



Web Sitings

MedlinePlus: Trusted Health Information

The U.S. National Library of Medicine recently redesigned its health information Web site, MedlinePlus (<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus>). The site, which houses information from more than 1,000 sources, is designed to provide free and up-to-date information about diseases, conditions, and wellness issues in easy-to-understand language. Visitors have the option of viewing the site in either English or Spanish. To simplify browsing, the site is broken into 3 main sections: (1) "Health Topics," (2) "Drugs and Supplements," and (3) "Videos and Cool Tools."

Under the "Health Topics" section, users have access to information about symptoms, causes, treatment, and prevention for more than 800 diseases, illnesses, health conditions, and wellness issues. Users can search for specific topics alphabetically, by body location or system, by the type of disorder or condition, or by demographic group. Links on the site are updated daily.

The "Drugs and Supplements" section enables users to search for medications, thereby allowing users to retrieve more detailed information than what is printed on the bottle or provided by the pharmacist. This section also houses information about dietary supplements and herbal remedies—including details on their effectiveness, usual dosages, and drug interactions.

The "Videos and Cool Tools" section offers live Webcasts of surgeries performed at hospitals around the country (allowing visitors to see exactly what will happen if they need to undergo that procedure). This sec-

tion also offers interactive tutorials and anatomy videos.

The Caring Place: Support for Those Who Are Grieving

The Highmark Caring Place, a Pennsylvania facility that offers peer support groups and educational programs for children and families grieving over the loss of a loved one, recently updated their Web site (<http://www.highmarkcaringplace.com>) to provide support virtually anywhere. The Web site offers support for various groups, including adults, teens, kids, and families. The site is designed to inform the audience of what grief is, the different stages they will walk through, and how to come to terms with their loss.

In the "About Grief" section, adults can read about the signs and behaviors they can expect a grieving child to display. Information is given on how to connect with a child who has experienced the loss of a loved one.

The "Get Support" section of the Web site provides a guide for people seeking assistance in helping others with grief. Brochures such as "The Grief of Preschoolers and the Questions They Ask," "The Grieving Child in the Classroom," and "Creating Connections When a Parent Is Diagnosed with a Terminal Illness" are available in PDF format.

The site also offers a section titled "In Their Words," where people share their experiences of grief. An expert in the field of crisis intervention offers his advice in this section, detailing how people, especially children, deal with grief and how their loved ones can help them cope.

Psoriasis Answers

A new educational Web site, called Psoriasis Answers (<http://www.psoriasisanswers.com>), provides information about the disease. The site (launched by Abbott Laboratories, Abbott Park, Illinois) is geared toward patients who have recently had psoriasis diagnosed as well as toward those who have been living with the disease for some time.

In the "Understanding Psoriasis" section, the 5 different forms of psoriasis are described. The site provides information about the symptoms and shows images of how each form generally appears. The causes of psoriasis also are detailed in this section, and answers to common questions are provided. The "Tips and Tools" section offers information regarding treatment options, while the "Life With Psoriasis" section offers information about daily skin care and day-to-day care. Ways to manage stress and creating a support system also are discussed. The site stresses the importance of talking to physicians regarding psoriasis and offers examples with a "Dermatologist Discussion Guide" and a "Family Doctor Discussion Guide."

The site also includes a survey, which poses questions regarding the impact psoriasis has on quality of life. Once the survey is completed, site visitors can opt to receive a downloadable or mailed 2-part "Answers Kit" that consists of question and answer cards (that provide useful tips, facts, and advice) and a symptom tracker pad (that allows visitors to track their progress). The symptom tracker pad is particularly useful, because it can assist both patients and their physicians when re-evaluating treatment options. ●