

HEALTH INFORMATION ON THE WEB



5 RECOMMENDED WEB SITES

www.medlineplus.gov

Run by the **National Library of Medicine**. It includes a medical encyclopedia and information on prescription drugs, herbs and supplements.

www.cdc.gov

Run by the federal **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**. It includes information on hundreds of diseases and health conditions, plus advice for international travelers.

www.healthfinder.gov

Run by the **U.S. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion**. It includes a searchable health library.

www.ahrq.gov

Run by the federal **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality**. It focuses on medical research to help improve quality of health care.

www.aarp.org/health

Run by the **American Association of Retired Persons**. One section of this web site is about prescription drugs and using medications wisely.

HOW TO FIND TRUSTWORTHY WEB SITES

Unfortunately, health information on some web sites is not always reliable or accurate. The Internet is not regulated. This means that people can create web sites with health information and say whatever they like. To find trustworthy health information, start by looking for the features listed below:

Does the web site tell you who is responsible for the site?

Look for links on the home page that say **about us**, **about this site**, or **contact us**. Check the bottom of the home page for a **copyright** notice.

Is the web site's only purpose to give you information and not to sell you something?

Look for web sites run by nonprofit educational or medical organizations or government agencies. You can often tell these sites by the ending of their name:

.gov for government

.edu for educational institutions

.org for nonprofit organizations such as medical foundations

Be cautious about using web sites that sell products or services. You can often tell these sites by the ending of their name: **.com** for commercial

Does the web site explain exactly what it will do with personal information?

Look for the web site's **privacy policy**. Usually there is a link at the bottom of the home page. Some web sites sell your information to other organizations. If you have any doubts, do not give out any personal information.

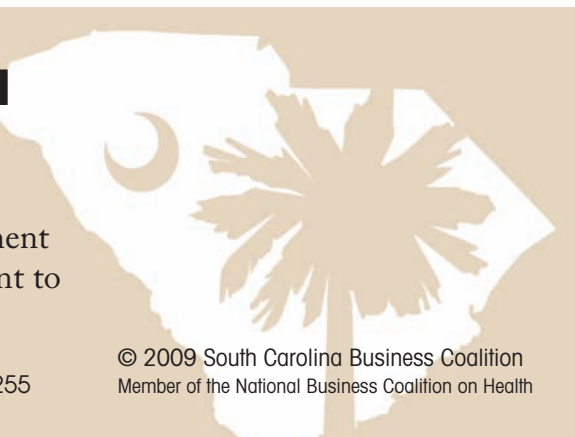
What is the source of the web site's information?

The most trustworthy health information is based on **medical research**. Look for references to articles in medical journals and other sources to back it up. The web site should **always** identify the **source** of its information. If you are not able to tell where the information comes from, be cautious about using it.

SOURCES: www.familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/;
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/z/;
www.mlanet.org/resources/userguide.html#1

ABOUT THE SOUTH CAROLINA BUSINESS COALITION ON HEALTH

The South Carolina Business Coalition on Health (SCBCH) is an independent, 501 (c)(3) nonprofit community organization working to improve health care in South Carolina. We are providing this guide to assist you when making important decisions regarding your health. Tools like this encourage improvement in our health care system. We believe you and your family deserve the best quality health care, and we want to equip you with the tools and resources to enable you to receive that care.



THE LEAPFROG GROUP FOR PATIENT SAFETY

The Leapfrog Group works with over 50 leading medical experts to identify solutions that will improve hospital quality and safety and then gather this information from hospitals around the country. The Leapfrog Hospital Quality and Safety Survey asks hospitals to report on the steps they take to improve the quality of patient care. Survey results are available for public viewing on Leapfrog's web site, www.leapfroggroup.org. The Leapfrog Hospital Quality and Safety Survey asks hospitals if they adhere to the following quality and safety practices:

Overall Patient Safety Ratings

- **Safe practices** – Select a hospital that has a full Leapfrog Safe Practices Score. This means it has put in place 17 procedures to reduce preventable medical mistakes.
- **Preventing medication errors** – Patients should choose a hospital that uses computerized prescriber order entry (CPOE) systems to order medications, tests, and procedures. CPOE systems are computer systems designed to alert doctors and other prescribers to potentially serious problems with their instructions.
- **Managing serious errors** – Patients should choose a hospital that has implemented Leapfrog's policy on managing serious events ("or never events") such as surgery on the wrong body part or death due to contaminated drugs or devices.
- **Appropriate ICU staffing** – Patients should choose a hospital with an intensive care unit (ICU) that is staffed by doctors and other caregivers who have special training in critical care medicine. These doctors are called "intensivists."

