doesn't have all the information you need, ask them whom they would recommend you speak to next.



2 START BROAD, THEN GET SPECIFIC

The best starting point for research is to simply type the condition into Google (you can use [Google Scholar](#) to review the latest scientific research on treatments or disease progression). From there, you will want to find information that pertains more to your situation; for example, whether the condition affects people of your sex differently.



3 CHECK RELIABLE SOURCES

Seek out information from accredited organizations like the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), the [American Heart Association](#), or the [National Institutes of Health](#). A good rule of thumb: URLs that end in .org or .gov are generally more credible than those that end in .com. Avoid blog sites published by individuals or posts on social media which are not vetted for accuracy.



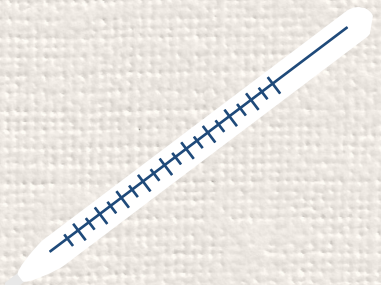
4 RECOGNIZE WRONG INFORMATION

False or inaccurate information can be published frequently on the internet. Or, information that was once considered to be accurate has since been disproved. Thus, always check publication dates. Information changes rapidly, especially in health, but anything published within the past five years will likely still be valid. You'll also want to consider if the article uses anecdotal evidence (personal stories) versus verifiable data (statistics from scientific research).



5 UNSURE? LOOK IT UP!

You will often come across a term you're unfamiliar with and while context clues can help, if you're still not sure what something means, just look it up! Try using a [medical dictionary](#) or if you're struggling to understand a biological process, the [National Cancer Institute](#) offers a great resource with modules that cover every system in the body.



6 STAY ORGANIZED

To avoid becoming overwhelmed by so much new information, try to stay as organized as you can. Start a document where you copy important information or take notes by hand. Use different colors to distinguish between information on treatments, symptoms, etc. Do whatever works best for you. The main objective is to learn as much as you can.



7 AVOID DECEPTIVE ADS

Your search history can be sold to companies who then try to sell you products, regardless of whether they will actually benefit you. If you come across ads in your research that promise easy solutions or a cure-all "vitamin," these are likely scams that will do you more harm than good.



8 GET A SECOND OPINION

It is well within your rights as a patient to meet with other physicians and get their perspectives on your situation. This does not mean that your diagnosis will be undone, but it could inform you on another treatment option that your other doctor may not have considered.

