

Livestrong Medical Guidelines

Last Modified on 12/17/2015 3:41 pm PST

General Guidelines

- Write to the average reader and do not use excessive medical jargon. Use a “bedside manner” approach and explain necessary medical terminology on first use.
- Base article content on standard medical practice supported with evidence-based research. Focus on clinical, evidence-based prevention measures and practice guidelines as primary sources, when applicable.
- Do not recommend treatment options or directly advise; present options. Keep articles informational. Instructions may be included only for minor ailments that usually do not require professional medical care, such as a cold.
- Do not suggest or recommend drug dosages for medications.
- Do not suggest or recommend off-label use of prescription drugs.
- Focus on what is common rather than rare. Include incidence or prevalence data as relevant.
- Use a thematic approach when discussing topics with numerous, causes, treatments, etc. Give common examples
- Always include relevant warnings, including signs or symptoms that require immediate medical attention. Warnings can be given their own section in the article, if need be. Include potential side effects, complications and black-box warnings.
- Primarily use generic drug names, unless the title specifies a brand name. If a recognizable brand name exists, it's helpful to include it parenthetically next to the generic name. Example: ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin).
- Avoid providing lengthy lists; always explain and provide context.

Condition Center Expert Contacts & Outlines

The LIVESTRONG.COM Asthma and Acid Reflux condition centers require the condition center expert's sign off on an outline before submitting your first draft.

Please reach out to them to confirm your basic article outline before writing your first draft for any article in their condition center. **Please note that the expert's signoff on your approach is mandatory. Once you have signoff from the expert, please paste your approved outline into the available notes field when submitting your first draft to the Studio.** Our condition center experts are:

Acid Reflux: Dr. Jonathan Aviv

Asthma: Dr. Shilpi Agarwal

Please reach out to Tim Edmundson (tim.edmundson@studiod.com) for their contact information.

For all remaining condition centers, please reference the outlines found below. These outlines, along with the Medical section guidelines, should inform your approach for your article.

[Diabetes Type 1 Outlines](#)

[Cold & Flu Outlines](#)

[Erectile Dysfunction Outlines](#)

Exceptions to AP Style and Technical Dictionary

- Do not spell out numbers less than 10 (unless at the beginning of a sentence) or common abbreviations. Examples: “mg” instead of milligrams; “lbs” instead of pounds; mL instead of milliliter.
- Do not hyphenate vitamins; write vitamin B12 not B-12.
- Do not capitalize the word “Type” in type 2 diabetes.
- Use "Stedman's Medical Dictionary" for the accepted spelling of technical terms.

Title & Article Types

Use the following guidance to approach the various types of articles within the Health section.

Treatment Articles

- Discuss issues such as how the treatment works; circumstances in which the treatment is used; whether the intervention is primarily therapeutic or supportive; and whether it's typically used alone or in combination with other treatments.
- Address efficacy and safety; support with evidence.
- Include CAM therapies only if there is robust clinical evidence (not animal or laboratory models) to support specific use relevant to the title.
- Provide tips that might make the treatment easier to tolerate, less risky, more effective, etc., if relevant.

Sample Treatment Articles

- [Medications That Help With Nerve Pain](#)
- [Over-the-Counter Tendinitis Treatments](#)

Cause Articles

- Address both "what" and "how."
- Provide relevant context and distinguishing features of causes to make the information more useful to the reader. Avoid lengthy, unexplained lists.
- Include genetic, environmental and lifestyle contributing/risk factors for titles that deal with causes of specific conditions.

Sample Cause Articles:

- [Causes of Lower Left Side Abdominal and Back Pain](#)
- [High Fever With a Cough in Children](#)

Prevention Articles

- Assess the type of prevention measures implied by the title to determine article content. Present primary, secondary and tertiary prevention measures in that order as they apply to the title.

Side Effects to Drugs and Treatments Articles

- Conduct literature research for drug side effects to reflect “real world” experience with the medication. Do not rely solely on the prescribing information.
- Include signs and symptoms for specific adverse effects as applicable.
- Include warnings for pregnant or breast-feeding women, if applicable.
- Include a generic warning about allergic reactions in the warnings section. Note the potential for allergic cross-reactivity if relevant.

Sample Side Effect Articles

- [What Are the Side Effects of Prednisolone 5 mg?](#)
- [250 mg Azithromycin Side Effects](#)

Medication Use in Pregnancies Articles

- Be specific if a medication is known to be of particular risk at a certain period during pregnancy.
- For over-the-counter medications, include information noted on the drug facts label beyond the recommendation to discuss use with her doctor.
- Discuss potential side effects/complications: Include the incidence of known adverse effects and/or birth defects associated with use.
- Note that pregnant women should consult with a doctor before taking any new drug,

supplement or herb, and before discontinuing or adjusting the dosage of prescribed medication.

Nutrition Articles

- Articles should address therapeutic management for specific medical conditions and not general nutrition.
- Do not suggest/recommend specific diets or foods without supporting evidence or a sound rationale based on physiology or nutritional biochemistry.

Sample Nutrition Articles:

- [Acute Pancreatitis Diet](#)
- [Foods to Eat and Avoid to Treat Gout](#)

Signs & Symptoms Articles

- Include information about relative frequency.
- Provide context to help the reader understand and identify signs/symptoms.

Sample Signs & Symptoms Articles

- [Signs and Symptoms of a Blood Clot in the Calf](#)
- [Signs & Symptoms of Low Potassium Levels in the Blood](#)

Complementary & Alternative Medicine (CAM) Articles

- Rely on the best available evidence to support (or refute) efficacy and safety claims, acknowledging unknowns.
- State if no clinical trials have been conducted for a particular modality. Data involving

a closely-related condition (similar pathophysiology) may be presented in the absence of relevant clinical trials. Make the distinction clear for the reader.

- Include known safety concerns or adverse effects associated with CAM therapies, including potential medication interactions with herbs or other supplements.
- Caution readers to seek care for persistent and/or unexplained symptoms, highlighting “red flag” signs/symptoms.

Sample CAM Articles:

- [Cough Remedies for a 1-Year Old](#)
- [Vitamin B1 as a Mosquito Repellent](#)
- [Natural Home Remedies for Heartburn](#)

Information/About Articles

- Include information about incidence/prevalence; etiology; risk or predisposing factors; common signs and symptoms; common diagnostics; and therapeutic options, as relevant.

Sample Information/About Articles:

- [Headaches From Anger](#)
- [The Primary Functions of the Larynx](#)

Diagnosis Articles

- Keep the content informational. The article should not read as, “How to diagnose yourself without seeing a doctor.”
- Provide relevant information on signs and symptoms.

Equipment Articles

- Discuss different styles/types. Do not focus on a single model or style unless specified in the title.
- Present information that is likely to be useful to the broadest audience.

Complications Articles

- Include signs and symptoms for specific complications as applicable.
- Highlight symptoms that should prompt professional medical evaluation or intervention.