Your guide to

FINDING TRUSTED HEALTH INFORMATION



BONE CANCER RESEARCH TRUST

This guide has been created to help you understand health misinformation (false information).

Health information should help us to stay well but misinformation can be dangerous.

We have developed this guide for our community:

- In response to the rise in misinformation which can be dangerous.
- To help you understand what health misinformation is – it is false information.
- To support you in finding health information that you can trust, that is balanced, robust and evidence-based.

Trusted health information should help us to stay well, help us feel informed so we can better advocate for ourselves, and it should give us a better understanding of what to expect in terms of symptoms, diagnosis and treatment if we have a certain condition.

This guide has been developed from the Patient Information Forum's (PIF's) resources. PIF is the independent voice of trusted health information, promoting access to evidence-based health information for patients, carers, the public, and healthcare professionals.

We want you to feel empowered by the information we provide, giving you confidence that it can be trusted. We also want to help you find the best information out there, whatever the source, ensuring that it is trusted information and not misinformation.

You can access our trusted resources by:

Visiting out website: **bcrt.org.uk/information**
Downloading them: **bcrt.org.uk/download**
Requesting them: **bcrt.org.uk/requestinformation**
Calling our Support and Information Team: **0800 111 4855**

What misinformation is

There are different types of false health information:

- **Misinformation**: False or misleading information shared by people because they believe it.
- **Disinformation**: False information created and spread to mislead people on purpose.
- **Artificial intelligence (AI)**: Answers to health questions produced by AI can include misinformation and disinformation.

1 in 10

adults in the UK have been affected by misinformation.[1]



What to look out for

Before you share something you've read, watched or heard, consider whether the information is reliable.

The points below can help you spot false information. If you're unsure, double-check with other sources or organisations that you know you can trust, like BCRT.

Phrases like "miracle drug"

Such claims are attention grabbing and designed to draw you in. Do they show you the evidence to back them up? They often don't.

If it sounds too good to be true it probably is.

Bias

When something is favoured or disfavoured unfairly.

Does the information seem balanced? If it appears one-sided, think about why this might be.

For example, is the information trying to sell you something.

Unreliable or no evidence

Be careful of any information that claims big results or does not include references to back this up.

If possible, find the source of information, for example a research paper. Check any findings yourself or ask someone you trust to do this.

"My friend said..."

Personal stories are helpful for knowing others are going through similiar experiences.

However, remember, people respond to treatment in different ways. Just because someone else has a particular side effect or outcome does not mean you will too.

1. pifonline.org.uk/resources/knowledge-is-power/

Trusted health information and social media

Social media can be a great way to find health information. But there are risks when using and sharing this content.

Here are some top tips to help you find and share trusted content:

- **Look beyond likes:** Do not trust posts just because a social media channel has lots of likes or followers.
- **Fact check:** Check how the social media channel deals with fake or misleading information. Does it flag suspicious content or simply ignore it?
- **Look for trust marks:** See if content has the PIF TICK **piftick.org.uk** or is on the YouTube Health Shelf **health.youtube**.
- **Look for trusted channels:** Use channels from trusted sources like the NHS and health charities that are members of the Association of Medical Health Research Charities (AMRC); **amrc.org.uk/membership**.
- **Think before you share:** Think about who shared the link with you and where it came from to start with. Ask: "How do I know it is true? Why am I sharing it? How does it make me feel and how might it make others feel?"



8 in 10 "cancer cures" on TikTok are fake[2]

2 citystgeorges.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2024/november/tiktok-fake-cancer-cures-radicalisation

Searching for trusted health information

Ask yourself these questions to help decide if information you find can be trusted:

- **Is there a publication and review date?** Trusted medical and health information changes over time so check it is up to date.
- **Is it backed by other organisations?** Check if the information is created or endorsed by a trusted organisation, such as the NHS, BCRT or other reputable charities.
- **Has it been reviewed by trusted experts?** Trusted organisations will use trusted experts to help produce information, backed up with evidence from references.
- **Does it look professional?** Do the links provided work? Are there spelling mistakes?
- **Is it trying to sell you something?** Be wary and look for balanced views of the risks and benefits of a treatment or device.
- **Does it have the PIF TICK?** The PIF TICK logo tells you that health information has been produced to meet 10 criteria, including use of evidence, it is easy to use, and it has involved users to develop the information.
- **Does it use AI?** AI may be used to support the creation of health information. However, trusted health information is transparent about this. It will tell you how AI has been used and the checks in place to ensure it is accurate.

