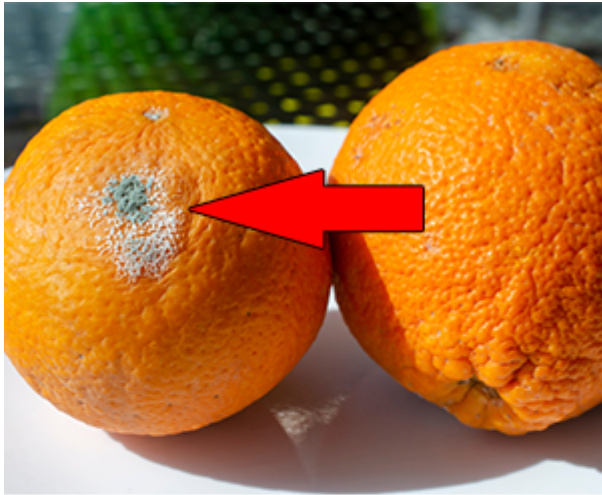


# The Dangers of Misleading Medical Information and How to Avoid Them

*The world of communication and information sharing has seen significant advancement, thanks to technology. This improvement has led to easy access and dissemination of information. Online communities –social media platforms and forums– play a significant role in spreading digital messages. With easy access to these online communities, much misleading information has also been disseminated, especially health information.*

Misleading medical information is on the rise today, and it can pose a significant danger to human life. They can be posts, articles, or shared resources that contradict current medical knowledge accepted by medical professionals. This information is mainly based on myths, opinions, and beliefs. However, reliable medical information should be established and backed by scientific studies.

Human health is a crucial aspect of life, and getting false information on it, might cause a big problem. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there were restrictions in movement, and people were not allowed to go out. Therefore, most people turned to get information online, which caused much medical misinformation, hurting humans. In this piece, we will discuss the dangers of misleading medical information and ways to avoid them.



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## **Dangers of Misleading Medical Information**

The risks of spreading false medical information can't be overlooked. When the masses share misleading information about a health-related topic, many people tend to believe it regardless of any other fact. However, this false information often creates widespread panic and avoidable fear among the people. And as a result, it makes dastard reactions into the nooks and crannies of society.

Some of the dangers posed by misleading health information include:

- **Unnecessary Worry and Confusion:** When people hear different information about health issues, they tend to be confused and worried about what to believe. This can further lead to anxiety and depression, which can affect the mental health of some people. Also, excessive worries that are difficult to control can interfere with

their day-to-day activities, which can cause forgetfulness and concentration difficulty.

- **Wrong Decision Making:** As humans, making decisions is just as important to us as daily meals. Some of these decisions may impact our health, especially as it relates to food or drug ingestion. However, due to the misinformation flying around, people find it hard to make the right decision. Even when reliable information is gotten from medical professionals, most people still tend to become adamant and would rather believe whatever their friends and family tell them. By doing so, many have taken the wrong medication, which has complicated their health issues and made some lose their life. For example, when COVID-19 started in the year 2020, some people, due to misinformation, didn't believe it, so they weren't following its guidelines. This increased the number of cases seen then and claimed many lives as well.
- **Changes in Attitude and Behavior:** The kind of health information people hear tells their attitude and behavior towards a disease or illness. A perfect example is an anti-vax movement –a movement coordinated by some people against vaccination. They believe it could lead to autism, developmental delays in children, and certain health risks. Although there has been proof that vaccines and autism do not correlate, many parents across the US still don't allow their kids to get vaccinated after that movement. Therefore, misinformation on health can affect how we respond to things.

## **Why People Create or Share Misleading Information**

You might be wondering why people create misleading medical information. Here are some of the reasons for the creation of

such misinformation.

- **To get more website traffic:** When site owners want to generate traffic, they look for catchy content, not minding its harmful effect.
- **Used for phishing scams:** Con-artists use them to get private information from users to defraud people.
- **Used to cause panic:** They create fear, getting people frightened for no particular reason.