High-risk treatment safety ratings

Select a hospital with lots of experience and the best results for specific procedures, surgeries or conditions. This is known as Evidence Based Hospital Referral (High-risk procedures). The scores for the following high-risk treatments are based on a combination of quality and costs:

- Heart bypass surgery
- Heart attack
- Heart angioplasty
- Pneumonia

LEAPFROG SCORING

- Fully meets the standards of Leapfrog's recommended quality and safety practices
- Substantial progress in implementing Leapfrog's recommended quality and safety practices
- Some progress in implementing Leapfrog's recommended quality and safety practices
- Willing to report publicly; did not yet meet Leapfrog's criteria for good early stage effort
- Hospital does not perform procedure
- Hospital declined to respond

THE LEAPFROG HOSPITAL QUALITY AND SAFETY SURVEY RESULTS

Results are as of August 3, 2009. Visit www.leapfroggroup.org for monthly updates.

UPSTATE HOSPITALS	OVERALL PATIENT SAFETY RATINGS				HIGH-RISK TREATMENT SAFETY RATINGS					
	Safe practices	Preventing medication errors	Appropriate ICU staffing	Managing serious errors	Heart bypass surgery	Heart angioplasty	Heart attack	Pneumonia	High-risk deliveries	Weight loss surgery
AnMed Health Medical Center	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●
AnMed Health Women's and Children's Hospital	●	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	●
Cannon Memorial Hospital	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Greenville Memorial Hospital	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○
Greer Memorial Hospital	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	○	○
Hillcrest Hospital	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	○	●
Laurens County Hospital	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Mary Black Hospital	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	○	○
Oconee Memorial Hospital	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Palmetto Health Baptist Easley	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	○	○
Patewood Memorial Hospital	●	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○
Piedmont Medical Center	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●
Self Regional Healthcare	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Spartanburg Regional Health System	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
St. Francis Hospital - Downtown	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●
St. Francis Hospital - Eastside	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	●	○	○
Upstate Carolina Medical Center	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	○	○
Wallace Thomson Hospital	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
MIDLANDS HOSPITALS	OVERALL PATIENT SAFETY RATINGS				HIGH-RISK TREATMENT SAFETY RATINGS					
	Safe practices	Preventing medication errors	Appropriate ICU staffing	Managing serious errors	Heart bypass surgery	Heart angioplasty	Heart attack	Pneumonia	High-risk deliveries	Weight loss surgery
Palmetto Health Baptist	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	●
Palmetto Health Richland	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○
Providence Hospital	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○
LOW COUNTRY HOSPITALS	OVERALL PATIENT SAFETY RATINGS				HIGH-RISK TREATMENT SAFETY RATINGS					
	Safe practices	Preventing medication errors	Appropriate ICU staffing	Managing serious errors	Heart bypass surgery	Heart angioplasty	Heart attack	Pneumonia	High-risk deliveries	Weight loss surgery
Bon Secours - St. Francis Xavier Hospital	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	●	○	○
Coastal Carolina Medical Center	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○
Colleton Medical Center	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	●	○	○
East Cooper Regional Medical Center	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	●	○	○
Grand Strand Regional Medical Center	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○
Hilton Head Hospital	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○
McLeod Regional Medical Center	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○
Medical University of South Carolina	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Roper Hospital	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○
Trident Medical Center	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○
Tuomey Health care System	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	○	○

DISCOVERING THE BEST TREATMENTS THROUGH MEDICAL RESEARCH

To find out what types of care work best, doctors and others do scientific studies of patient care. The results from this medical research are called “medical evidence.” Each patient is different, but medical research can show whether some types of health care tend to get better results than others for patients with certain conditions. Using medical evidence is part of “good quality” care.

