



Health Awareness

Stay Informed About Heart Disease

(NAPSA)—Nowadays, in addition to working with your health care professional to manage a health condition, you have an extra resource you can turn to: the World Wide Web.

Research shows that more than 80 percent of Internet users have gone online to research a procedure or condition. While the Internet offers an abundance of information, not all of it is helpful or reliable. It's important to have a source of accurate information that you can use to help you make decisions about your course of treatment. A new research study focused on an American Heart Association Web-based tool shows that this tool is an effective way for people to manage heart conditions.

More than 250,000 people have used the American Heart Association's free Heart Profilers tool since it first launched. According to research, patients who used this online heart disease education program were more aware of treatment options than other patients, and were more compliant with their treatments.

Heart Profilers are free, interactive tools designed to help patients make informed treatment decisions once diagnosed with high blood pressure, high cholesterol, atrial fibrillation, coronary artery disease or heart failure. The service provides a complete report customized to each patient with treatment options, potential side effects and outcomes, as well as pros and cons of treatment. In addition, you get a list of questions to ask your health care provider and access to published medical trials that relate to your condition.

"Patient education and empowerment are key in reducing complications of heart disease," said Ileana Piña, M.D., professor of medicine at Case Western Reserve



Now there's a new way to fight heart disease.

University in Cleveland and senior author of the study. "We need to help empower patients to take control and manage their condition by providing personalized information in lay language so they have a complete picture of their condition and the treatments available to them."

Heart Profilers users complete a simple questionnaire to receive a confidential, personalized treatment options report. The report is based on the latest research regarding success rates of various treatment options and potential medication side effects. Patients also have access to medical journals and research studies written in a consumer-friendly, easy-to-understand format.

"It's beneficial for people to be educated in this way," Piña said. "When they understand the different treatment options available to them, they can become more active participants in their health care decision making by asking appropriate questions and understanding what their doctor is telling them."

To learn more or to register, go to americanheart.org/heartprofilers.