Looking for breastfeeding information on the internet?

Anyone can set up a web site and publish any kind of information. How do you decide what information is accurate and that you can trust?

The NHS Health Development Agency www.quick.org.uk has a colourful simple site to help you understand information on the internet. If you want a more detailed site, visit the international Health on the Net Code of Conduct for web sites www.hon.ch The checklist below is based on these two sources.

Web site checklist:

1. Is it clear who has written the information?

Who is the author? Is it an organisation or an individual person? Is there a way to contact the web site?

2. Are the aims of the site clear?

What are the aims of the site? What is it for? Who is it for? Is it a commercial site marketing a product or service, a personal site with an individuals' personal opinions, or the site of an established and recognised organisation or government department.

3. Is the site relevant to me?

Each person may look for different information, so a site might be useful to you but not to your friend who wants different information.

4. Can the information be checked?

Is the author qualified to write the site? Has anyone else said the same things anywhere else? Is there any way of checking this out? If the information is new, is there any proof?

5. When was the site produced?

Is it up to date? Can you check to see if the information is up to date and not just the site?

6. Is the information biased in any way?

Has the site got a particular reason for wanting you to think in a particular way? Is it a balanced view or does it only give one opinion? Where does the site get funding? Any advertising should be clearly marked as an advertisement.

7. Does the site tell you about choices open to you?

Does the site give you advice? Does it tell you about other ideas? Does the site make any claims about health benefits? Are any claims supported by appropriate, balanced evidence and the source of the evidence given?

Sites to visit:
www.hphallireland.org
then go to Resources or News
and click on the BFHI link
www.lalecheleague.org
www.cuidiu-ict.ie

The information provided on a web site is designed to support, not replace, the relationship that exists between a patient / site visitor and his/her existing health care providers.