Cancer information on the internet

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The internet

Many people diagnosed with cancer use the internet to search for information about their disease and treatments.

Much website information is valuable but some can be false or misleading. Some sites combine health information with commercial interests. A few sites may even give dangerous advice. Anyone can set up a website—you don’t have to be an expert.

Always talk to your doctor and health care team about any information you find especially when considering treatment options.

It is important that you know if the website provides reliable information about cancer.

This website is a good place to start to help you find the information you need. Most topic pages have links to other websites if you want to look for more information.

How do I know if a website has good information?

- find out who runs the website—it should be clearly stated on the homepage or it should say where this information can be found
- look at the URL (web address). Web addresses containing .gov are government funded sites, .org are often not-for-profit websites, .com sites are usually commercial and .edu are educational institutions
- good websites tell you about their organisation—who funds them, why they exist, where they are located and what is their purpose
- think about possible conflicts of interest—are they trying to sell you something or promote a particular viewpoint?
- can you find the information you are looking for—is it up to date and helpful? Who reviewed it?
- does this website link to other reputable sites?
Finding the right information

Think about what sort of information you’re looking for before you start searching.

• are you looking for help with emotional needs, information about treatment or other people’s experiences?

• everyone is different. Not all information will be appropriate for your diagnosis and situation

• don’t expect to find everything you want. Write down any questions or concerns as you go

• talk to your health team about the information you find. Your specialist, doctors, nurses and other health care professionals will know your individual situation and can explain anything you don’t understand

• bookmark good sites to go back to for reliable information

• print out information to read and think about later and to discuss with your doctor and health care team

• call Cancer Council 13 11 20 if you have any questions or concerns or find anything upsetting.

Useful websites

Disclaimer: Cancer Council SA does not necessarily endorse the opinions or recommendations of the websites listed. This list is not comprehensive—there are many other reputable sites that are not listed here. Call Cancer Council 13 11 20 if you want to discuss the information you find.

Australian health websites

SA Health links to information from leading health information providers, government agencies as well as peak health organisations, educational and research institutions.  
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au

National Health Services Directory is a comprehensive source of detailed information about services provided in the health, housing, family and community sectors.  
www.nhsd.com.au

HealthInsite provides access to a wide range of up to date and quality assessed information on important health topics (Commonwealth government).  
www.healthinsite.gov.au

Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing—information on policies, programs and priorities for the health and ageing portfolio.  
www.health.gov.au

National Health and Medical Research Foundation supports Australian health and medical research, develops health advice for the community, health professionals and government.  
www.nhmrc.gov.au

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare—the national agency for health and welfare statistics and information.  
www.aihw.gov.au
Australian cancer information

Cancer Council SA is South Australia’s leading independent, cancer-related non-government organisation.
www.cancersa.org.au

Cancer Council Australia is Australia’s leading not-for-profit cancer organisation.
www.cancer.org.au

Cancer Care Centre is South Australian cancer, complementary health care organisation.
www.cancercarecentre.org.au

Cancer Voices SA is a consumer advocacy group that represents the views of South Australians whose lives have been affected by cancer.
www.cancervoicessa.org.au

Virtual Medical Centre – the cancer section is a commercially funded source of cancer information on drugs, disease, treatment, trials, symptoms, support and breaking news.
www.myvmc.com

evIQ Cancer Treatments Online provides patient and clinician information about the standard treatments for cancers.
www.eviq.org.au

Cancer Australia is Australia’s independent national authority and information source on breast and ovarian cancer.
www.canceraustralia.gov.au

Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) is the peak national organisation for Australians affected by breast cancer.
www.bcna.org.au

Lions Prostate Health provides comprehensive Australian information on all aspects of prostate cancer.
www.prostatehealth.org.au

Ovarian Cancer Australia is a national not-for-profit organisation providing support and advocacy for people affected by ovarian cancer, and is the peak body for ovarian cancer awareness and prevention.
www.ovariancancer.net.au

National Cancer Screening Programs provides information about government funded population screening programs for breast, bowel and cervix cancer.
www.cancerscreening.gov.au

Palliative Care Council SA provides local and national information on palliative care services.
www.pallcare.asn.au

Leukaemia Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the care and cure of patients and families living with leukaemias, lymphomas, myeloma and related blood disorders.
www.leukaemia.org.au

International cancer organisations

American Cancer Society (USA)—not-for-profit cancer organisation.
www.cancer.org

National Cancer Institute (USA)—comprehensive, evidence-based cancer information.
www.cancer.gov