



Grade 6 Sample Lesson Plan: Reliable Health Information

SOLs

- Analyze the reliability of health information.

Objectives/Goals

- Students will understand basic guidelines for accessing reputable health information.

Materials

- Internet Access

Procedure

- Have a discussion with students about the importance of getting health advice (advice about medications, behaviors, treatment etc.) from knowledgeable and credible sources. Just because a friend or an ad on TV or in a magazine gives health advice or promotes a health product does not necessarily mean it is good for you. Much of the health information (e.g., drug advertising, health gimmicks, diet and nutrition advice) provided through advertising is intended to convince people to buy products or services and is not necessarily reliable information.
- Encourage students to talk with their parents, trusted adults, school nurses and their family health providers to validate medical advice or information about drugs, medicines, diets etc. that they may receive from friends or see and hear in media.
- One of the first places people look for health information is the internet – but how can you be sure the information on a site is accurate? Many sites provide wrong or misleading information.
- To increase the chances of finding good health information on the internet, follow the following tips:
 - Rely on websites of well-known health organizations such as hospitals, health departments, and universities (as an example, take students to local hospital websites).

- Tell students to look for ".gov," ".edu," or ".org" in the web address. A ".gov" address means the site is run by a government agency. An ".edu" address is for an educational institution, and an ".org" address often means a professional organization runs the site. A ".com" address means a for-profit company runs the site. It may still have some good information, but the content may be biased
 - Don't only use information from one website. Compare the information you find on a site with the information you find on other sites. Make sure other sites can back up the information you have found.
 - Be cautious about trusting personal stories -just because someone claims that their personal health story is true, it does not mean that it is and it doesn't mean that what helped them will help you.
- Have the students visit the following sites that have ". gov," and ".org" in their web addresses as examples of sites with good health information for children:
 - KidsHealth.org <https://kidshealth.org/en/kids>
 - CDC.Gov BAM-Body and Mind <https://www.cdc.gov/bam/body/index.html> GirlsHealth.Gov <https://www.girlshealth.gov>
 - Kids.Gov - General Health for Teens
 - <https://kids.usa.gov/teens/health-and-safety/general-health/index.shtml>
 - Assign students a health topic (e.g. smoking, the flu) to research on at least two of the sites.
 - Ask them to identify three facts on the topic from the first site and see whether they can confirm it on the second site.
 - Discussion: Was the information on the sites similar? Do you think each site provided good advice or information? Why or Why Not?
 - As an alternative, teachers may locate "bad" information in a magazine or on the Internet and then have students go to reputable sites to discredit the information.

Assessment Idea

- Did students visit the sites?
- Were they able to articulate three facts on the topic, confirm those facts, and discuss the differences between sites.

References

- Iowa Children's Hospital – Online Health Information What Can You Trust <https://uichildrens.org/online-health-information-what-can-you-trust>
- Family Doctor.Org (American Association of Family Physicians) – Finding Reliable Health Information on the Web <https://familydoctor.org/health->

- [information-on-the-web- finding-reliable-information/?adfree=true](https://medlineplus.gov/evaluatinghealthinformation/?adfree=true)
- Medline Plus - Evaluating Health Information
<https://medlineplus.gov/evaluatinghealthinformation.html>
- Medline Plus - Guide to Healthy Web Surfing
<https://medlineplus.gov/healthywebsurfing.html>

Health Information on the Web: Finding Reliable Information

Health Information on the Web: Finding Reliable Information

"Don't believe everything you read." It's an old warning that is especially true for health-related information you find on the World Wide Web.

The Web can be a great resource when you want to learn about a specific disease or health condition. You can also find tips on staying healthy. But among the millions of websites that offer health-related information, there are many that present myths and half-truths as if they are facts.

To avoid unreliable health information when you're surfing the Web, ask yourself the following questions:

Where did this information come from?

Any website that provides health-related information should tell you the information's source. See if you can find answers to the following questions:

- Who wrote this information? Keep in mind that many health-related websites post information that comes from other sources. If the person or organization that runs the website didn't write the information, the original source should be clearly stated.
- If a health care professional didn't write the information, was it reviewed by a doctor or another medical expert?
- If the information contains any statistics, do the numbers come from a reliable source?
- Does something on the website appear to be someone's opinion rather than a fact? If so, is the opinion from a qualified person or organization (such as a doctor or medical organization)?

How current is this information?

Health information is constantly changing. For example, researchers continue to learn new things about various diseases and their treatments. You should know whether the health-related information you're reading is up-to-date. Many Web pages will post the date on which the page was last reviewed or updated. You can usually find this date at the very bottom of the page. If this date isn't included, check to see whether the page has a copyright line. This tells you when the information was originally written. If the page you're reading hasn't been reviewed in the past year, look for more recently updated information.

Who is responsible for the content of the website?

Before you believe any health-related information you find on the Web, find out who is responsible for information on the site. The easiest way to do this is to look at the site's home page. If the home page doesn't tell you who publishes the site, look for a link that says "About us" or "About this site." Often, this link will be at the bottom of the home page. Clicking on this link will usually take you to a page that explains what person or organization is responsible for the information on the site.

Websites published by an organization. Health-related websites may be published by the U.S. government (.gov), a nonprofit organization (.org) or a college or university (.edu). These sites may be the most reliable sources of health information because they're usually not supported by for-profit companies, such as drug or insurance companies. However, you still need to find out where these sites get their information.

