



TEAMSTERS TRUST BENEFITS INSIDER



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Is Googling Your Symptoms a Good Thing? When online research is (and isn't) helpful.

There are many ways people seek health information, advice, and care outside of the doctor's office, such as nurselines, virtual medical appointments, and health-based apps.

One of the most popular ways to search for health information is to ask the internet (aka "Dr. Google") about your symptoms, medications, or medical condition. With so much information online, the internet can be a great place to turn to become better-informed, but it can also be a great place for misinformation and lead us to incorrectly self-diagnose.

Dr. Google Should Just Be Step One

You've probably heard of hypochondria, where you feel an abnormal level of anxiety about your health which can lead you to think you may have serious conditions. Similarly, "cyberchondria" is when you develop excessive worry from unfounded concerns based on your online research.

Googling (or whatever search engine you may use) your health concerns can sometimes be useful, but the internet cannot replace the expertise and guidance from a qualified healthcare practitioner. Use online searches to better understand your symptoms and concerns, and to develop a more informed list of questions to talk to your doctor about.

Finding Reliable Online Sources

The internet is full of valuable information, but not all internet content is credible, and following advice from unverified sources can lead to misinformation and potential harm. It is important to check your sources for any medical or health-related information and resist the urge to rely on a single website. Remember, just because a website comes up first in a search doesn't mean it has the most accurate information!

TAKE ACTION

Get your medical questions answered quickly! **Kaiser E-Visits** are a quick way to get care and answers for many health conditions. Login in or register at www.kp.org/wa and begin an online E-visit.



CONSIDER THE SOURCE, AND TRY THESE WELL-RESPECTED MEDICAL INFORMATION SITES FIRST:

- MedlinePlus (National Library of Medicine): www.medlineplus.gov/
- Mayo Clinic: www.mayoclinic.org/
- Harvard Health Publishing: www.health.harvard.edu/
- National Institutes of Health: www.nih.gov/
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/



The Impacts of Social Media

Create healthy social media habits.

Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are an ever-present part of modern life and have transformed how we engage and communicate. It is often where we connect with family and friends, build community, and pursue our interests. However, there is a dark side to too much social media time, and studies show that social media can lead to or worsen feelings of depression, isolation, and insecurity.

Negative Effects of Social Media

Comparison and inadequacy, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), cyberbullying and harassment, body image concerns, attention and focus issues, and sleep disturbances are just a few of the negative consequences that un-checked social media use can trigger for people of any age. Doom scrolling, scrolling compulsively through bad and troubling news, is a common problem and creates a cycle where increased time spent on social media worsens our mood or feelings of loneliness, driving us to spend even more time scrolling. For some, the answer may be to delete social media apps from phones and devices all together, but with a few practical guidelines you can keep your apps and maintain a more positive relationship with social media while protecting your mental health.

These strategies take a little self-control and effort, but by adopting them you can create a healthier relationship with social media and lessen the potential negative impact on your mental health!

Tips for Healthy Social Media Use



REDUCE ONLINE TIME: Track your social media use and then set achievable goals to decrease screen time. Avoid using your phone during driving, meals, or social interactions. You can even try setting a time limit and timer for online time.



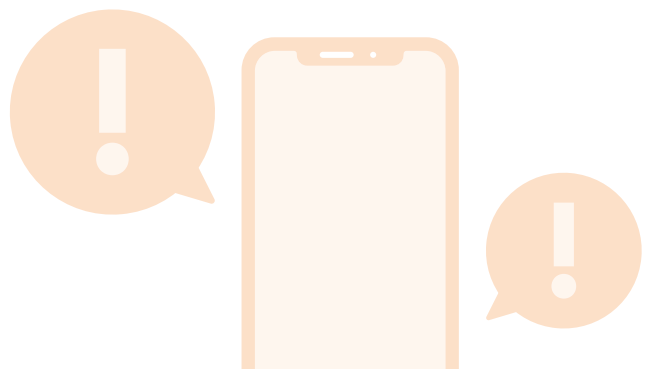
LIMIT NOTIFICATIONS: Getting that notification ding or buzz is hard to ignore. Disable social media notifications to reduce distractions and feelings of constant connectedness.



WEAN YOURSELF OFF COMPULSIVE CHECKS: Gradually reduce the frequency with which you check your phone to break the habit of constant monitoring. Try leaving it in another room or at home when you go out.



PRIORITIZE IN-PERSON CONNECTIONS: Set aside phone-free time each week for face-to-face interactions with friends and family. Engage in hobbies or activities you enjoy and join groups where you can meet like-minded people in person.





Sleep Tight, Feel Right

How sleep shapes emotional well-being.

Anyone who has ever had a run of bad nights of sleep knows how much the lack of sleep can impact your ability to think, make decisions and feel good physically. Sleep also plays a major role in our mood and how we manage stress.

Restful sleep is a crucial aspect of maintaining good mental health.

Emerging research shows that poor sleep can be both the cause and consequence of mental health issues. This means that poor sleep may be why you feel depressed, sad, or extra stressed, and by addressing sleep issues you may relieve these feelings.

Not getting enough sleep may impact your mental health by:



INCREASING EMOTIONAL REACTIVITY: Too little sleep has been associated with a bigger response to common stressors, making it challenging to cope with the pressures of daily life. At the same time, positive emotions are dulled, which affects your overall mood, perspective, and resilience.



DECREASING COGNITIVE REGULATION: Sleep plays a pivotal role in our ability to pay attention, learn, and remember things. Poor-quality sleep impairs our ability to think and process information, which in turn increases our sense of anxiety and frustration.



INTENSIFYING EXISTING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES: Chronic sleep problems can make depression, anxiety, stress, and other mental health issues worse. Inadequate sleep has also been linked to an elevated risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

Getting enough restful sleep is an important part of nurturing a healthy mind and body. Prioritizing good sleep hygiene and seeking help if you have chronic sleep issues can help improve your emotional resilience, decision-making abilities, and overall quality of life.

Source: Article sources available upon request.

DID YOU KNOW?

That Kaiser offers many behavioral health services, often without a referral needed! From help managing stress, to depression and anxiety, or substance abuse concerns, Kaiser can connect you to mental health professionals in your area.

Call **(888) 287-2680** or search Behavioral Health at www.kp.org/wa.





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THE TAKEAWAY

Trust & Plan Updates

Recent and upcoming changes.

New Survivor Dependent Benefit

As of July 1, 2023, the Trust has added a new survivor dependent benefit. With this new benefit, in the event of your death, coverage for your surviving eligible dependents will continue for twelve months without a contribution from an employer or individual payment. This coverage will run concurrently with the COBRA term. Please see your Plan booklet for more information.

Multi-Factor Authentication

Today, it is more important than ever to protect your personal information when on the web. That's why Northwest Administrators (www.nwadmin.com) now requires multi-factor authentication when you login to the site to view plan, claim, and benefits information.

Multi-factor, or two-factor identification is when a website uses two different ways to log you in and access your personal information. An example is when a passcode is sent to you via text or email on top of your usual login information.

If you have any issues logging in, please contact us: websupport@nwadmin.com.

COVID-19 Coverage Changes

The COVID-19 Public Health Emergency officially ended in May 2023. As a result, the temporary coverage changes for COVID-19 vaccines, testing, and treatment returned to being covered like any other condition covered under your Plan, and over-the-counter test kits are no longer covered. If you have any questions about your benefits, please refer to your Plan booklet or call Kaiser at **(888) 901-4636**.