Medical evidence from research answers questions such as these:

- **What works best for keeping people healthy?** This includes finding out what works best to prevent health problems and what works best to keep diseases from returning.
- **What works best for catching problems at an early stage when treatment can be more effective?**
- **What tests are best for finding out what’s wrong?**
- **Which treatments help the most and have the fewest side effects?** Some studies collect evidence on experimental treatments, new drugs, or new approaches to surgery. Other studies collect evidence on the best ways to improve the quality of life for people with long-term medical conditions.



1 Be informed and involved – Find and use information about quality of care and take an active part in all decisions.

2 Get the care that is known to work best for your condition – Ask questions when you see your doctor. Ask for information about your treatment choices and ask whether any research has been done to find out which treatments work best.

3 Get the right amount of care – Make sure that you are getting as much as you need of the right kind of care. Ask questions when tests and treatments are recommended for you.

4 Get care that is as safe as possible – Ask about the risks as well as the benefits of each treatment choice.

5 Get timely care – Go in for care as soon as you need it. Stay on schedule with preventive care and follow-up visits.

6 Do your part to stay healthy – Make wise lifestyle choices. This means doing your best to eat healthy food, stay physically active, keep a healthy weight and stay tobacco-free.

USING QUALITY STANDARDS FOR YOUR CONDITION

If you have an ongoing medical condition such as asthma, diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, or high blood pressure, then you know it’s especially important to look after your health.

Much research has been done to find ways to help people with ongoing conditions stay as healthy as possible. The results from this research have been used to set quality standards for people with ongoing conditions. These guidelines tell what types of care you should be getting to catch problems at an early stage and prevent serious complications.

If you have an ongoing health condition, you’ll want to be sure that the care you are getting follows these guidelines for quality care. This means finding and using information about the quality standards for your condition.

EXAMPLES OF QUALITY STANDARDS

Getting an antibiotic at the right time before surgery

• Research shows that surgery patients who get antibiotics within **one hour before** their operation are less likely to get an infection of their surgical wound.



• The **timing** for when patients are given the antibiotic is **important**. Research shows that the antibiotic does not work as well if patients get it too far in advance or if they get it after their surgery begins.

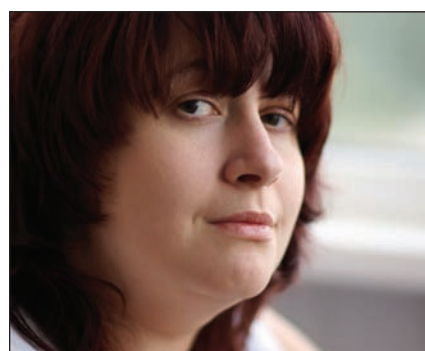
• Therefore, a quality standard for surgery is to make sure **surgery patients get an antibiotic at the right time**, which means getting the antibiotic within one hour before surgery begins.

Taking control of their health



“ I have diabetes, and I thought I was doing everything I should do to stay healthy. Then I read a booklet with standards of good quality care for people with diabetes. I found out that I wasn’t getting some tests I need to have as often as I should. So I made an appointment right away. Now I’m up to date on everything. I’m even keeping track of all my tests on a wallet card. I don’t want to fall behind again. My health is too important.”

“ My doctor showed me statistics on how being overweight can lead to big health problems – that got my attention. Then he gave me advice about healthy eating and sent me to some web sites. One of them has a Body Mass Index calculator that’s quick and really easy to use (www.cdc.gov). The one I like best is the “Portion Distortion Quiz” on the web site of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. It shows how portion sizes of some common foods have become a lot bigger over the years (<http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/portion/>). It made me realize what huge helpings I’m used to eating.”



“ I was very upset and discouraged when my doctor gave me the bad news about cancer. I had so many questions and concerns. The nurse at my doctor’s office told me about a guide on a government web site called “Next Steps After Your Diagnosis: finding information and support” (www.ahrq.gov/consumer/diaginfo.htm). I found information that helped me understand my type of cancer. It told about research on what kinds of treatment seem to work the best, and I talked it over with my doctor. I was glad I took the time to look up that information. Otherwise, I might have rushed into doing something that wasn’t right for me.”