

## The eight HONcode Principles

### > Authority

If medical advice or information is given, the website must inform visitors if it's given by a doctor or not.

### > Complementarity

A clear statement for its purpose to support, not replace, doctor-patient relations.

### > Confidentiality

Confidentiality of data relating to individual patients and visitors to a medical/health Web site, is respected by this Web site.

### > Attribution

Refer properly to source information. The date when a clinical page was last modified will be clearly displayed.

### > Justifiability

Justify claims about benefits & performance of a specific treatment.

### > Transparency of authorship

Identify site developers, authors & Webmaster and a valid contact address easily accessible.

### > Transparency of sponsorship

Present financial backers.

### > Honesty in advertising & editorial policy

Clearly separate advertising from editorial, if advertising is a funding source.

The accreditation is based on these eight principles

Full version available at

<http://www.HealthOnNet.org/HONcode/Conduct.html>



## Health On the Net Foundation

### HON Executive Committee

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### How to reach us:

Come visit HON's website at <http://www.HealthOnNet.org/>  
All our services are in English and French and the HONcode exists in 31 languages.

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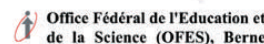
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### Partner sites

Santé romande: <http://www.santeromande.ch>  
Smoking cessation: <http://www.stop-tabac.ch>  
Swiss Society of Nephrology: <http://www.nephro.ch>  
ORPHANET: <http://www.orpha-net.ch>  
OESO Foundation: <http://www.oeso-foundation.org>

### Supported by:

Département  
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## Quality & Trustworthiness of the Medical & Health Web



### HONcode Toolbar: search engine and checker of the accreditation status

HON has been created for improving the quality of information intended to both patients and medical professionals for facilitating quick access to the most relevant and up-to-date medical discoveries.

**HONcode** is the oldest and the most used ethical and trustworthy code for medical and health related information available on Internet. The HONcode is designed for two target audiences: the general public and the web publisher, actively involving the site owner in the process of accreditation.

The HON Foundation is a Non-Governmental Organization, internationally known for its pioneering work in the field of health information ethics, notably for the establishment of its code of ethical conduct, the HONcode.

## What is the HONcode accreditation?

### The HONcode: an Accreditation System

#### Who can request it?

Any health or medical web site, intended for patients, health workers or the general public, whether or not it has a strictly health or medical focus.

The request for accreditation is explicit and voluntary (Requests are handled through the HON website).

#### Review for certification:

Each request for accreditation is examined by a HONcode review committee including professional medicals. HON makes a thorough visit of the site and verifies if all eight of the HONcode ethical principles (see below) are respected. If some principles are missing in the web site, HON and the site owner work together in order to bring the site into compliance.

#### Active accreditation:

A site which is found to respect the eight HONcode principles is given a unique dynamic seal to place on their pages. The seal is directly linked to a HONcode accreditation certificate located on the HON website.

#### Regular monitoring:

An accredited site receives a check-up visit periodically, beginning one year after the initial accreditation, or following a complaint or technical malfunction detected by our monitoring services.

#### Compliance assurance:

Mechanisms have been implemented in order to ensure compliance and detect violations of the HONcode. HON is the only organization to enforce its code through a formal complaint mechanism.

### Quality & Trustworthiness of the Medical & Health Web

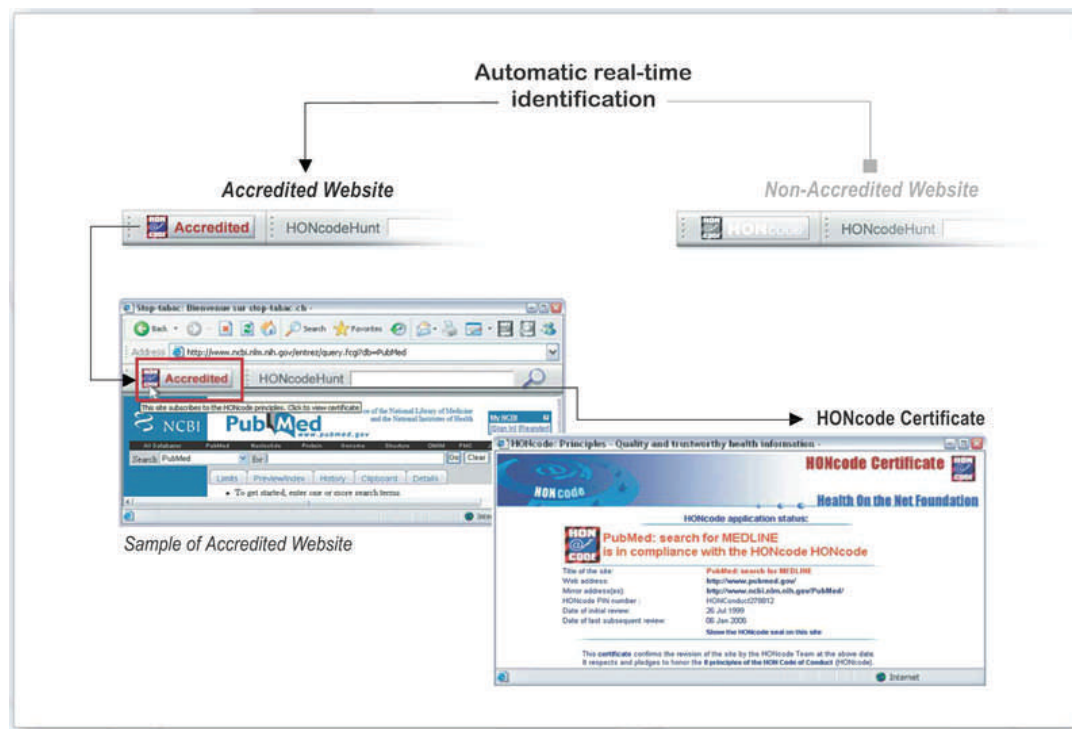
The HON's HONcode is now a de facto standard for trustworthy online information used by thousand of health and medical web publishers which aims to protect citizens from false or misleading health or medical information. Consultations brought together webmasters, citizens and experts, who reached consensus on an 8-point code now in use by over 5,000 web sites. The qualifying web sites form a 'confidence-space', where citizens could safely explore their information options.

The HONcode requires that information providers disclose the authority of the information provided, confidentiality and privacy policy, proper attribution of sources, transparency of financial sponsorship and relationship between advertising and editorial content.

## HONcode Toolbar

### Easy access to trustworthy information

Automatically checks a site's HONcode status when browsing health web sites. The search engine indexes only HONcode-accredited sites. HONcodeHunt currently includes millions of accredited medical and health Web pages.



### HON for Africa collaboration

The South African Medical Research Council is an Accreditation Centre for health and medical Web sites for English-speaking countries in Africa.

This collaboration with HON implies a HON for Africa Web site presence at [www.honafrika.org](http://www.honafrika.org) where English-speaking African webmasters can apply for accreditation of their Web sites. As part of the collaboration, MRC provides an e-learning module for webmasters guiding them in the development of Web sites based on the HONcode principles.



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The HON toolbar, installed with your browser, allows you to surf and locate health information you can trust. The HON toolbar is a free service supported by the Canton of Geneva, Swiss Government and European Union.

**All the services of [www.HealthOnNet.org](http://www.HealthOnNet.org) are free of charge**

### HON Facts

The HONcode is the most widely accepted reference for online health and medical publishers. Currently the HONcode is used by over 5'000 accredited websites, covering 72 countries.

HON web site <http://www.HealthOnNet.org/> is visited by 27'000 visitors world-wide per day.