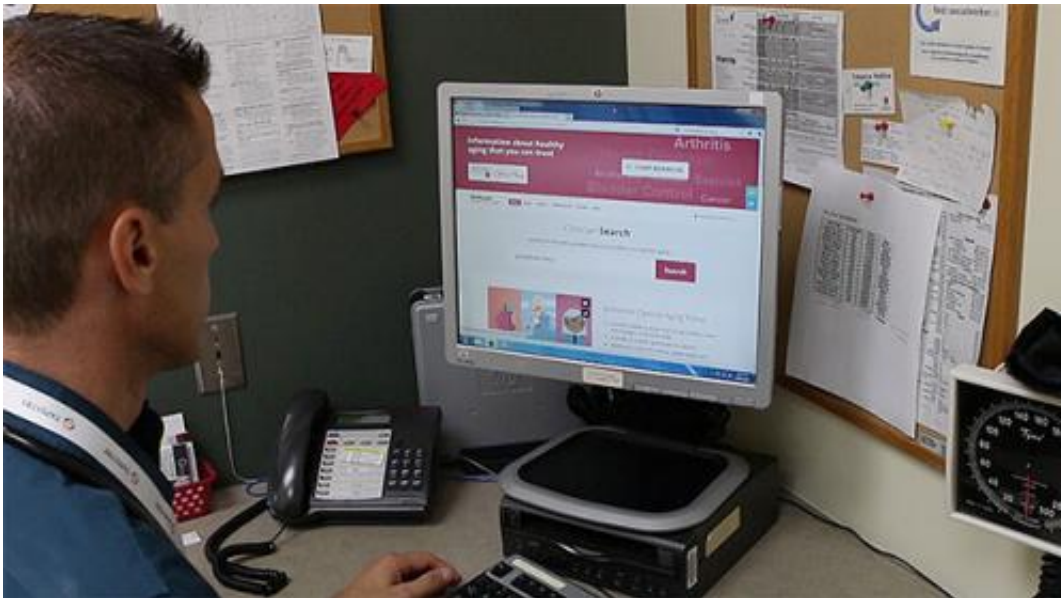


# Optimal aging portal is the 'Rotten Tomatoes' of health advice

October 2 2014

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Dr. Doug Oliver, associate professor of medicine, uses the new McMaster Optimal Aging Portal. The new website uses evidence summaries, blog posts and web resource ratings to present health information in an easy-to-understand way.

Canada's seniors are increasingly turning to the web to self-diagnose illnesses and maladies – without a clear understanding of whether the information they're relying on can be trusted.

That will all change today with the launch of the McMaster [Optimal Aging Portal](#): a go-to place for Canadians to find quality [health](#) and medical [information](#) on senior life.

The website brings together research evidence about clinical, [public health](#) and [health systems](#) questions and presents it in an easy-to-understand way.

Key features include evidence summaries, blog posts and web resource ratings, which help to sort through the masses of other resources available online.

Anthony Levinson compared the ratings system to that of popular sites like Rotten Tomatoes, which aggregate user ratings of things like movies.

"There are many other online resources that deal with health and aging available, but what sets the Optimal Aging Portal apart from the crowd is its emphasis on providing only the best evidence, and telling you why it's considered the best," said Levinson, an associate professor of psychiatry who leads the design and development of the website and holds the John R. Evans Chair in Health Sciences Educational Research and Instructional Development.

"The portal filters out the noise and makes it easy to understand how scientific evidence and other types of information can help you. We've become like the Rotten Tomatoes of [health information](#)."

Suzanne Labarge, McMaster's Chancellor, has a keen interest in ensuring the public has access to information that can promote healthy aging. In 2012 she gave \$10 million to the University to establish the Labarge Optimal Aging Initiative.

"With the web you don't know who to believe and who to trust. There is so much misleading information around and, frankly, a lot of people are selling snake oil. You really want to know you're doing something good for yourself, not something stupid. We decided having a trusted source

would be really important as part of the Initiative."

To help the public learn more about the portal, two online discussions are planned. The first webinar on Oct. 15 from 3 to 4 p.m. will focus on showing citizens how to use the portal's various features to find information on issues and health concerns. The second webinar on Oct. 21, also at 3 p.m., will focus on how the content of the portal is evaluated, and specifically on the web resources ratings. Information on registration may be found at [www.mcmasterhealthforum.org](http://www.mcmasterhealthforum.org)

The [portal](http://www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org) may be found at [www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org](http://www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org). The site is already the premier health resource found on the home page of the Government of Canada's online source for seniors at [www.seniors.gc.ca](http://www.seniors.gc.ca).

**More information:** The portal may be found at [www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org](http://www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org).

Provided by McMaster University

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