

SHOULDER TO SHOULDER:

Supporting the Health Literacy needs of Men's Shed Groups in County Leitrim

Comhairle Chontae Liatroma
Leitrim County Council

SOLAS
learning works

ALL Adult Literacy for Life

msletb
Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Mhuigh Eo, Shligigh agus Liatroma
Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim
Education and Training Board

Health Literacy

What is health literacy?

Health literacy involves the information that people need to be able to make good decisions about their health.

- **Personal health literacy** is about how well a person can find and understand the health information and services that they need. It is also about using the information and services to make good health decisions.

Why is health literacy important?

Health literacy is important because it can affect your ability to:

- Make good decisions about your health
- Get the medical care you need. This includes preventative care, which is care to prevent disease.
- Take your medicines correctly
- Manage a disease, especially a chronic disease
- Lead a healthy lifestyle

Health literacy difficulties can have a huge effect on a person's ability to prevent and cope with illnesses

Where can you find reliable information regarding your health? Is research online reliable?

How to determine whether the information you find is valid, reliable and factual

Health information is easy to find. But finding reliable health information takes a little effort. Some of the health information you get from newspapers, magazines, books, TV, the Internet, and social media is up to date and trustworthy. But some is not. That's why it's important to evaluate health information for yourself.

Health brochures/pamphlets that are available from your GP Surgery or at your local hospital or community health-care centre are considered reliable sources of information.

Health information websites, such as government sites, condition-specific sites, support organisation sites and articles from medical journals are also considered reliable.

The quality of information found online is extremely variable. Anyone can post data and information on the Internet and ***not all online sources are equally reliable, valuable, or accurate.*** It is important to carefully evaluate information found online before relying on it for your own research.

Take into account what you know about previous information they have published and its accuracy, whether or not there is potential for bias, and whether the authors of the information meet basic credibility criteria.

Key questions you should ask when assessing the reliability of information accessed online

Who are the authors and are they credible?

Authors should be well respected and well known in a field of expertise. Their crendentials should support their expertise and experience.

Is it possible the source could be biased for some reason?

If the information is provided by an author, organization or publisher that has an obvious perspective on a given topic this will likely slant the perspective of the information.

Is the content substantial and supported by evidence?

If information is accurate, it can often be validated by multiple reliable sources. If available, additional graphs, illustrations and charts should be used to support the information presented and the author should cite that information in some fashion so the reader can review it for him or herself.

How current is the information?

Recommendations for what is defined as current varies, but given the rate at which new information and data is created sources should be as recent as possible, especially when looking at medical or scientific topics.

For a website, what's the domain name?

It is important to pay attention to the end of the website domain name as it can be an indicator of the reliability of the information. Common endings are .gov, .mil, .edu, com, or .org. These domain names indicate who generated the information and can also indicate its reliability. If an About Us section is available on the site it can describe the purpose of the site, organization or company and whether the information may be biased.



Many people turn to **'Dr. Google'** to self-diagnose their health symptoms and seek medical advice, but online symptom checkers are not always accurate.

Google is a search engine designed to help find materials that are available on the internet.

It has been estimated that Google's health related searches amount to approximately 70,000 every minute.

Online symptom checkers have value but these sites are not a replacement for going to the doctor. They can, however, be useful in providing more information once you do have an official diagnosis from a healthcare professional.

You may have found good information, but your healthcare professional can tell you whether it's good **for you.**

One of the main risks of self-diagnosis is the potential for mis-diagnosis or medical errors. Online resources will not take into account a person's unique medical history, lifestyle factors or the other vital information that will affect a diagnosis. Inaccurate self-diagnosis can result in increased anxiety, stress and fear.

Good health information does not promote one treatment over another. It gives you balanced facts based on research. With an abundance of content available at our fingertips, we need to be sure that what we are reading online is accurate and safe. Such knowledge can undoubtedly be empowering, helping us to make important decisions about our health. But if the information we're absorbing is inaccurate, it can also be harmful.

Useful Websites for further information

www.irishheart.ie

Supports and campaigns for people who have been affected by heart and strokes throughout their lives.

www.diabetes.ie
Provides support, education and motivation to everyone affected by diabetes

www.ika.ie
Dedicated to supporting and meeting the needs of kidney patients and those likely to be affected by kidney disease.

www.cancer.ie
Supporting people affected by cancer

Around 20,000 Irish men are diagnosed with cancer each year. By taking a few simple steps such as maintaining a good diet and taking action early, every man can improve their chances of living a happy and healthy life.

