HEALTH BASICS

Health A-Z videos

Health A-Z videos are short educational videos that explain health topics, tests, treatments, and care

WHAT IT IS
Short educational videos arranged by health topic

WHERE IT COMES UP
Health websites, patient portals, clinic links, and search results

WHY IT MATTERS
Supports understanding but cannot personalize medical advice

WHAT IT IS NOT
Not a diagnosis or substitute for clinical assessment

WHO TO ASK
Clinician, pharmacist, or the video's publishing service

HOW IT IS CHECKED
No medical test; check source, evidence, date, and accessibility

Overview

Health A-Z videos are educational videos organized by health topic. They may explain a medical condition, test, treatment, medicine, procedure, or aspect of staying well.

"Health A-Z" is not a single medical standard. Different health services and websites use the term for their own collections. The content, review process, and level of detail may therefore differ between publishers.

A video can make an unfamiliar subject easier to understand. Images and demonstrations may be especially helpful when learning how a test works or what to expect during a procedure. Captions and transcripts can also make information easier to review.

However, a health video provides general information. It cannot examine you, confirm a diagnosis, assess your personal risks, or account for your full medical history. It should support, rather than replace, advice from an appropriate healthcare professional.

How it works

A health video usually combines spoken explanation with images, animation, text, or a demonstration. The publisher may group videos alphabetically or connect them to written Health A-Z pages.

Reliable publishers normally use an editorial process. This may involve checking the script against clinical evidence, asking qualified professionals to review it, and adding a publication or review date. The video should clearly identify who produced it and what evidence supports it.

Some videos are hosted by another service, even when they appear on a healthcare website. The hosting service may collect information about viewing activity or place cookies on your device. Its privacy terms may differ from those of the health website.

Accessibility features can include captions, a written transcript, clear narration, and audio descriptions of important visual content. The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines describe captions and other alternatives that can make recorded media more accessible.[1]

Why it matters for your health

Health information can be difficult to take in, particularly after a new diagnosis or before an unfamiliar test. A clear video may help you learn the main terms, understand the steps involved, and prepare questions.

You can pause, replay, or share a video with someone supporting you. A transcript may help you check a word or instruction without watching the whole video again.

Videos can also show practical actions that are hard to describe in writing. However, demonstrations do not automatically make information correct. Research examining healthcare videos on public platforms has found differences in quality, completeness, and reliability.[2]

Your own care may differ from what appears in a video. Tests and treatments can be adapted because of age, pregnancy, allergies, other medical conditions, current medicines, local services, or personal preferences. A clinician or pharmacist can explain which parts apply to you.

What can go wrong

The main concerns relate to the information, how it is understood, and how it is used.

Misinformation means information that is false, unsupported, or seriously misleading. Warning signs include claims of a guaranteed result, pressure to buy something, conspiracy claims, or

advice to stop prescribed treatment without clinical guidance. MedlinePlus recommends checking who runs a health resource, why it exists, where its information comes from, and when it was updated.[3]

Outdated information may describe tests, medicines, or service arrangements that have changed. An old video is not necessarily wrong, but you should check its review date and compare important instructions with current information from your healthcare service.

Misunderstanding can happen when a short video leaves out exceptions or uses unfamiliar language. A general explanation may also be mistaken for a personal diagnosis. Watching a video cannot establish what is causing your symptoms.

Delayed care can occur if someone keeps searching or watching videos instead of seeking help. For routine questions, note what is unclear and discuss it at your next suitable appointment. Contact an urgent care service sooner if you have new or worsening symptoms that may need prompt assessment.

For possible emergencies, do not wait for a video to tell you what to do. Severe difficulty breathing, signs of a stroke, heavy uncontrolled bleeding, loss of consciousness, or severe chest pressure require immediate help through your local emergency service.

Unsafe self-management may occur when a video gives broad advice about medicines, exercises, diets, or home procedures. Do not change a prescribed medicine or attempt a procedure solely because a video suggests it.

Accessibility barriers include missing captions, inaccurate subtitles, rapid speech, flashing images, or important details shown only on screen. Look for a transcript or another format if the video does not meet your needs.

Privacy concerns may arise on websites that track viewing or allow comments. Avoid posting identifying health information in public comment sections.

What you can do

There is no medical test that checks a Health A-Z video. You can assess whether it is a suitable source and confirm any advice that could affect your care.

Before relying on a video, check:

Keep a brief record of the video's title, publisher, and review date if you want to discuss it with a professional. Write down the exact point that concerns you. For example: "Does this preparation advice apply to my test?" or "Could this interact with my medicines?"

Ask a pharmacist about medicine information. Ask the clinic arranging a test or procedure

about preparation and recovery instructions. For a diagnosed condition or treatment plan, ask the clinician or service responsible for that part of your care.

If a trustworthy video simply explains a general topic and does not affect a decision, you may not need to do anything else.

- Who published it and whether that organization is accountable
- Whether qualified reviewers or evidence sources are named
- When it was produced or last reviewed
- Whether it separates facts from opinion, advertising, or personal stories
- Whether captions, a transcript, or another accessible format are available
- Whether the information agrees with your current care instructions

Common questions

Can a video tell me whether I have a condition?

No. A video may explain features associated with a condition, but diagnosis can require a medical history, examination, test, or a combination of these. Similar symptoms can have different causes.

Are videos from healthcare organizations always correct?

A recognized publisher and clinical review process are useful signs, but errors or outdated details are still possible. Check the date and confirm instructions that could affect your treatment or safety.

What if a video conflicts with advice I received?

Follow the individual instructions provided by the service responsible for your care unless that service tells you otherwise. Contact them for clarification rather than choosing between conflicting instructions yourself.

Can I share a health video with family or friends?

Yes, if it helps explain a topic. Make clear that it is general information and may not apply to another person's situation. Do not share someone else's private health details without permission.

What if captions or audio are inaccurate?

Look for an official transcript or written version. Report the problem to the publisher, especially if the error changes the medical meaning. Ask for information in an accessible

format when you need it.

Sources

- World Wide Web Consortium. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 . W3C Recommendation; 2023.
- Madathil KC, Rivera-Rodriguez AJ, Greenstein JS, Gramopadhye AK. Healthcare information on YouTube: a systematic review. Health Informatics Journal . 2015;21(3):173-194.
- US National Library of Medicine. Evaluating Health Information . MedlinePlus.
- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit . Second edition; 2015.
- National Health Service. Health A to Z . NHS health information service.