Trusted Information Creator
Patient Information Forum

What is PIF?

PIF is a membership organisation for anyone producing quality information and support.

Any health information with the PIF TICK shows that is has been produced in line with a robust process, meaning it is top quality, evidence-based, up-to-date, easy to use, and most importantly, it can be trusted. So you can be confident it is not misinformation. You will find this logo on many of BCRT's information resources.

AI summaries for health searches

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a term to describe computers that learn and carry out 'human' tasks.

What are AI summaries?

AI summaries, called 'AI Overviews', are short answers to your internet search questions, created by AI. They use Google and other search engines. They appear at the top of the search results.

These summaries can be useful, but they are still being developed and tested. This means they can get things wrong. Problems include:

- Giving answers which may be wrong or misleading.
- Sharing irrelevant content from other countries.
- Reduced signposting to further support, giving the assumption that the information found is correct or the best available with no further options out there.
- The need to scroll down to the full research results.

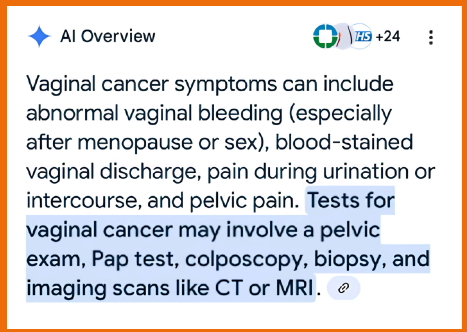
To get around these problems, our top tips include:

- Visit the source provided with the AI summary to check its credibility.
- Check your findings with your healthcare team.
- For primary bone cancer, you can always speak to the Bone Cancer Research Trust to get free and confidential information, and support.
- Adding "-AI" to the start of searches. This will remove the AI overview.
- Adding "-UK" to get local results.
- Searching for health information with the PIF TICK to help limit the search results to trusted information.
- Note that Google now has an 'AI' mode for searches. Make sure you use the standard search when looking for health information.

When AI gets it wrong

The Eve Appeal, a gynaecological charity, searched for "vaginal cancer symptoms and test".

The Google AI summary listed a PAP test as a test for vaginal cancer. A PAP test is **NOT** a test for vaginal cancer.



Using generative AI (GAI)

What generative AI is

- GAI describes online tools or apps that give or "generate" answers to questions asked.
- GAI can create text, images and videos.
- When asked a question or given a "prompt", a GAI tool will search data to give an answer.
- ChatGPT, Co-pilot, Gemini and BLOOM are all examples of GAI.

GAI should not be trusted to give you accurate answers currently. Be very careful if you use this to find health information.

Problems with GAI

- It might give answers that are out of date or share misinformation (false information) from the data it has searched.
- It can reflect racial, gender and other prejudices.
- If it cannot find useful data, it can make up answers that sound real.

Always fact check by asking GAI where it got the information from when answering your question. But be aware it might not offer this information. If it does not, check the original website or other source.

How GAI may be used in health information

- Translate websites into other languages.
- Power chatbots on websites, to mimic a human conversation.
- Study research data.
- Support in the creation of health information.

Good health information is transparent about its' use of AI. For example, it may say: "This website uses AI to study research data."

How I can use GAI

- Ask good questions that are simple and specific.
- Ask GAI tools to search using trusted information sources. For example, "Find information on symptoms of primary bone cancer. Search the NHS and health organisations with the PIF TICK."
- Do not act on advice from GAI tools.

Always check health advice with a healthcare professional or a professional organisation such as a specialist charity. For primary bone cancer, you can contact BCRT for free and confidential information, and support.

Please contact us to request your free copy or visit our website to view our printable/ downloadable resources. You can also scan the QR code.



BONE CANCER RESEARCH TRUST

Visit: bcrt.org.uk
Call: 0800 111 4855
Email: support@bcrt.org.uk

/BoneCancerResearchTrust
Bone Cancer Research Trust
@bonecancerresearchtrust
@bonecancerresearch

©Bone Cancer Research Trust 2026
10 Feast Field, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 4TJ

Registered charity in England & Wales: 1159590

V1.0 SEPT 26

Review dates for this booklet
Version 1 published: 09/26
Next review due: 09/29