



# Fact or Fraud! A Critical Evaluation of Popular Health Trends on the Web

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## I found it on the Web. It must be true!

## Critical Evaluation

### Be skeptical of

- all-natural ingredients
- meaningless medical jargon
- personal testimonials
- quick fixes and promises
- satisfaction guaranteed
- statements that seem too good to be true
- time-tested or new miracle treatments

### Use critical thinking

- **Authority/Accuracy:** who authored the page?
- **Bias:** is the purpose of the site to sell, to educate, to inform, to sway?
- **Currency:** is the information up-to-date?
- **Funding/Advertising** can influence content
- **Navigation:** is the site easy to navigate?
- **Sources:** are statements supported by facts?

## Authoritative Sources

- **MedlinePlus** – the best place to start
- **National Cancer Institute**
- **National Center for Complementary & Alternative Medicine**
- **National Women’s Health Information Center**
- **Office of AIDS Research**
- **Office of Dietary Supplements**



### Alzheimer's Disease

#### Pure emu oil

- “My husband has Alzheimer ... he began eating 1 teaspoon full of ... Pure Emu Oil each day. ... Now (in just 22 days) he mowed the grass, cleaned out the garage, weeded the flower beds, and we take our morning walk again. It hasn’t helped his memory much yet, but he is more like himself again!!!”
- **Warning:** *Be skeptical of personal testimonials*

### Cancer Cures

#### Natural Therapies

- “Cancer doesn’t scare me anymore!”
- Dr. Lorraine Day reversed her severe, advanced cancer by rebuilding her immune system by natural therapies, so her body could heal itself
- She offers natural, alternative therapies for all diseases, including cancer and AIDS
- **Warning:** *Be skeptical of statements that sound too good to be true; question “authority”*

### HIV and AIDS

#### Herbal cures

- “Experience has shown that certain herbo-mineral compounds prepared as per the formulae prescribed by sages of yore like Agasthya, Charaka, Sarangadhara and others for the treatment of Kshaya have brought about significant results in improving the conditions Aids [sic] patients.”
- **Warning:** *Don’t be fooled by meaningless medical jargon*

### Menopause

#### Black Cohosh

- Herb used for menopausal symptoms
- Evidence of effectiveness is not well established
- American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists stated--primarily on the basis of consensus and expert opinion--that black cohosh may be helpful in the short term (6 months or less) for women with vasomotor symptoms of menopause
- Long-term safety data are not available
- **Warning:** *Where’s the evidence? Will it work for you?*

### Supplements

#### Comfrey, Ephedra, Kava, etc.

- Dietary supplements are used by many
- Product regulation and safety issues are of concern
- Food & Drug Administration does not approve supplements or require warning labels about possible side effects
- **Warning:** *Manufacturers of supplements may not legally claim that their product will diagnose, cure, mitigate, treat, or prevent a disease*

### Weight Loss

#### Trans-Derm Diet Patch

- Over-the-counter transdermal weight-loss patch
- Reduces hunger cravings, increases energy levels, completely safe and effective, all natural ingredients
- **Warning:** *Quick fixes and promises can be just that; ask to see the evidence that the product was tested in a controlled clinical trial on humans*

