# Digital Health Education Content Development and Sourcing Policy

WebMD Ignite's commitment is to provide clients and their end users with accurate, timely, and understandable digital health education content. We focus on diseases, conditions, tests, and procedures. Our goal is to promote understanding and management of health conditions and wellness. WebMD Ignite is dedicated to developing health education that is evidence-based, easy to understand, and focused on improving outcomes.

Our health education content is developed using clinicians whose expertise falls in the content area under development. We aim to develop content consistent with evidence-based medicine and nationally accepted guidelines and standards of practice. WebMD Ignite's methods include, but are not limited to, reviewing journal articles, practice guidelines, and subscription databases; consulting with medical experts; and attending health care association meetings and conferences with both practitioners and end users of our products.

**Content Development Process**

The content development process begins with careful planning and thorough research. Each topic is approached collaboratively, involving clinicians and editorial teams who define the scope and direction of the content. Research for the content is based on peer-reviewed journals, clinical practice guidelines, and trusted medical databases. The involvement of medical research staff as needed ensures the inclusion of relevant and up-to-date evidence. This research foundation ensures that all content produced adheres to national or internationally recognized medical standards and is grounded in evidence-based medicine.

**Writing and Initial Review**

Once the planning and research phases are complete, writing and initial review begin. During this phase, health professionals, writers, and editors work closely to draft content that not only reflects accurate medical information but also meets health literacy and accessibility standards. The content is written in plain language to be easily understood by users with varying levels of health knowledge, and it supports behavior change principles to aid in decision-making. The editorial review at this stage further ensures the content aligns with organizational style guidelines, correcting any readability issues, grammar errors, and formatting inconsistencies.

Our health education content adheres to WebMD Ignite's editorial style guide and is developed for a range of reading levels, depending on the audience and topic requirements. Going beyond readability, WebMD Ignite also focuses on health literacy. We create content using the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Toolkit and the Plain Language and Training Resources offered by the National Institutes of Health. We have also developed our own resources, such as a Style Guide, Equity and Inclusion Guidelines, Accessibility Guidelines, and Plain Language Tips and Glossary.

Multimedia content facilitates a low-literacy reading level with medical illustrations and a diverse selection of multimedia products. We also strive to use language and imagery that is relevant, respectful, and inclusive of a diverse audience. We do this by using appropriate tone for the subject matter, avoiding insensitive or stigmatizing language, avoiding assumptions, using gender-inclusive language, and including imagery that reflects a wide range of ages, skin colors, genders, and body types.

We are also committed to making all our content accessible to all users and to meeting national and international standards of accessibility. We develop and maintain our consumer-facing solutions to meet WCAG 2.0A and AA standards, as well as Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Web accessibility means that websites, tools, and technologies are designed and developed to make the Web accessible to people with disabilities. This includes people

who have visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, language, learning, and neurological impairments. Key accessibility features include alt text and images, screen reader support, video accessibility, plain language, and language diversity. By following these guidelines, we not only meet but exceed accessibility standards to ensure people with disabilities can fully engage with our content.

While Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools may be used to assist with content development processes, the organization takes care to ensure that AI does not compromise the quality or integrity of the content. Human oversight remains central to maintaining high standards of accuracy and relevance, with clinical and editorial teams closely managing the content creation process.

**Digital Health Education Content Authors and Reviewers**

We employ a highly skilled team of medical authors, editors, and reviewers. Most reviewers are independent contractors and licensed clinicians, ranging from physicians and nurses to allied health professionals. Our medical writers are experienced in writing patient education materials for hospitals, health systems, private organizations, and professional organizations.

Our licensed and clinically-experienced medical reviewers ensure that the content is evidence-based and that recommendations made on a particular topic are consistent across all content on that topic. To ensure accurate and accessible content, we have an in-house team of:

- Clinicians with advanced degrees
- Medical writers
- Medical editors
- Certified medical illustrators
- Multi-media production staff
- Project managers

All individuals involved in the content development process are required to follow strict conflict-of-interest guidelines to prevent any potential bias or commercial influence on the information presented. This ensures that the content remains objective, unbiased, and focused on delivering accurate, evidence-based health information.

