

N E X T   S T E P S

# Becoming an Informed Consumer

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## Why is it important to be informed?

Just as you may be careful about buying a home, car, or appliance, it is important to be an informed consumer of health information and services.

In this section, you will learn how to be an informed consumer when:

- Searching the Web
- Finding the right care
- Considering the use of alternative or complementary therapy

Remember, the best health care decisions are made when you work with your registered health care provider. Please share your concerns and questions with your health care team.



## Searching the Web

There is a lot of information on the Internet. Sometimes it can be hard to know what information is reliable. Ask yourself, “Can I trust the information on this website?”

Health websites sponsored by Federal Government agencies, large professional organizations, and well known medical schools are usually good sources of information. Website addresses are helpful in identifying the source of the information. Addresses that end with:

- .gov identify a government agency
- .edu identify an educational institution, like a school, college, or university
- .org usually identify non-profit organizations (such as professional groups; scientific, medical, or research societies; advocacy groups)
- .com identify commercial websites

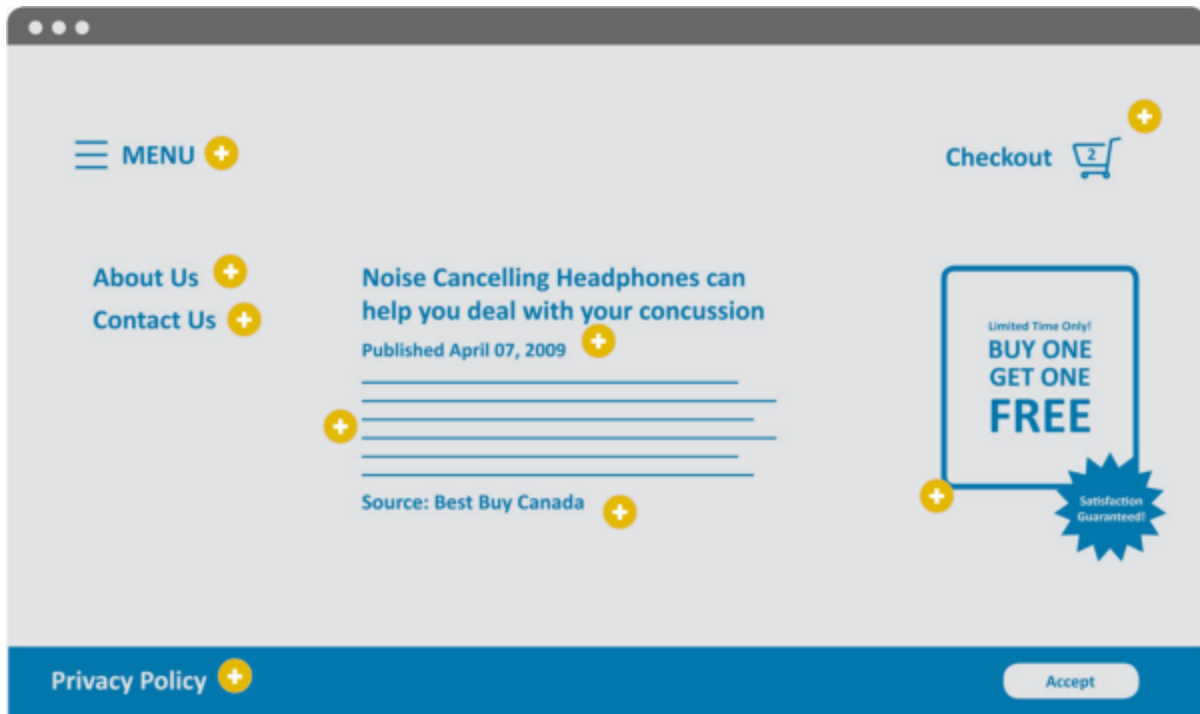
For more information about evaluating health care information, take a look at these helpful documents.

- Online Health Information: [Can I Trust It?](#)
- MedlinePlus Evaluating Internet Health Information: [Checklist](#)

## What should you Look for on a website?

Click on the image to enter full-screen mode. Then, click on the yellow hotspots to read more about key items to watch for on a website.

Source: MedLinePlus, US National Library of Medicine [\[webpage\]](#)



(ref: <https://concussion.vch.ca/becoming-an-informed-consumer>)

## Questions to ask when pursuing alternative or complementary therapies

Some people get frustrated with the pace of their recovery from long COVID and may consider alternative or complementary therapies. Examples of providers for these therapies include naturopathic physicians, chiropractors, traditional Chinese medicine practitioners and functional medicine practitioners.

Before you invest time and money, it may be worthwhile to ask your provider some questions. For example:

- Has this treatment been shown to work better than no treatment or other known treatments for long COVID?
- How much of the treatment is needed to achieve the desired results and in what time frame?
- How much will the treatment cost?
- What are the common side effects? What are the rare but serious problems?
- When and how would we know that the treatment is not working?
- Why do you think this treatment will work for me? What would change your mind?
- Can I try one at a time? If starting a new treatment, it is often helpful to try one at a time so it is easier to determine if it is helpful or harmful.

For a more comprehensive list of questions, take a look at [Alternative Therapy - Will it work for me?](#)

## Taking action!

Whether you are looking for reliable health information or trying to find the right treatment and provider, it's important to ask lots of questions!

List the questions you want to ask, print a copy, and bring the questions to your appointment.

# Where to next?

- For more information about evaluating health care information, take a look at these helpful documents:
  - Online Health Information: [Can I Trust It?](#)
  - MedlinePlus Evaluating Internet Health Information: [Checklist](#)
- For a more comprehensive list of questions on alternative or complementary therapies, take a look at [Alternative Therapy - Will it work for me?](#)