Common cancers that affect men include:

- **Prostate Cancer**
- **Bowel Cancer**
- **Testicular Cancer**
- **Skin Cancer**
- **Mouth and Neck Cancer**
- **Lung Cancer**

www.cancer.ie/cancer-information-and-support/cancer-prevention/mens-health/common-cancers-that-affect-men

National Cancer Screening Programmes

There are 4 national population screening programmes:

3 that screen for cancer, and 1 that screens for diabetic retinopathy.

www2.hse.ie/conditions/breast-screening/information

www2.hse.ie/conditions/bowel-screening/screening-information

www2.hse.ie/conditions/cervical-screening

www2.hse.ie/conditions/diabetic-retina-screening/about

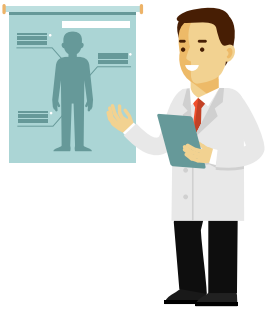
Smoking and Alcohol Supports

www2.hse.ie/living-well/quit-smoking

www2.hse.ie/living-well/alcohol

Information and advice regarding Mental Health and Wellbeing and self-help tips on common difficulties around Anxiety, Stress, Sleep and Low Mood.

https://www2.hse.ie/mental-health





Leitrim Library Services

Library Membership is free. Joining is easy; just complete an application form, either at the library or online at the link below.

www.leitrim.spydus.ie/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/MSGTRN/WPAC/JOIN

As a library member, you have access to a wide range of both print and online material. Visit your local library to see the range of material in our Healthy Ireland at Your Library Collection. You can also borrow from the range of online health magazines through our Borrowbox Service

Magazine Titles include:

- **Men's Health**
- **Prevention**
- **Diabetic Living**

Research shows that men experience a disproportionate burden of ill-health and die too young.

• Men Die Younger Than Women: On average, men have a shorter lifespan compared to women.

• Higher Death Rates: Males have higher death rates than females for almost all leading causes of death and at all ages.

• Poorer Lifestyles: Men's poorer lifestyles contribute significantly to the prevalence of chronic diseases.

• Late Presentation: Men often present to health services late, making many health issues untreatable.

Men's Health Forum in Ireland

"A men's health issue is a disease or condition unique to men, more prevalent in men, more serious among men, for which risk factors are different for men, or for which different interventions are required for men" (Fletcher 1996)

The Men's Health Forum in Ireland recently launched three publications entitled 'Men's Health in Numbers'.

These reports can be downloaded at

www.mhfi.org/news/1096-men-s-health-in-numbers.html

There's no denying that the state of men's health on the island of Ireland is often poor. However, there are things which can be done to change this situation and mem, themselves, can play a key role in doing this. 'Action Man – ten top tips for men's health' is a free Man Manual which explains: (i) **WHY** an action is needed; (ii) **WHAT** can be done about it; and (iii) **HOW** to find support if you need it.

Check it out at: www.mhfi.org/ActionMan.pdf

'Is fearr an tsláinte ná na táinte' ***'Health is Your Wealth'***

Roman poet Virgil's famous comment that "the greatest wealth is health," the idea is that our physical and mental well-being are arguably the most valuable assets of all.

HSE Social Prescribing Service

Social prescribing connects you with activities and supports in your area. These include walking and running groups, reading groups, self-help, adult education, men's sheds, gardening, arts and creativity. Social prescribing aims to reduce social isolation and improve mental health and wellbeing.

A health professional can refer you or you can access the service without a referral.

Contact:
Breffni Family Resource Centre
Breffni Crescent
Carrick On Shannon
Co. Leitrim
IRL - N41 X9D6



Tel: 086 066 3789
Email: info@breffnifrc.ie
Website: https://www.breffnifrc.ie/
www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100083205495377

Opening Times: 9.00 am - 5.00 pm (Mon/Tue/ Wed/ Thurs/ Fri)



Healthy Ireland at Your Library

The healthy Ireland at your library service encourages people to 'Eat Well, Think Well, Be Well' by offering a dedicated section in every library with books and information on health and well-being in a relaxed and comfortable environment; a collection of free online health information and resources, including e-magazines, e-books and e-audio books and a programme of free heath events and activities.

For further information, please drop into your local library and have a chat with a staff member.

Carrick-on-Shannon Library	**071-9620789**
Ballinamore Library	**071-9645566**
Manorhamilton Library	**071-9856180**
Mohill Library	**071-9631360**
Drumshanbo Library	**071-9641258**
Carrigallen Library	**049-4339188**
Dromahair Library	**071-9164364**
Kiltyclogher Library	**071-9854891**