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## Reference on the Web: Common Health Concerns

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The excellent general health information Web sites featured in *Reference Books Bulletin* in the December 1, 2006, issue are still excellent today. Sometimes patrons need more details about specific conditions. The following resources offer free high-quality information about specific conditions that are currently among the most frequently searched topics on the National Library of Medicine's (NLM) *MedlinePlus* Web site (as of October 2009). Besides providing great information for consumers, many of these Web sites also offer information for professionals.

#### ASTHMA AND COPD

The American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology ([www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org)) has a Health Impact Award-winning Web site with a wealth of information in the Patients & Consumer tab alone. Comprehensive coverage of asthma includes management, asthma in adults, asthma in children, clinical trials, research, publications, and awareness events.

The American Lung Association ([www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org)) has been "working to save lives, improve lung health and prevent lung disease" for more than 100 years, and the experience shows. Cool tools: Facebook fan page, question of the week, and interactive North American pollen-level and air-quality maps.

#### AUTISM

Keeping up with technology, the attractive Web site of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities ([www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism)) offers e-mail and SMS (cell-phone text message) alerts, RSS feeds, and podcasts. Features include Screening & Diagnosis, Data & Statistics, Free Materials, and Links to Other Websites.

The Autism Society ([www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org)) "exists to improve the lives of all affected by autism" and has been a trusted resource for almost 50 years. Highlights on the Web site include Autism Source, a tool to find local services and support, and a Free Downloads section for 4- to 12-page PDF documents covering special concerns for those living with autism.

#### AUTOIMMUNE DISORDERS

The all-business clearinghouse of information at [www.niams.nih.gov](http://www.niams.nih.gov) is supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). An encyclopedic A-Z Health Information Index links to entries about specific autoimmune conditions. Like most NIH Web sites, each entry acts as a portal to more information, including links to clinical-trial information and to a topical *PubMed* search for articles.

#### BREAST CANCER

Sixty years of expertise is evident in the American Cancer Society's highly interactive Web site ([www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)). The main sections under Breast Cancer include All About Breast Cancer for general to detailed information, a Treatment Decision Tool, and also recommended books, free brochures, and links to other high-quality Web sites.

#### DEPRESSION

Depression is just one of the Mental Health Topics detailed on the Web site of the National Institute of Mental Health ([www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)). It covers symptoms, treatment, and local resources for people of all ages. This resource also includes videos, free downloads, and clinical-trial information.

#### DIABETES AND KIDNEY DISEASES

The mission of the American Diabetes Association ([www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)), "to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes," shows in the comprehensive resources its

Web site provides. Highlights include Planet D, a Web site for kids and young adults; MyFoodAdvisor, an online calorie- and carbohydrate-counting tool; a meal-planning resource; a recipe finder; and the upbeat Lifestyle & Prevention section.

The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases ([www2.niddk.nih.gov](http://www2.niddk.nih.gov)) offers a Web site that is so extensive it has its own tour video. Consumer resources are front and center and include links to NIH information clearinghouses for specific kidney-related conditions and Spanish-language resources.

#### HYPERTENSION

The American Heart Association's Web site ([www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)) covers the topics of high blood pressure and other heart conditions with all kinds of multimedia and cool tools. Highlights include Why Blood Pressure Matters, Diagnosing and Monitoring, and Preventing and Treating subpages.

#### NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS

Extensive information in multiple languages in sections about the disease in general, living with Alzheimer's, and finding local support can be found on the Alzheimer's Association Web site ([www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)). The Education Center includes multimedia and more than 200 free

downloadable Alzheimer's Association-approved puzzles.

On the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke site ([www.ninds.nih.gov](http://www.ninds.nih.gov)), the encyclopedic Disorders A-Z section lists hundreds of conditions. This Web site is frequently updated and includes clinical-trial information.

#### OBESITY

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Overweight and Obesity information site ([www.cdc.gov/obesity](http://www.cdc.gov/obesity)) includes Defining Overweight and Obesity, Causes and Consequences, Data and Statistics, State-Based Programs, and Resources. This Web site also offers interactive tools and videos and podcasts.

#### SHINGLES AND HERPES SIMPLEX

Shingles information from the NLM's *MedlinePlus* can be found at [www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/shingles.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/shingles.html). No other single Web site offers the variety of resources about herpes zoster virus or shingles. Coverage includes videos, photographs, interactive tutorials, and lists of other valuable information sources.

Herpes simplex is another topic covered more comprehensively by a *MedlinePlus* subpage ([www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/herpesimplex.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/herpesimplex.html)) than by any other single Web site. There are videos, photographs, interactive tutorials, and lists of other valuable information sources.

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