

Health & Wellness Buyer Beware Tips

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This document is a summary of the top reasons that both allergies and health issues have been increasing in staggering proportions over the last few decades. As long as credit is given as listed above, the contents of this document may be freely shared on websites, blogs, and in publications. Credit constitutes the copyright symbol along with the author's name, title and website address.

1. Credibility

What makes someone credible as someone you should listen to? What gives them their expertise? In a time when the health and wellness market is exploding beyond all imagination, well-informed consumers will be asking hard questions in this area. A few months ago I received an e-mail that I could become a Health Coach – in 90 minutes, for FREE. That is correct. I forwarded the e-mail onto one of the national organizations I work with just because it was so shocking, bold and sad. Also earlier this year I discovered a new gluten-free website run by someone who is lifting recipes from Craig's lists and other sources and then passing them on as his own.

I happen to have experience in IgE mediated and non-IgE mediated food allergies, celiac disease, gluten-intolerance, malnutrition and malabsorption because of my daughter's severe health issues, which began in infancy. People can visit my website and see that I used to work for Xerox, Bausch & Lomb, and Rhone-Poulenc Rorer (Dermik Laboratories). If someone won't let you know who he or she really is, that is a bit unsettling to me especially if they claim to be an expert, dispensing health information. If you use all of the tips on this page, you will be in a better position to sort out who has experience you should consider, and who is just out to make a quick buck.

2. Website Warnings

I met a man recently that wanted to connect to my website as a link. He informed me that he had a natural cures website. I then went to my credibility questions to see if this was the kind of guy that I would want to associate with. He had no medical training or credentials. He had never done any medical research. This guy was looking up information on health and posting it to his site. Unproven information that he was lifting from who knows where.

Here are my strongest warnings about individuals, websites and businesses when it comes to health care:

- No Photo?** Walk away. Everyone in this business knows that you must have a picture to identify yourself as who you say you are.
- No Biography?** Walk away. If someone has training, experience, expertise they will include this on an About Me or About Us page on a website or in a brochure.

Their written material should leave you clear that they have the background to serve your health needs.

•**No Free Content?** Walk away quickly. This is an excellent way to flush out who is out to simply make money and who is out to help other people. Content, by the way, is defined as FREE documents, tip sheets, white papers, recipes, videos, blog entries, etc. that anyone has access to. If you have to register, it is not free. Your price of admission was giving them your contact information, even if it was only your e-mail address. FREE content doesn't necessarily mean that the person or website has credibility.

3. Google them

Anyone who has any length of experience in a field or area will show up in a Google® search. Trust me this is true. Long before I published my cookbook, my name, phone number and town showed up on internet searches on celiac and gluten-free due to my activities in the celiac and gluten-free communities. It can't hurt to do an Internet search, and if the person doesn't show up or has only a few entries, I would look for someone with more experience and relevance.

4. Do they let you know about all products or only what they make money on?

There are websites who purport to be a "service" to particular markets, yet only let the market know about a product if they can make money on it in one way or another. This is especially true in the allergy and gluten-free market place where website owners withhold new products and books from the community unless they are paid handsomely. I did not realize just how sinister and widespread this was until I came out with my cookbook in 2007. Then I watched as "community sites" whose mission it was to serve and inform, refused to let their customers know about my book. They wanted more profit than I could afford to pay them. Word to the wise to keep your eyes wide open.

5. What is their Trust Factor?

Do you trust them? Do other people trust them? Do reputable people recommend them? This sounds a lot like credibility, however it is different. You can have a credible licensed practitioner who is not to be trusted. Trust and credibility can seem alike, but they are different. Are they mostly interested in selling you a product or helping you discover what you need to know?

6. Get your medical information from a licensed M.D., D.O., or other practitioner

As you learned in number one above, we are now seeing "Health Coaches" who received free training, and became coaches in 90 minutes. I advise getting your health information from a licensed medical doctor or other practitioner. I always let people know that I believe it is a huge mistake to self-medicate.

7. In Cookbooks – Buyer Beware Some “Gluten-free” Cookbooks contain gluten!

Yes, hard as it is to believe, some cookbooks that claim to be gluten-free actually contain recipes that call for gluten flours!! This is a big buyer beware!