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## Facing Facts: Google Unveils New View of Medical Searches



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Google announced this week that it plans to improve the way that medical information is presented during online searches. One in every 20 Google searches are related to health, according to the company. The hope is that curious healthcare consumers will be better served by the dissemination of accurate, physician-verified data in an environment of rampant misinformation and pseudoscience.

Consumers who use Google to search for information about a medical condition will see a new visual alongside their search results. The information boxes contain pictorial depictions of the condition, as well as details about disease prevalence and links to lists of symptoms and treatments. With three quarters of health inquiries beginning with the search engine, according to the Pew Research Center, Google's change will affect millions of consumers and providers within the medical industry.

"We use a combination of algorithms and medical professionals to create this medical information. First, our algorithms find and analyse health-related information from high-quality sites across the web. Then, teams of doctors carefully review and refine the information and licensed medical illustrators create the visuals."

### Knowledge Graph Strategy

Google is applying its Knowledge Graph to healthcare searches. The Knowledge Graph tries to anticipate what else users will want to know, beyond the original simple search term, and adds an information box that contains data about a searched-for topic. Currently, the boxes appear beside many search results for athletes and celebrities. In the future, the strategy will be applied to greater numbers of healthcare searches, which will also feature illustrations that depict some of the more commonly researched conditions.

Because healthcare information must be reliable, the data will be reviewed by multiple doctors. The information must then be approved by the Mayo Clinic before publication; Mayo is credited in the information boxes, according to some of the designs. The design caters to users of traditional browsers as well as mobile device owners who use the Google app on Android and iOS platforms as a starting point for searches on the go.

### Key Partners

Key partners in the Google effort are the Mayo Clinic, Lumiata and VoxHealth. Some of the websites and agencies cited by Google as main information sources are the Mayo Clinic, MedScape, Nature, Science Direct, Clinicaltrials.gov, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration, the National Cancer Institute, the National Institutes on Health, the National Library of Medicine and WebMD.

"We worked with these partners because they've done excellent work in thinking of the medical space from a data, and a graph, perspective (i.e., what the facts are and also how you relate them all to each other)," a spokesperson told MedCity News.

Source: [Mayo Clinic](#) and MedCity News

Image Credit: Mayo Clinic

