

yoga to attending a Boston Pops concert.

Communities also differ by housing model. Most offer rental units, condominiums and cooperatives, including attached townhouses. Some developments are continuing-care retirement communities (CCRCs), which combine independent-living apartments, assisted-living units and nursing-home facilities. At Lasell Village, a CCRC managed by the college, a resident doesn't own a unit but pays an entrance fee, 90% of which is refunded when the resident moves or dies.

Prices vary according to region. Condos in the Village on the Cannon range from \$194,000 to \$461,000. At Hyatt's Classic Residences, a CCRC on 22 acres in Palo Alto, Cal., near Stanford University, units cost \$600,000 to \$4 million, of which 90% is refundable when a resident moves or dies.

Gerard Badler, managing director of Campus Continuum, says prospective residents should consider the following issues before buying.

■ **Finances.** What is the college's financial stake in the project? If you're buying into a community on land leased from the college, make sure the lease is long-term, for at least 30 to 40 years. If the college has no stake in the project, try to gauge how involved it will be with senior residents.

■ **Integration.** Ask about the policies on attending and auditing classes, using the library and other school facilities, and eating in student dining halls. Prospective residents should ask if these arrangements are for the long term.

■ **User fees.** The best communities, Badler says, are those where seniors pay a monthly fee that includes campus activities rather than pay every time they use the fitness center.

■ **Dean of seniors.** Find out if the senior community has a staff person to coordinate activities with the college. The coordinator should help seniors find volunteer activities both on-campus and off-campus, including local schools, hospitals and libraries.

If the idea of a college-linked retirement community appeals to you, ask your alma mater if it has one or can recommend one, or call a university in a community that you're thinking of moving to. You can also check out the Web sites of developers, such as Campus Continuum ([www.campuscontinuum.com](http://www.campuscontinuum.com)), Collegeville Development ([www.collegevillecommunities.com](http://www.collegevillecommunities.com)), Co-operative Retirement Services of America ([www.crsa.com](http://www.crsa.com)), in Memphis, Tenn., and Kendal Corp. ([www.kendal.org](http://www.kendal.org)), in Kennett Square, Pa. **K**



## YOUR HEALTH

# Reliable Advice That's Only a Click Away

**O**LDER INDIVIDUALS are increasingly using the Internet to hunt for health-related information. They're visiting Web sites to research newly diagnosed conditions, weigh the relative merits of various treatments and review Medicare Part D options. But as Web-based medical content proliferates, zeroing in on reliable information can be a frustrating experience.

"It's not just about finding information, but finding good information," says Susannah Fox, an associate director of the Pew Internet & American Life Project, in Washington, D.C.

But, Fox says, only one in four individuals who seek online medical information checks the source and date of the information. Much of the medical advice and research online is already outdated, she says. But you can improve your chances of finding dependable information by visiting sites of trusted names, such as the Mayo Clinic's Web site ([www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)). Another option is to click on a site's "About Us" tab, which may tell you whether the site is sponsored by a drug manufacturer or a company specializing in treatments or equipment. You can also look for symbols that indicate a site has met standards set by organizations such as the Health on the Net Foundation (HON) or URAC, originally known as the Utilization Review Accreditation Commission.

To help you cut through the morass on the Internet, *Kiplinger's Retirement Report* has scoured dozens of

health-related Web sites to find ones that are credible and easy for any user to navigate.

### General Health-Search Sites

**Healthline** ([www.healthline.com](http://www.healthline.com)) uses new technology to conduct its own search of top Web-based health sites. It was started in 1999 as YourDoctor.com, and its new presentation is still in the testing stage. On its lean home page, you can choose among 200 disease-specific channels. Click on the arthritis channel, and you'll find articles that have either appeared in peer-reviewed medical publications or have been written in simple language by one of 1,100 physicians, specialists and medical editors hired by Healthline. You can narrow your search to specific conditions, such as fibromyalgia. Descriptions of conditions are accompanied by illustrations from medical textbooks.

**WebMD** ([www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)) provides trustworthy disease-related information in an easy-to-use format, and it has a number of nifty bells and whistles, such as interactive checkups and a symptom checker. For instance, you can calculate your body mass index, determine how many calories you burn and figure out whether knee pain is limiting your life. WebMD also has a physician directory: Plug in your zip code and you'll get the names and addresses of local specialists.

**MayoClinic.com** is run by the Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, which is an affiliate of the Mayo Clinic, in Rochester, Minn. Content is reviewed by Mayo Clinic medical specialists. Besides a comprehensive disease-and-condition section, the site's "Treatment Decisions" tab provides step-by-step help for patients weighing treatment options for common conditions, such as prostate cancer and uterine fibroids. Its "Ask a Specialist" page allows readers to send questions to specialists in about 30 areas.

### Disease-Specific Sites

New research shows that patients who seek online health information about their disease are more likely to follow treatment decisions. Because heart disease and cancer are among the two leading causes of death, we have included two specialty Web sites.

At the consumer-friendly **American Cancer Society** Web site ([www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)), you can tap into in-depth information on specific cancers. The site provides treatment-decision tools, links to research, a drug guide and advice on questions to ask your doctor. You can also find clinical trials and community resources.

The **American Heart Association** site ([\[heart.org\]\(http://heart.org\)\) provides dietary recommendations, describes steps to prevent a heart attack and offers smoking-cessation advice. You can find the basics on cholesterol, high blood pressure, heart attack, diabetes and stroke, as well as information on key tests and procedures. The site provides interactive risk assessments and a tool called the Heart Profiler, which offers customized reports based on your particular condition.](http://www.american</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

### Helping-You-Help-Yourself Sites

A host of other Web sites will help you find research articles on any ailment, find a doctor, track down a clinical trial and get dependable drug information.

**MedlinePlus** ([www.medlineplus.gov](http://www.medlineplus.gov)) is a patient-friendly goldmine of trusted information from the world's largest medical library, the National Library of Medicine. Consumers and health professionals can find authoritative background on more than 700 diseases and conditions. Its encyclopedia includes 4,000 physician-reviewed articles on diseases, tests and surgeries. You can also track down a physician or hospital, and get the skinny on prescription drugs. From MedlinePlus you can link to Medline/PubMed to find citations and abstracts on 16 million articles.

To find a clinical trial, visit **ClinicalTrials.gov**, a service of the National Institutes of Health and the Food and Drug Administration. The site provides information about federally and privately supported research using human volunteers. Type in your community and a condition in the search engine, and you'll get such details as participation requirements and contact information. A recent query for dementia trials in Baltimore, for example, listed ten studies.

For information on how to choose an insurance company, hospital or physician, visit the **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality** ([www.ahrq.gov/consumer](http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer)), the federal government's lead agency in improving health-care quality. It's not that easy to navigate, but the valuable "Your Guide to Choosing Quality Health Care" provides tips on all facets of health-care services. The guide also includes links to other sites where you can, for example, compare the quality of nursing homes in your community.

Still haven't found what you're looking for? Try the Medical Library Association's **Consumer and Patient Health Information Section** ([www.caphis.mlanet.org/consumer](http://www.caphis.mlanet.org/consumer)). At this site, you can link to "The CAPHIS Top 100," a list of Web sites that have met criteria for content and credibility. The sites are sorted for seniors, men's health, women's health and drugs. **K**