

Tip Sheet: Finding Credible Health Resources

Author: Society of Refugee Healthcare Providers

While the Internet is an invaluable source of information on health conditions and topics, it is essential to gather information only from accurate, reliable sources. Review the general tips below and see page 2 for a list of recommended resources.

- 1. Look for information from reputable medical associations' websites**, such as the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), [American Medical Association](#), [American College of Physicians/Internal Medicine and Primary Care](#), [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists](#), and [Infectious Diseases Society of America](#). Individuals can also ask their health care providers for recommended sources or suggestions.
- 2. Cross-reference reliable international sources**, such as the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO), the [Pan American Health Organization](#) (PAHO), the [Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention](#), and country-specific ministries of health, as U.S.-based sources may not cover all conditions relevant to newcomers (for example, tropical diseases).
- 3. Review multiple websites** about a given health condition or topic to identify consistent messaging or data. For example, if you are interested in information on vaccines, look through websites of medical and health care organizations, hospitals, and academic medical institutions.
- 4. Consider the website's purpose**, who owns or sponsors it, and who the author is to identify potential hidden motives behind the content (such as selling a product). Websites owned and operated by large health care or hospital systems (e.g., Mayo Clinic, Cleveland Clinic, Kaiser Permanente, Johns Hopkins) are usually reliable, as are websites of reputable nonprofits.
- 5. Identify whether the source has citations or underwent a peer-review process** in which legitimate, credentialed health experts verified that the content is accurate. Prioritize well-cited information with recent publication dates, as science can change with time.
- 6. Be aware** that artificial intelligence (AI) platforms, blogs, Wikipedia, news articles, [grey literature](#), YouTube, social media, and communications platforms such as WhatsApp may include information that is neither peer-reviewed nor verified. Information shared in these spaces may be inaccurate, biased, exaggerated, or oversimplified. Many of these platforms may even share fake studies. Always verify information shared through these channels with a health care provider and/or a reputable health source.
- 7. Avoid** sources that ask individuals to share personal or identifying information.

Recommended Resources

In addition to the [Switchboard resource library](#) and the [Society of Refugee Healthcare Providers' translated health resources directory](#), below are many more useful health resources:

For Resettlement and Health Care Providers

- [Association of Refugee Health Coordinators](#): State refugee health programs; publications
- [EthnoMed](#): Clinician- and community-facing education integrating cultural information into clinical practice
- [Migration Health Initiative](#): Culturally and linguistically appropriate health messaging for newcomer communities, as well as promising practices for service providers
- [Society of Refugee Healthcare Providers](#): Education, networking, and best practices

For Health Care Providers

- [CareRef Clinical Assessment for Refugees](#): Interactive tool that customizes screening guidance for individual refugees
- [Caring for Kids New to Canada](#): Information and resources to enhance patient care and understand the needs of newcomer children, youth, and families. Some information may be specific to the Canadian context, but much of it is also valuable for the U.S. context.
- [Minnesota Center of Excellence in Newcomer Health](#): Clinical guidance, tools, training, and best practices for clinicians serving refugee patients
- [Evidence-based Clinical Guidelines for Immigrants and Refugees](#): A Canadian journal article
- [Refugee Care](#): An app for health care providers
- [VaxRef](#): An app to help newcomers and clinicians translate immunization records into English. *Note: this app does ask for personal information.*
- [Refugee Health Domestic Guidance](#): CDC guidance for health care providers and state public health departments

Additional Resources

- [Immigrant and Refugee Health Care](#): CME-accredited course for clinicians
- [Introduction to Refugee and Immigrant Health Course; Refugee Health 101](#): Free, introductory course and webinar recording from the University of Minnesota
- [Settle In](#): A website and app led by Switchboard about the resettlement process and life in the U.S.

Remember

Online information cannot replace medical advice or care from a health care provider.

Only licensed health professionals should give or suggest medical advice to refugee and newcomer clients.

Encourage clients to discuss their symptoms and concerns with a licensed health professional.

Strongly encourage clients to consult with health care providers if they are interested in or currently using cultural practices (e.g., herbal remedies) as alternatives or additions to biomedical approaches.

The IRC received competitive funding through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant #90RB0053. The project is 100% financed by federal funds. The contents of this document are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

