

HONCODE HEALTH SITES CERTIFICATION GUIDELINES

This document is intended to help you bring your website into compliance with the 8 principles of the HONcode.

1 - AUTHORITY

Details of the editorial team and the site team are clearly stated.

Details about the editorial team and the application team should clearly be stated.

The names and qualifications of the team members responsible for the development of the site should also be indicated.

If the site contains medical content, the names and qualifications of the authors should be provided. If the author is not a health professional, this must be clearly stated.

2 - COMPLEMENTARITY

Clear mention of the site boundaries that does not replace relationship between physician and patient.

The information provided on the site should be intended to encourage, and not replace, direct relationships between the patient and health professionals.

This must be indicated by a clear and visible statement such as: *"The information provided on this site is intended to improve, not replace, the direct relationship between the patient (or site visitor) and healthcare professionals."*

The mission of the site should clearly be stated and respected.

The site's audience should be indicated (health professionals or non-professionals) and the site's content should be relevant to that audience.

If the site is prohibited for use by minors, this must be clearly indicated and the site must be designed in such a way that its use by minors is impossible.

3 - CONFIDENTIALITY

Declaration explaining all legal requirements concerning the confidentiality of personal data.

The site must comply with the new General Data Protection Regulations. More information here: <https://www.hon.ch/en/certification/gdpr.html>

The privacy policy must be site-specific and easily accessible.

The treatment of confidential data of the site user must be detailed.

In particular, the following points should be mentioned in the privacy policy:

- Whether consent to data collection is requested at the first launch of the site
- Where user data is stored,
- If the data collected is transmitted to third parties, and if so, to which third parties,
- Whether or not the site uses cookies and for what purpose,
- Whether or not the website uses Google Analytics and for what purpose.

4 - ATTRIBUTION

The site, its legal and medical pages have a date of last update.
The sources of health content are given.

The site should have a date of last general update (on the home page for example).
The legal contents (Legal information; CGU; Confidentiality) have a date of last update.

In the scientific and medical fields, the evolution of knowledge is very rapid, so it is necessary to indicate the date of creation of the content as well as its last update date.

Thus, if the site has medical content, it should have a date of last update. The user must be able to easily know when the health information he/she is consulting was created.

Each medical content presenting digital and/or statistical data must be accompanied by references.
These can be indicated in the following form, and must be indicated whenever necessary.
Author1, Author2, Author3, Title, Name of journal/article/book/conference, Reference year, page number

If the site is prohibited for use by minors, this must be clearly indicated and the site must be designed in such a way that its use by minors is impossible.

5 - JUSTIFIABILITY

Health information is complete and provided in an objective, balanced and transparent manner.

If the site has medical content, the information should be presented in an objective and balanced manner.

If the site presents treatments, drugs and/or surgeries, all information concerning contraindications, adverse reactions, interactions, precautions for use should be presented.

If the recommendation of a single brand is given, the professional must explain that it is his regular practice to prescribe that particular drug brand and must mention that there are other products.
All brand names must be identified, for example with ®.

If the site has before/after photographs, a statement on this subject should be present, for example:
"The photos illustrating our before/after clinical cases show consenting persons and the same patients appear, respectively, for the before/after result. These photos have not been retouched. We expressly draw your attention to the fact that the observed result is specific to the person concerned and that an identical result cannot be expected for another person, because of the individuality of each person."

More information here: <https://www.hon.ch/en/pba.html>

6 - TRANSPARENCY

The site is easy to use, its mission is clear, and the team is easily accessible.

A means of contact (e-mail address, contact form) should easily be available within the site.

If the website is complex, instructions for use could be available on the site, to help users.

The site is maintained regularly and potential bugs identified should be quickly fixed.

If the site is prohibited for use by minors, this must be clearly indicated and the site must be designed in such a way that its use by minors is impossible.

7 - FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

All sources of funding are identified and transparent.

The sources of funding for the site should be indicated and detailed.

A declaration of links of interest must be available if health professionals have been involved in creating the content of the site.

Thus, it must be mentioned whether the authors of the content, health professionals, have links of interest with health products and cosmetics companies.

More information on this directive on interest links is available here:
<https://www.hon.ch/en/links.html>

8 - ADVERTISEMENT POLICY

All advertisements should be identified and differentiated from content.

If the site carries advertising:

- This must be identified as such, with the term "Advertising" for example. The purpose of labelling these ads is to clearly differentiate them from the information content of the site,
- An advertising policy should be available within the site,
- Advertisements on topics such as weapons, pornography, religion, dating are prohibited.

Find in pictures how to clearly identify the advertising on your site here:
<https://www.hon.ch/en/ai.html>

If the site does not advertise, a statement to that effect states so, for example, "*Our site does not accept any form of advertising.*"

Our team is at your disposal to assist you in reaching
HONcode compliance for your site.

Do not hesitate to contact us by email via updateNF@healthonnet.org