



**National Library of Medicine**  
*Network of the National Library of Medicine*

## Code of Ethics

[\(MLA\) Medical Library Association's Code of Ethics for Health Sciences Librarianship](#)

[ALA RUSA's \(Reference and User Services Assoc.\) Health and Medical Reference Guidelines](#)

[ALA's Professional Ethics and Code of Ethics](#)

## Providing Health Information Reference Service

- Provide a welcoming and safe space
- Consider the question- topic and scope
- Observe and be aware of patron's emotions and needs (e.g. translator), state of mind, be prepared for emotions
- Be aware of your own verbal and non-verbal language
- Be an active listener
- Use plain language
- Use open-ended questions
- Utilize Teach-back to verify
- Verify medical terms and spellings
- Provide information from quality health information resources
- Provide the most complete information possible
- Know the limits of your library's collection
- It's ok to not provide information if not available from an authoritative source
- Do not be afraid to refer the patron back to his/her health care provider
- Do not interpret the information
- Do not make recommendations
- Do not share your opinion or story
- Do not let your own bias or personal or cultural values affect your professional interaction

## Evaluating Health Information

MedlinePlus Evaluating Internet Health Information: Checklist

- Provider – Who is in charge of the website?
- Funding – Where does the money to support the site come from?
- Quality – Does the site have advertisements? Are they labeled?
- Privacy – Does the website ask for your personal information?

[MedlinePlus Evaluating Health Information Checklist and Tutorial](#)

[Trust It or Trash It](#)

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## **Health Reference Resources**

WebJunction:

[Health Happens in Libraries](#)

[Resources](#)

[Understanding Ethics and Privacy in Health Information and Services](#)

Articles and Books:

Flaherty, M. G. (2018). [Promoting individual and community health at the library](#). American Library Association.

Luo. (2015). Consumer Health Reference Interview: Ideas for Public Librarians. *Public Library Quarterly* (New York, N.Y.), 34(4), 328–353. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01616846.2015.1106897>

Smith, C. A., & Keselman, A. (2015). *Meeting health information needs outside of healthcare: Opportunities and challenges*. Chandos Publishing.

## **Professional Development**

[Network of the National Library of Medicine class schedule](#)

- [MedlinePlus Tutorial for Librarians and Health Educators](#)
- [Introduction to Health Reference: Ethics and Best Practices](#)
- [Consumer Health Collection Management](#)

[Medical Library Association, Consumer Health Information Specialization \(CHIS\)](#)

[NNLM and CHIS](#)

## **Additional Resources**

[NNLM An Introduction to Health Literacy](#)

[NNLM Public Libraries guide](#)

[PLA Health Interest Group \(membership required\)](#)

[PLA Healthy Community Tools for Public Libraries](#)

[Medical Library Association's Top Health Websites](#)