



## April: Alcohol Awareness Month

### *What is Alcoholism?*

A dependence on alcohol that includes cravings, loss of control, physical dependence, and tolerance.

Alcoholism has little to do with willpower.

Most alcoholics need professional help to recover.

Genetics and environment influence a person's risk for alcoholism.

Over 50% of adults have a close family member who has a problem with alcohol.

Over 25% of children are exposed to alcohol abuse/dependence in the home.

Concerned about your drinking?

Contact the EAP or take a confidential online assessment at:

[www.ProblemsHaveSolutions.com](http://www.ProblemsHaveSolutions.com)

Alcoholism is a treatable disease.

## Evaluating Online Health Resources

For many of us, the internet is the first place we turn to manage our health. In fact, a 2007 study commissioned by Cisco, showed 62% of Americans have used online health tools. While many of these sites are undeniably helpful, it is important for consumers to evaluate all sites with care. Here are some questions to consider when using the internet for health resources. (NIH 2008)

### 1) *Who runs the site?*

Any reputable health site should make this information readily available and easy to identify.

### 2) *Who pays for the site?*

There is a cost to running and maintaining a website. The source of a website's funding should be clearly indicated or readily available. For example, it is important to differentiate between sites run by drug companies and sites run by not-for-profit organizations.

### 3) *What is the purpose of the site?*

This question is related to who runs and pays for the site. An "About This Site" link appears on many sites; if it's there, use it. The purpose of the site should be clearly stated and should help you evaluate the trustworthiness of the information.

### 4) *Where does the information come from?*

Many health/medical sites post information collected from other Web sites or sources. If the person or organization in charge of the site did not create the information, the original source should be clearly labeled.

### 5) *What is the basis of the information?*

In addition to identifying who wrote the material you are reading, the site should describe the evidence that the material is based on. Medical facts and figures should have references (such as to articles in medical journals). Also, opinions or advice should be clearly set apart from information that is "evidence-based" (that is, based on research results).

### 6) *How is the information selected?*

Is there an editorial board? Do people with excellent professional and scientific qualifications review the material before it is posted?

### 7) *How current is the information?*

Web sites should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. It is particularly important that medical information be current. The most recent update or review date should be clearly posted. Even if the information has not changed, you

## DID YOU KNOW?



**Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) affects over 6.8 million adults. (NIH 2007)**

**Having this disorder means always anticipating disaster, often worrying excessively about health, money, family, or work.**

**GAD can be very debilitating, making it difficult to carry out the most ordinary daily activities.**

### **Symptoms Include:**

- **Excessive anxiety and worry for at least 6 months (Mayo 2007)**
- **Difficulty concentrating, trouble sleeping and muscle tension**
- **Impairment with your daily life**
- **Being easily fatigued**
- **Irritability**

**GAD is treatable. If you or a loved one need help for your anxiety contact the EAP. The service is free, confidential and assistance is available 24/7**

**800-666-5EAP**

want to know whether the site owners have reviewed it recently to ensure that it is still valid.

### **8) *How does the site choose links to other sites?***

Web sites usually have a policy about how they establish links to other sites. Some medical sites take a conservative approach and don't link to any other sites. Some link to any site that asks, or pays, for a link. Others only link to sites that have met certain criteria.

### **9) *What information about you does the site collect, and why?***

Web sites routinely track the paths visitors take through their sites to determine what pages are being used. However, many health Web sites ask you to "subscribe" or "become a member." In some cases, this may be so that they can collect a user fee or select information for you that is relevant to your concerns. In all cases, this will give the site personal information about you.

Any credible health site asking for this kind of information should tell you exactly what they will and will not do with it. Many commercial sites sell "aggregate" (collected) data about their users to other companies--information such as what percentage of their users are women with breast cancer, for example. In some cases they may collect and reuse information that is "personally identifiable," such as your ZIP code, gender, and birth date. Be certain that you read and understand any privacy policy or similar language on the site, and don't sign up for anything that you are not sure you fully understand.

### **10) *How does the site manage interactions with visitors?***

There should always be a way for you to contact the site owner if you run across problems or have questions or feedback. If the site hosts chat rooms or other online discussion areas, it should tell visitors what the terms of using this service are. Is it moderated? If so, by whom, and why? It is always a good idea to spend time reading the discussion without joining in, so that you feel comfortable with the environment before becoming a participant. (NIH 2007)

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The 9th annual National Women's Health Week will kick off on Mother's Day, May 11, and will be celebrated until May 17 with the theme "It's Your Time: Get Inspired. Get Healthy." The weeklong health observance empowers women across the country to get healthy by taking action. National Women's Health Week also encourages women to make their health a top priority and take simple steps for a longer, healthier and happier life. Check out <http://www.womenshealth.gov/whw> for local events in your area and for more information on how you can participate.

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