



# Trust It or Trash It?

## How to use the *Trust It or Trash It?* tool

Use this tool to help you think critically about the quality of health information found on websites, handouts, booklets, and more.

Consider three questions to guide you through the critical thinking process:

- (1) *Who said it?*
- (2) *When did they say it?*
- (3) *How did they know?*

## Who said it?

*Who wrote the information you are reading?*

### **Think about TRUSTING IT if:**

- The author's name is easy to find.
- The authors have experience with the condition and are respected in the community and by their colleagues.

### **Think about TRASHING IT if:**

- You don't know who wrote it, or you can't find the author's name.
- You can't find information about the author's background or experience, or you can tell they don't have any experience.

*Who provided the facts? Where did the facts come from?*

### **Think about TRUSTING IT if:**

- You can tell where the information comes from – the sources are listed.

### **Think about TRASHING IT if:**

- You can't tell where the information comes from – the sources aren't listed.

*Who paid for it?*

### **Think about TRUSTING IT if:**

- The sponsor has a lot of experience with the condition and the information doesn't try to sell a product or point of view.

### **Think about TRASHING IT if:**

- The sources listed for the information aren't clearly related to the content or appear to be selling something.
- Information about the funding or sponsoring group isn't provided.

## When did they say it?

*When was it written or updated?*

 **Think about TRUSTING IT if:**

-The information is current.

 **Think about TRASHING IT if:**

-The information seems out of date based on other information you've read about or know.

-A date for the information isn't given.

## How did they know?

*How do you know this information pertains to you?*

 **Think about TRUSTING IT if:**

-The medical information is based on research on many people.

 **Think about TRASHING IT if:**

-The information is based only on someone's opinion or individual experience.

*Does the information seem reasonable based on what you've read or know?*

 **Think about TRUSTING IT if:**

-The information matches what you've found in multiple other sources.

-If there are no other sources with the same information, it could be new, cutting edge research. (See the second "Trash it" statement below).

 **Think about TRASHING IT if:**

-The information presented is clearly wrong given the current state of the science and the opinions of many experts.

-If there are no other sources with the same information and it seems too good to be true, it may be. (See the second "Trust it" statement above).

## For more information

Contact us at [trustortrash@geneticalliance.org](mailto:trustortrash@geneticalliance.org) for questions, comments, or suggestions on the *Trust It or Trash It?* tool. An online version of the tool is available at [www.trustortrash.org](http://www.trustortrash.org).

This version of the *Trust It or Trash It?* tool is based on the content contained in a more comprehensive tool created for developers of quality educational materials, as part of the Access to Credible Genetics Resource Network (ATCG). To see the developer's tool, visit [www.developerstrustortrash.org](http://www.developerstrustortrash.org). To learn more about the ATCG project and partners, visit [www.geneticalliance.org/atcg](http://www.geneticalliance.org/atcg).