



# Verifying online resources



Searching for online lupus resources is a great way to support your clients, but it's important to be aware of where the information is coming from and to assess its validity. Be sure to verify your online resources before sharing information with your community.

## Who is the author?

Reliable sources are written by someone with credentials, such as professional experience or a degree appropriate to the topic.

For example, if you want to direct patients to additional information about how to manage a lupus flare, an appropriate author may be a rheumatologist.

Government agencies, like the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, are reliable sources that may not list individual authors.

## Is the source current?

Scientific information, including medical information, may change as new research is published. Ensure that you have the latest available information. Websites sometimes have a copyright date or a "last updated" or "last modified" date. These dates are often located at the bottom of the home page. Any source that is more than three years old is likely out of date.

## Does the source have citations?

In general, sources with citations suggest that the information is based on research. A citation in the text can be in parentheses like **(Fairweather and Rose, 2004)** or appear as superscripted number<sup>1</sup> with a corresponding full citation at the bottom of the page or the end of the document. These citations mean that the source is backed by research and is not just one person's opinion.

## What is the source's goal for writing?

Sources that are emotionally or financially connected to the subject may not be scientifically based. For example, a patients' blog devoted to how to manage lupus symptoms will feature personal experiences rather than current information based on research. Someone selling supplements for lupus may not be objective.

## Keywords to search online

Keyword...



- > Lupus and Latinas
- > Lupus specialist in "city name"
- > Lupus and mental health
- > Lupus support groups in "city name"
- > Lupus treatment
- > Lupus signs and symptoms
- > Lupus awareness