For background information on our medical reviewers and health content developers, please see our policy for Digital Health Education Content Authors and Reviewers.

**Digital Health Education Content Development and Sourcing**

Our digital health education content development process adheres to an evidence-based approach, which integrates clinical expertise, patient preferences, and the latest research findings. Content is sourced from peer-reviewed journals, clinical practice guidelines, and proprietary databases such as Cochrane Library and UpToDate. This ensures that all information is up-to-date and reflects the most current practices in the medical field.

Our self-management/interactive tools, such as calculators, condition-related risk assessments, quizzes and multimedia content and animations are all considered health content. This information is medically accurate in content, visual representations, and data interaction. Standards and requirements that direct the creation of health content also guide the development process.

Throughout the process of the creation of multimedia content and self-management/interactive tools, there are several different script/content reviews by our content team. During production, the content team reviews many visual beta versions of any product developed by the graphic artists, animators, and programmers. During each step of the process,

our content team has multiple opportunities to ensure medical accuracy of the final product. All interactive multimedia content undergoes user testing by the staff and other consumer users.

Great importance is placed on visuals. Our imagery is used to:

- Bridge learning barriers—Visuals speak across languages, literacy levels.
- Convey key messages and actionable next steps—Images reinforce key content.
- Tie content and audience together—Offer real-life examples and solutions incorporating diverse and inclusive visuals.

Note: Content can be hosted by WebMD Ignite servers, hosted on the client's servers, or delivered via web services or manual syndication. Revision of licensed health content is permitted with a specific administrative tool obtained by clients to meet their needs, but if revision to licensed health content occurs, the content will not be considered URAC-accredited.

**Practice guidelines we follow**

In developing, medically reviewing, and updating digital health content, we monitor a substantial number of associations and organizations that publish health care guidelines. All guidelines are vetted, and those directly applicable to WebMD Ignite digital health content are taken into consideration and utilized for product development and maintenance.

Content is developed using trusted sources such as clinical textbooks, proprietary databases, and guidelines from recognized health organizations, such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Multimedia content, such as animations and self-management tools, undergoes thorough testing to ensure that it is medically accurate and meets educational objectives.

To maintain content quality, information from unreliable or unverified sources, such as broad internet searches or commercially produced patient education materials, is not used. All sources must be vetted and approved by recognized authorities in the medical field to be considered acceptable for use in content development.

**Publications Regularly Reviewed for Content Development**

To ensure the medical accuracy and consistency of WebMD Ignite's consumer health content, the organization continuously monitors publications, clinical practice guidelines and association statements, relevant articles from peer-reviewed journals, clinical databases and tools, publications from government organizations, and research summary products. The major publications and sources are presented here by medical specialty area. This is not an inclusive list.

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| Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine | American Society of Pediatric Otolaryngology |
| Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics | American Society of Plastic Surgeons |
| Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices | American Society of Radiation Oncology |
| Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality | American Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Management |
| Alzheimer's Association | American Society of Temporomandibular Joint Surgeons (ASTMJS) |

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| American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology | American Speech-Language-Hearing Association |
| American Academy of Audiology | American Stroke Association |
| American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry | American Thoracic Society |
| American Academy of Dermatology | American Thyroid Association |
| American Academy of Emergency Medicine | American Urological Association |
| American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery | American Venous Forum |
| American Academy of Family Physicians | Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses |
| American Academy of General Dentistry | Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America |
| American Academy of Neurology | Bone Health & Osteoporosis Foundation |
| American Academy of Ophthalmology | Brain Trauma Foundation |
| American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons | British Association of Dermatologists |
| American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy | British Menopause Society |
| American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery | British Society for Rheumatology |
| American Academy of Pain Medicine | British Society of Gastroenterology |
| American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry | British Thoracic Society |
| American Academy of Pediatrics | Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine |
| American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation | Canadian Association for Interventional Radiology |
| American Academy of Sleep Medicine | Canadian Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons |
| American Academy of Sleep Medicine | Canadian Association of Radiologists |
| American Association for Respiratory Care | Canadian Cardiovascular Society |
| American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases | Canadian Diabetes Association |
| American Association for Thoracic Surgery | Canadian Headache Society |
| American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation | Canadian Heart Rhythm Society |

