

Identifying Credible Pet Health Websites

T textvetpets.org/article/finding-veterinary-information-on-the-internet/



Strategies and Credible Websites

The TexVetPets article *[Finding Information on the Internet](#)* provides us with a great starting point and framework for identifying credible online content on pet health. Now let's delve into more detail.

Before you search online for veterinary information, ask yourself:

- What am I looking for? Is someone likely to have written about it?
- Where am I likely to find it?
- Should I believe this author?

When you look at your results, ask yourself:

- Did I find reasonable results, or are they unrealistically ideal?
- Is this website a place that should have veterinary information?
- Was this reviewed by others sharing the specialty (e.g., peer-reviewed)?

Your Veterinary Clinic's Website

You conducted research when you chose your veterinarian. Some veterinarians write articles about pets, diseases and care for their clinic website. Others link to trusted, peer-reviewed information from a site like [TexVetPets](#). Some purchase pre-prepared content for their websites.

Professional Veterinary Associations

Veterinarians and their veterinary health care teams are often members of organizations. These provide information for them and for pet owners. One example is the Texas Veterinary Medical Association, which created [TexVetPets](#), a site for pet owners written by Texas veterinarians and their veterinary health care teams. Another example is the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the portion of their site specifically about pet care: <https://www.avma.org/public/PetCare/>.

Veterinary Specialties

One type of veterinary organization, the specialty college, is restricted to veterinarians with advanced credentials in a specific area of medicine such as internal medicine or oncology. Many of the specialty college websites have information for pet owners. Look for areas of the website labeled “for pet owners” or “for the public.” AVMA keeps a list of the specialty colleges and their websites:

<https://www.avma.org/ProfessionalDevelopment/Education/Specialties/Pages/default.aspx>.

Specialties with information for pet owners include anesthesia, behavior, dentistry, dermatology, emergency and critical care, internal medicine, nutrition, radiology and surgery.

Information from Veterinary Colleges

Veterinarians and veterinary technicians earn degrees at veterinary colleges or veterinary technical programs. These often have resources for pet owners. Lists of the [veterinary colleges](#) and [veterinary technical programs](#) are kept by AVMA. Several examples are:

Texas A&M University

A variety of pet topics:

Pet Talk: <https://vetmed.tamu.edu/news/pet-talk/>

Disaster Preparation:

Veterinary Emergency Team: <https://vetmed.tamu.edu/vet/beprepared/>

Cornell University

Predominantly Covers Cats:

Partners in Animal Health: <https://partnersah.vet.cornell.edu/>

The Ohio State University

Dogs and cats in English and cats in Spanish:

Indoor Pet Initiative: <https://indoorpet.osu.edu/pet-owners>

Government

Many national and state government agencies provide information about animals and pets. Consider which may be the best agency to answer your question. A strategy to use in Google is to enter your search and then site:.gov. That will limit your results to government websites. You may want to look at information published by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), National Institutes of Health (NIH) and National Library of Medicine (NLM). One of the most comprehensive government websites is the CDC's Healthy Pets, Healthy People: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/>.

Organizations

A website ending in .org does not carry any specific meaning. This is described in the companion article to this (link to other article). Do not dismiss looking at organization websites, regardless of their web address, when seeking veterinary information online, but be cautious and always consider whether the organization has a strong point of view and if that could influence the information they publish on their website.

Some organizations will have veterinary information that clearly aligns with their mission. For example, the American Red Cross has robust pet disaster preparedness and Recovery information: <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/pet-disaster-preparedness.html>.

Organizations with a mission that focus on animals may have specialized information sections (e.g., the ASPCA covers poisonous plants): <https://www.aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants>.

Other Resources

Sometimes what you want is a reference book for background information. Instead of looking solely at what you find in an online search, look for online copies of standard books, including the Merck Veterinary Manual (<https://www.merckvetmanual.com/>), which is written for veterinarians. It includes a pet health and wellness section (<https://www.merckvetmanual.com/resourcespages/pet-health-overview>) that is written for pet owners.

Veterinary Partner [<https://veterinarypartner.vin.com/>] is produced by the Veterinary Information Network (VIN). Similar to TexVetPets, it is written and reviewed by veterinarians and veterinary health care team members and provides information for pet owners.

The bottom line

There are plenty of websites that have reliable information about a seemingly endless range of topics for pet owners written by knowledgeable experts. Equally, there are plenty of websites that will reinforce what you may have already decided you want to hear and have validated.

The best advice is to search for information with an open mind, seek credible websites and authors and use this information to enhance discussions with your veterinarian. There is no substitute for the professional who knows you and your animals.