

# Healthy Education

By Suze Hargraves

One of the most effective prevention methods for health concern is public education. The federal government knows that. The current health care reform legislation includes extensive prevention dialogue. The state of New Hampshire also understands the value of effective public education on health care. Together with private resources, state and federal resources publish volumes and volumes of important information on a daily basis. The problem with all this public education seems to be end-user related. The public now has so much health information to process that just keeping up is a daunting task requiring daily diligence. What's an average person to do? How do we stay informed without going into overload?

Getting your health information from reliable sources is important. If an e-mail claiming to warn you of some pandemic or miracle cure comes across your desk simply trash it. Reliable medical information generally does not come from a forwarded e-mail. If you think it might have some validity, check it out by searching [snopes.com](http://snopes.com). Snopes is a Web site that exposes e-mail hoaxes by the thousands. Always check Snopes before you pass along any medically-related e-mail.

One of the easiest things you can do to get reliable health information is ask your health care provider for recommendations of books to read and online resources regarding health conditions. You'll often find that well-established support groups also have sound recommendations for materials that can help you manage a specific health condition such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease and more.

The following is a list of the major Web sites considered to be reliable sources for health information on major health concerns:

- Diabetes: [diabetes.org](http://diabetes.org).
- Cancer: [cancer.org](http://cancer.org).
- Heart Disease: [americanheart.org](http://americanheart.org).
- General health and specific health concerns: [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov), [mayoclinic.com](http://mayoclinic.com) and [webmd.com](http://webmd.com).
- For state of New Hampshire information visit [dhhs.state.nh.us](http://dhhs.state.nh.us).

Signing up for newsletters from these Web sites will help you keep abreast of new information and research. They also have tools to help you manage your health. There is one important thing you have to remember when you get information in newsletter format: You've got to read it. Yes, I know sometimes it is dry, boring information, but if you want to stay informed you have to sift through the less interesting bits to get to the good stuff. That's just the way it is.

Being healthy is not solely about diet and exercise. It's about educating yourself on health topics and being able to use that information in a proactive way.

Stay healthy. Stay informed.

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