Sites with .com Web addresses may represent a specific company or be published by a company that uses the Web to sell products or services. These are called commercial sites. Commercial sites can offer useful and accurate information. You may want to be more careful about believing the information you read on these sites, though. The information may not be fair and accurate if the company that pays for the site has something to gain from it. It's a good idea to double-check information you read on commercial websites.

Websites published by an individual. Websites published by individuals may offer support and advice about coping with certain conditions and their treatments. These sites can contain reliable and useful information. However, it's very important to double-check health information you see on a website published by an individual. While many of these sites contain good information, some may contain myths or rumors.

Other Organizations

Remember:

Information that you find on a website does not replace your doctor's advice. Your doctor is the best person to answer questions about your personal health. If you read something on the Web that doesn't agree with what your doctor has told you, ask him or her about it.

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Tags: **Internet** (<https://familydoctor.org/tag/internet/>), **patient education** (<https://familydoctor.org/tag/patient-education/>), **patient information** (<https://familydoctor.org/tag/patient-information/>), **search** (<https://familydoctor.org/tag/search/>), **Web site** (<https://familydoctor.org/tag/web-site/>), **World Wide Web** (<https://familydoctor.org/tag/world-wide-web/>)



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This information provides a general overview and may not apply to everyone. Talk to your family doctor to find out if this information applies to you and to get more information on this subject.



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Menu



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Home (/)

Online health information - what can you trust?

Definition

When you have a question about your or your family's health, you may look it up on the Internet. You can find accurate health information on many sites. But, you are also likely to run across a lot of questionable, even false content. How can you tell the difference?

To find health information you can trust, you have to know where and how to look. These tips can help.

What to Look For

With a bit of detective work, you can find information you can trust.

- Search for websites of well-known health institutions. Medical schools, professional health organizations, and hospitals often provide online health content.
- Look for ".gov," ".edu," or ".org" in the web address. A ".gov" address means the site is run by a government agency. A ".edu" address indicates an educational institution. And a ".org" address often means a professional organization runs the site. A ".com" address means a for-profit company runs the site. It may still have some good information, but the content may be biased.

- Find out who wrote or reviewed the content. Look for health care providers such as doctors (MDs), nurses (RNs), or other licensed health professionals. Also look for an editorial policy. This policy can tell you where the site gets its content or how it is created.
- Look for scientific references. Content is more reliable if it is based on scientific studies. Professional journals are good references. These include the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* and the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Recent editions of medical textbooks are also good references.
- Look for the contact information on the site. You should be able to reach the site sponsor by telephone, email, or a mailing address.
- No matter where you find the information, check how old the content is. Even trusted sites may have out-of-date information archived. Look for content that is no more than 2 to 3 years old. Individual pages may have a date at the bottom that says when it was last updated. Or the home page may have such a date.
- Beware of chat rooms and discussion groups. The content in these forums is typically not reviewed or regulated. Plus it may come from people who are not experts, or who are trying to sell something.
- DO NOT rely on just one website. Compare the information you find on a site with content from other sites. Make sure other sites can back up the information you have found.

Things to Keep in Mind

While searching for health information online, use common sense and be wary.

- If it seems too good to be true, it probably is. Beware of quick-fix cures. And remember that a money-back guarantee does not mean that something works.
- As with any kind of website, it is important to be careful with your personal information. DO NOT give out your Social Security number. Before you buy anything, be sure that the site has a secure server. This will help protect your credit card information. You can tell by looking in the box near the top of the screen that cites the web address. At the start of the web address, look for "https".
- Personal stories are not scientific fact. Just because someone claims that their personal health story is true, it does not mean that it is. But even if it is true, the same treatment may not apply to your case. Only your provider can help you find the care that is best for you.

Where to Start

Here are a few high-quality resources to get you started.

- American Heart.org -- www.americanheart.org: Information on heart disease and ways to prevent disease. From the American Heart Association.
- Diabetes.org -- www.diabetes.org: Information on diabetes and ways to prevent, manage, and treat the disease. From the American Diabetes Association.
- Familydoctor.org -- www.familydoctor.org: General health information for families. Produced by the American Academy of Family Physicians.
- Healthfinder.gov -- healthfinder.gov/: General health information. Produced by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- HealthyChildren.org -- www.healthychildren.org/English/Pages/default.aspx: Information on children's health. From the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- CDC -- www.cdc.gov/: Health information for older adults. From the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- NIHSeniorHealth.gov -- www.nihseniorhealth.gov: Health information for older adults. From the National Institutes of Health.

When to Call the Doctor

It is great that you are seeking information to help you manage your health. But keep in mind that online health information can never replace a talk with your provider. Talk to your provider if you have questions about your health, your treatment, or anything you read online. It can be helpful to print out the articles you have read and bring them with you to your appointment.

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Revision

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Disclaimers

- The information provided herein should not be used during any medical emergency or for the diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition.
- A licensed medical professional should be consulted for diagnosis and treatment of any and all medical conditions.
- Call 911 for all medical emergencies.
- Links to other sites are provided for information only -- they do not constitute endorsements of those other sites.

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(<https://www.youtube.com/user/UIChildrens>)



(<https://twitter.com/uichildrens>)



(<https://www.flickr.com/photos/uichildrens/collections>)

University of Iowa Health Care

- Stead Family Department of Pediatrics (<http://www.medicine.uiowa.edu/pediatrics/>)
- UI Hospitals and Clinics (<http://www.uihc.org>)
- UI Carver College of Medicine (<http://www.medicine.uiowa.edu>)
- UI Physicians (<https://www.medicine.uiowa.edu/uiphyicians/>)

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