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When your pet develops a medical issue, chances are you'll be inclined to do some [internet](#) research. Performed responsibly, surfing the internet can be an invaluable exercise in terms of reinforcing what you've already heard from your [veterinarian](#), learning new things, and even finding online support groups. While I say, "More power to you!" it is important to get the most accurate information out of your searches.

Responsible internet searching

How can you go about finding instructive, accurate, worthwhile Internet information while avoiding "online junk food?" Here are some general guidelines:

- **Ask your veterinarian for website recommendations.** Your veterinarian might be able to refer you to a specific site that will supplement or reinforce the information she has provided.
- **Veterinary college websites** invariably provide reliable information. Search for them by entering "veterinary college" or "veterinary school" after the name of the disease or symptom you are researching.
- **Web addresses ending in ".org," ".edu" and ".gov,"** represent nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and governmental agencies respectively. They will likely be sources of more objective and accurate information.
- **If your dog has a breed-specific [disease](#),** pay a visit to the site hosted by that specific [breed's](#) national organization. The significant health issues and associated medical research pertaining to the breed are often discussed on such sites.
- **Be ever so wary of anecdotal information.** It's perfectly okay to indulge yourself with remarkable tales (how Max's [skin disease](#) was

miraculously cured by a single session of aromatherapy), but view what you are reading as fiction rather than fact. As fascinating as these *National Enquirer* type stories may seem, please don't let them significantly influence the choices you make for your pet.

- **I am a big fan of disease-specific online forums.** Check out those [sponsored by Yahoo](#). Not only do they provide a wealth of educational information, forum participants can be a wonderful source of emotional support — always a good thing when dealing with a beloved, sick pet.

If you are considering joining an online forum, I encourage you to look for a group that has lots of members, has been around for several years and focuses on a specific disease ([kidney failure](#), [diabetes](#),