

False health information – the warning signs

False health information can be dangerous. There are two main types of false health information:

Misinformation

False or misleading information shared by someone because they *believe* it.

Disinformation

False information spread *deliberately* to deceive people.

To help stop the spread of false information, check what you are reading, watching or listening to is reliable before sharing.

Warning signs to watch out for

"Miracle cure" or "wonder drug"



Claims like this are designed to catch your attention. However, they often lack evidence to back them up. If it sounds too good to be true it probably is.

Small groups of people – big results



Generally speaking, more people in a study means more reliable results. Be careful of information which claims big results from small sample sizes.

"My friend said..."



Personal stories are great for knowing other people are going through the same thing as you. But everybody responds to treatment in different ways.

Just because someone has had a particular side effect or outcome does not mean you will.

Bias



Does the information seem balanced? If it is all negative or all positive it might be biased. This does not mean it is untrue. But you should think about their reasons for publishing.