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| American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists | Canadian Medical Association |
| American Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists | Canadian Paediatric Society |
| American Association of Endodontists | Canadian Pain Society |
| American Association of Neurological Surgeons | Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care |
| American Association of Neuroscience Nurses | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention |
| American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons | Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services |
| American Association of Orthodontists | Concussion in Sport Group |
| American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons | Emergency Nurses Association |
| American Association of Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus | Endocrine Society |
| American Cancer Society | Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA) |
| American Chronic Pain Association | Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease |
| American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology | Heart Rhythm Society |
| American College of Cardiology | Infectious Diseases Society of America |
| American College of Chest Physicians | Institute of Medicine |
| American College of Clinical Pharmacy | Joint Commission |
| American College of Critical Care Medicine | Joint Council of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology |
| American College of Emergency Physicians | Joint Task Force on Practice Parameters |
| American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons | Kidney Disease: Improving Global Outcomes (KDIGO) |
| American College of Gastroenterology | National Association for Sport and Physical Education |
| American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists | National Asthma Education and Prevention Program |
| American College of Physicians | National Cancer Institute |
| American College of Preventive Medicine | National Cholesterol Education Program |
| American College of Prosthodontists | National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute |

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| American College of Radiology | National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) |
| American College of Rheumatology | National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases |
| American College of Sports Medicine | National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases |
| American College of Surgeons | National Institute of Mental Health |
| American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists | National Institute on Aging |
| American Dental Association | National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism |
| American Diabetes Association | National Institute on Drug Abuse |
| American Epilepsy Society | National Institutes of Health |
| American Gastroenterological Association | National Kidney Foundation |
| American Geriatric Society | National Lipid Association |
| American Head and Neck Society | North American Menopause Society |
| American Heart Association | North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition |
| American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine | Obesity Society |
| American Laryngological, Rhinological and Otological Society | Oncology Nursing Society |
| American Lung Association | Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society |
| American Medical Association | Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists |
| American Occupational Therapy Association | Royal College of Radiologists |
| American Optometric Association | Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions |
| American Osteopathic Association | Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine |
| American Physical Therapy Association | Society for Vascular Surgery |
| American Podiatric Medical Association | Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons |
| American Psychiatric Association | Society of Cardiovascular Anesthesiologists |

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| American Psychological Association | Society of Critical Care Medicine |
| American Rhinologic Society | Society of Interventional Radiology |
| American Society for Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology | Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada |
| American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy | Society of Thoracic Surgeons |
| American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery | Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration |
| American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition | U.S. Department of Defense |
| American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition | U.S. Department of Health and Human Services |
| American Society for Reproductive Medicine | U.S. Department of Justice |
| American Society of Addiction Medicine | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs |
| American Society of Anesthesiologists | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency |
| American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery | U.S. Food and Drug Administration |
| American Society of Clinical Oncology | U.S. Multi Society Task Force on Colorectal Cancer |
| American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons | U.S. Department of Agriculture |
| American Society of Echocardiography | U.S. Preventive Services Task Force |
| American Society of Hematology | U.S. Public Health Service |
| American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians | Veterans Health Administration |
| American Society of Nephrology | World Health Organization |
| American Society of Neuroradiology | World Heart Federation |
| American Society of Nuclear Cardiology | Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society |

**General Inquiries or Feedback about our Health Content**

To contact us, please email WebMD Ignite at comments@webmd.net or call 1-800-706-9646 (Select option #1) between the hours of: 8am-5pm CST.

A response acknowledging client or consumer feedback emails will be sent within 24 hours on business days.

Reviewed, Revised, and Approved by the Quality Management Accreditation Council: March 2025