Sometimes people share information with a good intention to help, but it might be misleading.

## How to Avoid Misleading Medical Information

Medical misinformation can be difficult to spot, sometimes. There may be a mix of both accurate and inaccurate information, which makes it difficult to decipher. Therefore, before sharing any information, you must be sure that it comes from a reliable source. Some tips should be considered to avoid misleading medical information. They include:

- **Question the Source of Information:** Before giving your verdict on a piece of medical information, you must know its source and be genuine. Ask questions about where the data was gotten from, and also try to identify the author. Take the lead from medical advisory organizations. For instance, know what the American Heart Association response is about a new heart disease study. Also, has the American Cancer Society said anything on the supposed breakthrough cancer treatment everyone is posting and sharing on social media? This is because the information from organizations like these is always carefully written and reviewed by experts. Hence, they are trustworthy, and their data are accurate.
- **Seek other sources of information:** Another way to ensure

accurate medical information is to seek other reliable sources and compare the former information you got with the new one. Never settle for a source of information. Always base the authenticity of any health information obtained on several other sources. If you can find sustainable information whose pattern, trend, or the number of studies have reached the same conclusion on different platforms, such information is most likely accurate. And make sure the forum you are seeking information from is reliable. With this scrutinization, you can avoid the sharing of misleading medical information.

- **Disclaim the Misinformation Regarding Vaccination:** Vaccination has always caused controversy over the years, as seen in the current COVID-19 trend. An instance of misleading information on vaccination is the “anti-vax movement” mentioned earlier. Some individuals began spreading misinformation on how vaccination could lead to autism, children’s developmental delays, and other health risks with no proven research. Many already have this mindset about the current COVID-19 immunization, which has made them hell-bent on not getting vaccinated. However, studies have shown that with the vaccine, your chances of contracting COVID-19 are very slim. Therefore, we should all get vaccinated and disclaim every other information against it.
- **Visit Medical Content Websites:** As we all know, most misleading medical information is disseminated through online web pages for many reasons: to create site traffic. But there are medical content websites you can visit that are experts in the field and passionate about the accuracy of medical information online. This is achieved through freelance medical writers using a freelance platform like [Kolabtree](#)—a platform where you meet medical experts who give authentic medical information online. Getting accurate medical information is essential because it allows you to make the right

decision without being confused or worried. Human health is very delicate, and any misinformation can lead to loss of life by taking the wrong medication. Thus, accurate health information can help save your life.

- **Talk to Your Doctor:** Always carry your doctor along by communicating with them whenever you get new medical information. This is because the most credible online news can be useless without medical professionals' evaluation and diagnosis. Please discuss what you read online with your doctor or email them the article in cases where they are not around. A good doctor will always be willing to assist and help. Also, you can get a second opinion by visiting another doctor on the same information, especially if your doctor's initial response does not convince you. This will help eradicate your doubt and provide reliable medical information.
- **Consider the intent of the information:** Please pay close attention to the content of the data to know its motive. Some medical articles are written for financial purposes or an attempt to deceive you. That your research study or an expert claim sounds appealing and suitable doesn't mean it's genuine. When a claim sounds too good to be true, engage in proper personal research for authentication. For example, when you see a post like, "Eating a fruit everyday will help cure cancer," try consulting reliable sources. This is because it's too good to be true. In addition, if you received a message from someone, you can also talk to the person by highlighting your doubts about the information.

## Conclusion

As technology is evolving, many online platforms have been created for easy dissemination of information. This has also led to an increase in the number of people accessing the online platform. Medical data are shared through these platforms. But some medical content may contain misleading

information. And this can adversely affect human health. Misinformation on human health can give the wrong advice on how best to manage your health and wellbeing. Hence, false information can mislead you into making bad decisions and cause unnecessary anxiety and confusion. However, the spread of misleading medical information can be stopped and avoided. One very efficient way to achieve this is through freelance medical writers using a freelance platform like Kolabtree.

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