AI and health information

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a term to describe computers that learn and carry out "human" tasks. AI has some good uses in health information but public AI tools come with risks.

1) How can AI be used in health information?

Here are some ways AI is used in health information:

- Turning medical jargon into plain language.
- Powering chatbots on websites.
- Analysing research data.

Good health information is open about using AI. For example it will say: "This website uses AI translation."

2) What is generative AI (GAI)?

Generative AI (GAI) describes online tools or apps that give or "generate" answers to questions asked. GAI can create text, images and video.

When asked a question or a "prompt", a GAI tool will search data to give an answer. ChatGPT, Co-pilot, Gemini, Google AI mode and BLOOM are examples of GAI.

3) Can I trust GAI to give me accurate answers?

AI answers are not always correct, up-to-date or relevant to the UK.

GAI might share misinformation. It can also "make up" answers that sound real. This is called AI hallucination.

GAI can reflect racial, gender and other prejudices.

4) How can I use GAI?

Ask good questions

- Keep questions or prompts simple.
- Be specific.
- Ask GAI tools to search trusted information sources.

For example, "Find information on signs of breast cancer. Search the NHS and health organisations with the PIF TICK."

5) Be SMART

The SMART guide can help you use chatbots more safely. Visit healthchatbotguide.org

S - Slow down and think before asking health questions to an AI chatbot.

M - Make your questions clear.

A - Ask yourself "What am I sharing?"

R - Remember to check the facts.

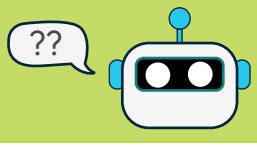
T - Talk to a person when you need to.

Fact check the answer given

Ask GAI where it got the information for its answer.

Using AI search overviews?
View our guide here.

Always check health advice with a health professional or a patient support group. Do not act on advice from GAI tools.



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