

20. Be smart about pain advice: What to trust on social media?

Elisa, 37, had been struggling with recurring neck pain after the birth of her second child. Between sleepless nights and carrying her baby, her shoulders felt tense all the time. She wanted quick answers, but her schedule left little room for appointments. So, like many others, she turned to social media.

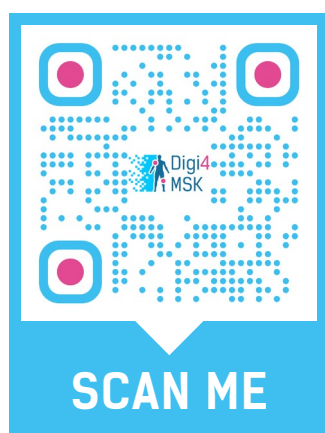
Her feed quickly filled with advice: one influencer promised *"a one-minute stretch to cure neck pain forever"* another warned that her pain came from *"toxins in the lymphatic system"* while a third claimed she needed to *"release emotional blockages"* to heal. Each video looked convincing—friendly faces, catchy music, clear instructions. Elisa saved them all.

Over the next weeks, she tried every tip she saw online: massages with spoons, ice showers, stretching while holding her breath, and even a posture corrector sold in a livestream. Some things helped briefly, others made her feel worse. When she asked about it in a parenting forum, replies flooded in—everyone swore by something different.

One night, scrolling through yet another post claiming to *"fix pain instantly"* Elisa stopped. She realized she no longer knew which information to trust. *"How can I tell who actually knows what they're talking about?"*, she wondered.

She did not want to stop looking for help online—but she wanted to know how to do it safely, without getting lost in so many opinions.

Be smart about pain advice: What to trust on social media?



Skills you can build by watching the video:

- Learning how to tell the difference between reliable and misleading pain advice online.
- Understanding why some health content on social media can be biased or based on personal opinion.
- Recognizing signs of trustworthy sources—qualified professionals, scientific evidence, and transparency.
- Feeling confident about using the internet safely to support, not replace, professional healthcare.

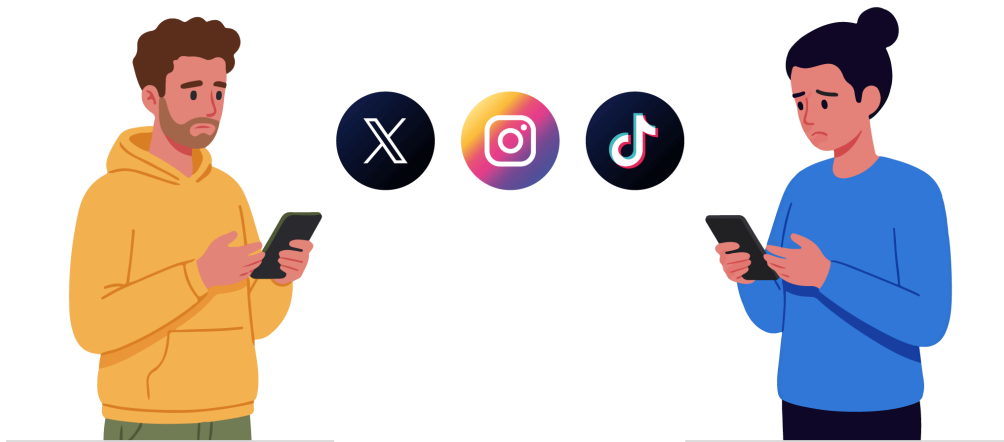
YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/FZXnVyZ8vGY>

20.1. Why does not “popular” always mean best for your health?

1. **Anyone can post anything:** Social media is open to everyone. This means anyone can share health tips, even if they do not have any medical training or proof that what they are saying actually works.
2. **No fact-checking:** Unlike healthcare professionals or scientific journals, social media posts are not checked by experts. What you see, often has not been tested or proven to be true or safe.
3. **Risk of harm:** Following bad advice can lead to real problems. You might waste money on things that do not work, delay getting the actual help you need, or even try something that makes your pain worse.
4. **Hidden motives:** Many influencers are paid to promote products (like supplements, special diets, or equipment) or to get you to sign up for their own paid programs. Their main goal might be to sell something, not necessarily to give you the best medical advice.

20.2. How to spot reliable health advice online?

1. **Who is this person?** Do they have real medical training (like a doctor, physical therapist, or registered nurse)? Are they licensed? Be wary of someone who just calls themselves an “expert”, “specialist” or “coach” without clear, recognized credentials.
2. **Is it “too good to be true”?** Be very cautious of claims about “quick fixes,” “secret cures,” or promises that everyone will be pain-free overnight. Real pain management takes time and effort.
3. **Is it based on science or stories?** Good health advice is based on solid research, not just one person’s amazing story. If they only show “before and after” photos or testimonials without mentioning studies, be sceptical.
4. **Are they selling something?** If the advice always pushes a specific product, supplement, discount code, or paid program, be extra careful. There might be a hidden motive.
5. **Do they badmouth doctors?** Be cautious of influencers who claim doctors are hiding information or that traditional medicine is a conspiracy. This often suggests they are promoting unproven alternatives.



Takeaway messages:

Your doctor, physical therapist, or other licensed healthcare professional is your best source for personalized, safe, and effective pain management advice. If you find something online that sounds interesting or makes you curious, please **bring it up at your next appointment!** You can talk about it together and figure out if it is right for you. Your well-being is our top priority.