

Medical Information Assignment

1. Check your medical reference collection. Do you have a medical dictionary? A health or medical encyclopedia? Are they illustrated? How old are they? Would you feel comfortable handing them to a library user? Does your library subscribe to a database with coverage of health issues either as part of a general periodicals index or as a stand-alone resource for health and medical concerns? Have you been trained on it, or can you get training on it easily?

2. What is your library's policy on medical reference? Is it written policy? Are there guidelines for you regarding how much information to give? Is there any kind of question that is always referred?

3. Find out where more complex medical questions are usually referred from your library. Do you refer to a main or central library for your system, to a "second level reference center," or to a library in a hospital or medical center? If there is one of the latter in your area, find out:
 - What is the purpose of the library? (Does it primarily serve the medical community or the public?)
 - Who is on the staff? (Introduce yourself, find out names)
 - How large is the collection? Are there non-print items?
 - Do they have any areas of specialty?
 - May the public use the facility? If so, what hours? Is there material that can be checked out? If the library is not open to the public, can articles be obtained through interlibrary loan? Is there a charge?

4. Do a search for information on "celiac sprue" on NOAH, InteliHealth, the Mayo Clinic, and MedlinePlus, and compare results. Note:
 - Which site had the largest number of results?
 - Which was the easiest to navigate and understand?
 - Which had the most scientific information?
 - Are there any alternative treatments for this condition?
 - Which included links to discussion groups or associations for people who have this?