

## Health Information on the Web: Finding Reliable Information



“Don’t believe everything you read.”

It’s an old warning that is especially true for health-related information you find on the World Wide Web.

The Web can be a great resource when you want to learn about a specific disease or health condition. You can also find tips on staying healthy. But among the millions of websites that offer health-related information, there are many that present myths and half-truths as if they are facts.

To avoid unreliable health information when you’re surfing the Web, ask yourself the following questions:

### Where did this information come from?

Any website that provides health-related information should tell you the information's source. See if you can find answers to the following questions:

- Who wrote this information? Keep in mind that many health-related websites post information that comes from other sources. If the person or organization that runs the website didn't write the information, the original source should be clearly stated.
- If a health care professional didn't write the information, was it reviewed by a doctor or another medical expert?
- If the information contains any statistics, do the numbers come from a reliable source?
- Does something on the website appear to be someone's opinion rather than a fact? If so, is the opinion from a qualified person or organization (such as a doctor or medical organization)?

### How current is this information?

Health information is constantly changing. For example, researchers continue to learn new things about various diseases and their treatments. You should know whether the health-related information you're reading is up-to-date. Many Web pages will post the date on which the page was last reviewed or updated. You can usually find this date at the very bottom of the page.

If this date isn't included, check to see whether the page has a copyright line. This tells you when the information was originally written. If the page you're reading hasn't been reviewed in the past year, look for more recently updated information.

### Remember:

Information that you find on a website does not replace your doctor's advice. Your doctor is the best person to answer questions about your personal health. If you read something on the Web that doesn't agree with what your doctor has told you, ask him or her about it.

### Who is responsible for the content of the website?

Before you believe any health-related information you find on the Web, find out who is responsible for information on the site. The easiest way to do this is to look at the site's home page. If the home page doesn't tell you who publishes the site, look for a link that says “About us” or “About this site.” Often, this link will be at the bottom of the home page. Clicking on this link will usually take you to a page that explains what person or organization is responsible for the information on the site.

**Websites published by an organization.** Health-related websites may be published by the U.S. government (.gov), a nonprofit organization (.org) or a college or university (.edu). These sites may be the most reliable sources of health information because they're usually not supported by for-profit companies, such as drug or insurance companies. However, you still need to find out where these sites get their information.

Sites with .com Web addresses may represent a specific company or be published by a company that uses the Web to sell products or services. These are called commercial sites. Commercial sites can offer useful and accurate information. You may want to be more careful about believing the information you read on these sites, though. The information may not be fair and accurate if the company that pays for the site has something to gain from it. It's a good idea to double-check information you read on commercial websites.



**Websites published by an individual.** Websites published by individuals may offer support and advice about coping with certain conditions and their treatments. These sites can contain reliable and useful information. However, it's very important to double-check health information you see on a website published by an individual. While many of these sites contain good information, some may contain myths or rumors.

### Other Organizations

[Medical Library Association User's Guide to Finding and Evaluating Health Information on the Web Healthfinder](#)

*Written by familydoctor.org editorial staff*

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### Recipe for a Happy New Year

By Author Unknown

Take twelve fine, full-grown months; see that these are thoroughly free from old memories of bitterness, rancor and hate.

Cleanse them completely from every clinging spite; pick off all specks of pettiness and littleness; in short, see that these months are freed from all the past—have them fresh and clean as when they first came from the great storehouse of Time.

Cut these months into thirty or thirty-one equal parts. Do not attempt to make up the whole batch at one time (so many persons spoil the entire lot this way) but prepare one day at a time.

Into each day put equal parts of faith, patience, courage, work (some people omit this ingredient and so spoil the flavor of the rest), hope, fidelity, liberality, kindness, rest (leaving this out is like leaving the oil out of the salad dressing- don't do it), prayer, meditation, and one well-selected resolution.

Put in about one teaspoonful of good spirits, a dash of fun, a pinch of folly, a sprinkling of play, and a heaping cupful of good humor.

## Fruit of the Month: Dried Fruit

([www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.org](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.org))

Drying is the oldest method of preserving food. The first European settlers in America often ate dried corn, apple, currants, grapes and meat. Sun drying of food was an easy way to prolong the life of food, but this form of dried food was different from what is available today.



Organisms that make food spoil require moisture to survive, so foods that have been completely dried have the longest life. Methods of drying food, particularly fruits and vegetables, have become more sophisticated over time.

Dried fruits and vegetables are high in fiber and carbohydrates and low in fat. However, dried foods are more calorically dense than their fresh counterparts. The recommended serving size for dried fruits and vegetables is half that of fresh.

### Selection

For drying at home, select ripe fruits and vegetables for drying. Bruised fruit may be used if those areas are removed before drying. Do not use any food with mold on it for drying. Peel and slice food into 1/8 to 1/2 inch slices. The higher the water content, the larger the slice should be because the more it will shrink in drying. Pretreating food before drying is a common practice, but not required. Dipping fruits into citrus juices (orange, lemon, or pineapple) helps avoid color changes. Vegetables are best dipped in diluted lemon juice before drying (1/4 cup lemon juice to 2 cups water).

Blanching is also recommended for certain vegetables (asparagus, green beans, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, and peas). Blanch vegetables in boiling water for 1 to 3 minutes, or until the skin cracks.

If you choose to purchase dried fruit at the supermarket, you will generally find a good selection of the most

### Storage

Whether dried at home or purchased, dried fruits and vegetables should be kept in an airtight container. Refrigeration is not necessary, but some people prefer the taste of cold dried food. Dried fruit may be frozen, but this sometimes affects the texture and taste of the food. Shelf life varies from product to product, but most items will keep, if stored properly, for a minimum of one month. Some items, such as raisins, have a significantly longer shelf life of approximately a year or more.

### Recipe

#### Sea Bass with Dried Fruit Salsa

Makes 4 servings

(Each serving equals 1/2 cup of fruit or vegetables)

#### Ingredients

4 (5 to 6 ounce) sea bass fillets, about 1-inch thick  
2 tsp olive oil                      1/4 tsp cinnamon  
2 tsp ground coriander            1/4 tsp cayenne pepper  
1 tsp ground cumin                3/4 tsp salt  
1/4 cup of each dried fruit, mango, papaya, cherry, pineapple  
1/3 cup apple juice or cider  
2 Tbsp cider vinegar  
2 Tbsp chopped cilantro  
2 Tbsp apricot jam

Rub fish with olive oil. Combine coriander, cumin, cinnamon and cayenne pepper; mix well. Set aside 1/2 teaspoon of the mixture for the fruit salsa. Add salt to remaining mixture. Rub seasonings over both sides of fish. Heat a large nonstick skillet over high heat until hot. Add fish. Reduce heat to medium, cook 3–5 minutes or until fish is browned and seared. Turn fish over; cook about 5 minutes or until fish is slightly firm and flaky. Combine dried fruit, juice, vinegar and 1/2 teaspoon reserved seasoning mixture in a small saucepan or microwave-safe dish. Bring to a boil. Stir in jam. Let stand 5 minutes. Transfer fish to serving plates. Top with fruit salsa and sprinkle with cilantro.

*Nutritional Analysis: Calories 337, Fat 6g, Calories from Fat 16%, Protein 28g, Carbohydrates 43g, Fiber 3g, Cholesterol 58mg, Sodium 241mg.*



### Health Ministry Contact Information:



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