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New app to help Australians make smarter health decisions

Each week in Australia, more than 12 million people search the internet for health and medical information, yet 78%* of these visits land on overseas websites where there is no guarantee that the information is clinically sound or appropriate to the Australian health system.

In response, Healthdirect Australia is today launching the healthdirect app, a free mobile application with three key tools to help Australians make health decisions safely, quickly and easily.

You can check your symptoms and receive advice on what action to take next, find a local health service at the touch of a button regardless of where you are in the country, and search for trusted information sourced from Australia's leading health organisations.

The healthdirect app also displays latitude and longitude coordinates which can be relayed to emergency service operators – this is especially useful in emergency situations where people may be in an unfamiliar place or a rural location with no obvious landmarks.

“We understand that people want information quickly and easily, particularly when it comes to their health. Our new app provides that advice to people right in their pocket or purse. It has undergone a strict quality assurance process so people can be confident the information is safe, appropriate and relevant,” said Anton Donker, General Manager, Digital Services at Healthdirect Australia.

The new app is backed by the governments of Australia with NSW Health Minister Jillian Skinner commenting: “The NSW health system is focussed on providing the right care in the right place at the right time.

“healthdirect is a vital resource which provides professional advice and reassurance to families and individuals about the most appropriate response to medical concerns. Most importantly, healthdirect helps reduce stressful and unnecessary visits to hospital emergency departments.”

The app, which is compatible with both iPhone and Android devices, was developed as an extension to the existing healthdirect service, consisting of a website and helpline, which is used by millions of Australians each year.

“Our decision to invest in a mobile app was made easy by the increasing number of Australians moving to mobile as their preferred communication platform. It's a natural evolution to our healthdirect service, as our core role is to help people manage their own health through use of innovative technology. It is the combination of these three things in one app that people have really been after”, Mr Donker said.

“If an individual is looking for reliable advice when they or someone close to them isn't feeling their best, if they need to locate the nearest open GP or pharmacy, or they just want to be prepared for an emergency situation, we encourage them to download the healthdirect app and take that first step towards making smarter health decisions,” Mr Donker said.

Search for 'healthdirect' at either the iPhone or Android app store and download the free app today.

Ends

Notes to editors:

About Healthdirect Australia

Healthdirect Australia is a publicly funded company, established to provide all Australians with access to trusted health information and advice, when and where they need it. We deliver a number of health services, including healthdirect - trusted, quality health information and advice online and over the phone. For more information visit: www.healthdirect.gov.au.

About the healthdirect app

The healthdirect app brings together the tools people need to make informed decisions about their health and can give people confidence to make the right health decision for themselves and their family, wherever they are in Australia:

Symptom checking capability - The healthdirect app includes a Symptom Checker tool which guides people through a set of questions to help them better understand their symptoms and receive advice on what to do next, whether it is self-care or seeing a health professional.

Find a health service - The healthdirect app puts the most comprehensive directory of Australian health services at people's fingertips, to help them easily find the service they need, when they need it.

Search for trusted information - All information in the healthdirect app is sourced from Australia's leading health organisations and has undergone a quality assurance process so people can be assured it is safe, appropriate and relevant for Australians. It complies with Healthdirect Australia's Clinical Governance Framework.

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*SOURCE: Tracking data from www.hitwise.com