

With the internet, accessing multitudes of health information is literally at your fingertips. Unfortunately, a lot of the information on the internet can be unreliable or misleading.

Always remember, you should not use apps or websites to diagnose you or anyone else if you are unwell. Please seek the advice of a medical professional either by:

1. Visiting your GP or healthcare professional in person
2. Calling the HealthDirect Helpline on 1800 022 222, where you can consult a registered nurse for non-emergency health advice, 24 hours a day.
3. Calling 000 for an emergency

Accessing reliable information online

When using Google or another search engine, try to be as specific as possible, and add in the name of a reliable website. For instance, searching "Coronavirus HealthDirect" will give you more accurate results than just "virus".

When you search for "Coronavirus HealthDirect" the first few results should be links for the HealthDirect website. This website is run by the Australian Government, and contains up to date information on the issue.

If you think you still need help on searching the internet, contact KNC to see whether you can join any digital literacy classes.

When viewing search results, look at the web address (also called URL) to see what organisation or company is behind the page.

It is a good rule of thumb to only click on the organisations you have seen before and know are reputable, such as the Cancer Council and Beyond Blue.

Signs of an unreliable website

1. The website is attempting to sell you something. Information from a site that is trying to sell you something may be false or misleading in order to convince you to buy their product.
2. The website seems old or out-of-date. Most reputable health websites will have a date somewhere on the page showing when it was last updated. This way you know the website is keeping up-to-date and providing you with current information.
3. The website is written by a private company or person. Check that the website has an .org, .gov, or .edu at the end of it. This indicates that the information on the website has been provided by a government department, non-profit or educational institution, and not a business or individual.
4. The website won't offer any information until you give information about yourself or create an account. Honest websites won't ask you to create an account or give personal information before you can access the information.

Remember not to give out very personal details like your name, address, date of birth, passwords or bank accounts.

Sometimes Google results may tell you that you have a very severe or perhaps even fatal illness or disorder. Don't panic. Symptoms of common sicknesses may also be symptoms of more worrying sicknesses. Ask your GP for their advice if you are concerned about what you've read online.

Further information on the coronavirus can be found by searching “Coronavirus HealthDirect” on Google.

The Department of Health has created a page for the coronavirus that updates daily. Either type this into the top internet bar <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert> or search “Department of Health alerts coronavirus” on Google.



HealthDirect - What do you know?

HealthDirect Australia is a national, government-owned, not-for-profit organisation. They have been helping Australians manage their health and wellbeing for over a decade through a range of different information and advice services.

This activity sheet aims to help you to explore key information from the HealthDirect relating to Coronavirus. It asks you to find important facts about caring for you and your family/friends.

Step One: Search for reliable information

Open your internet browser

Go to www.google.com

Type "coronavirus healthdirect" into the search bar

Select the result "Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) | healthdirect"

Step Two: Read the information

Explore the HealthDirect website.

You can look up conditions by searching for them, or see them categorised by conditions, symptoms, procedures or age ranges. The service finder can show you all the services in your area such as GP practices, pharmacists, dentists and optometrists.

Step Three: Find answers to the following questions

Use the HealthDirect webpage to find the information you need to fill in the table on the next page.

		<p>learners how to find this by going to Google and searching for "coronavirus health alert". It should be the first result. Open the link and show learners around the website.</p> <p>Show learners the smartraveller.gov.au website. Enter a destination in the search bar and show learners the information they can find out.</p>	
Practical activity	15 minutes	<p>Give learners the handout "Health advice for Julie". Ask learners to work through the activities on the sheets.</p> <p>Remind learners that you're there to support them and to ask as many questions as they need to.</p>	<p>Work your way around the room when learners are doing this and check everyone is comfortable with the task.</p>
Group discussion	5 minutes	<p>Bring the group back together and go through what learners chose and why. If learners got answers wrong, explain why the correct answer is the one they should have chosen.</p>	<p>Learners should have gotten most of the answers correct.</p>
Session review and wrap-up	5 minutes	<p>Refer back to the learning objectives and ask learners if they feel more confident with researching health-related topics online.</p>	<p>Learners should respond positively and feel empowered to go away and do this on their own.</p>

Suggested next steps:

If learners have a smartphone or tablet, they may wish to learn about how to find and download health-related apps onto their devices (https://www.beconnectednetwork.org.au/sites/default/files/sessionplan_reliable_websites.pdf).