



## Task Title: Evaluating Online Health Information

### OALCF Cover Sheet – Practitioner Copy

**Learner Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Started:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Successful Completion:** Yes ☐ No ☐

**Goal Path:** Employment ☐ Apprenticeship ☐

Secondary School ☐ Post Secondary ☐ Independence ☒

**Task Description:** The learner will read a short article about how to assess the credibility of online health information and answer questions.

#### Main Competency/Task Group/Level Indicator:

- Find and Use Information/Read continuous text/A1.2

#### Materials Required:

- Pen/pencil and paper and/or digital device

## Learner Information

Many people go online to learn about symptoms, health conditions, medications and other health topics. It is important to learn how to evaluate information you find online to determine if it's accurate and from a credible source. Online health information should never replace advice from your doctor or other medical practitioner.

Read "Evaluating Online Health Information".

## Evaluating Online Health Information

Many Canadians go online to search for medical and health-related information. The internet is the first source of information for many people, before even speaking to a doctor or other healthcare provider.

Online health information can have many positive impacts on our health knowledge, behaviours, and well-being. Unfortunately, the quality and accuracy of online health information is not consistent, including social media where information quality can be very low. Being able to evaluate online health information is an important skill.

Use the steps below to evaluate the health information you find online.

**Check the date:** Look to see when the website was created or last updated. Health information should be up to date to make sure it is relevant and accurate. Even if the information has not changed, it should be regularly reviewed.

**Check the author:** Identify the author to determine if they have the necessary background, experience, or training to accurately discuss the topic.

**Look for the evidence:** Health information should be based on facts rather than opinion, rumours, or personal stories. Authors and websites should clearly list their sources, so that you can check the information for yourself.

**Understand the purpose:** Read a website's "About Us" page to understand the website's purpose and who runs it. Are they credible and unbiased? Be cautious of websites selling a product. Their information may already be biased, as the goal is to make profit rather than present clear facts. Often product claims are too good to be true.

**Be critical of the details:** Be skeptical of websites that look outdated, contain broken links, or have spelling and grammar errors. Patient information should be written in plain language, making it easy to follow.

You should carefully consider the source of the information you find on the internet and discuss that health information with your healthcare provider.

[Sourced from:

[https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Health/Pages/conditions.aspx?hwid=custom.ab\\_online\\_health\\_info\\_tips\\_inst](https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Health/Pages/conditions.aspx?hwid=custom.ab_online_health_info_tips_inst)  
[https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Health/Pages/conditions.aspx?hwid=custom.ab\\_online\\_health\\_info\\_tips\\_inst](https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Health/Pages/conditions.aspx?hwid=custom.ab_online_health_info_tips_inst)]

## Work Sheet

**Task 1: List three things you should check to determine if an author is able to provide credible health information.**

Answer:

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**Task 2: List three types of health information that are not based on evidence.**

Answer:

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**Task 3: Why should you be cautious if a website is sharing health information and also selling a product?**

Answer:

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**Task 4: List three details that should make you skeptical of an online health website.**

Answer:

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## Answers

**Task 1: List three things you should check to determine if an author is able to provide credible health information.**

Answer: Determine whether they have the necessary background, experience, and training.

**Task 2: List three types of health information that are not based on evidence.**

Answer: Those based on opinions, rumours, or personal stories.

**Task 3: Why should you be cautious if a website is sharing health information and also selling a product?**

Answer: The information may be biased, as the goal of the website is to make a profit rather than presenting clear facts.

**Task 4: List three details that should make you skeptical of an online health website.**

Answer: Three of: looks outdated, contains broken links, has spelling and grammar errors, not written in plain language for patients.

### Performance Descriptors

Levels	Performance Descriptors	Needs Work	Completes task with support from practitioner	Completes task independently
A1.2	scans text to locate information			
	locates multiple pieces of information in simple texts			
	makes low-level inferences			
	makes connections between sentences and between paragraphs in a single text			
	reads more complex texts to locate a single piece of information			
	follows the main events of descriptive, narrative and informational texts			
	obtains information from detailed reading			
	begins to identify sources and evaluate information			

This task: Was successfully completed ☐ Needs to be tried again ☐

Task Title: EvaluatingOnlineHealthInformation\_I\_A1.2

Learner Comments:

Instructor (print):

Learner (print):