This is a Brief Online Learning Tutorial (or BOLT) brought to you by the LISTEN project, a HRSA funded project focusing on improving the information literacy competencies of nursing students and professional nurses.
It is imperative that nurses have the most current, up to date information, and resources available. Evidence-based nursing practice requires resources with the most recent clinical treatments, medications, evidence, quality and safety guidelines in order to provide optimal patient care.
The quality and safety of patient care relies on accurate and current information. This is why it is especially important for practicing nurses to be able to evaluate print and Internet resources for current and timely information.
Currency is determined by how current and up to date the information is within the resource. The following information will provide questions and criteria for evaluating the currency of resources, both Internet and print.
To determine currency first determine when the website was updated. The date should be visible and a signature noted. This information is usually at the bottom of the web page and appears in a similar format as the example presented. Also check whether this is done regularly by going through other pages within the same site. It is important to know how often a website is updated for current clinical information. Is it updated yearly, monthly, weekly, or daily? Frequent updates are necessary for clinical information.
Always determine if a book or journal article are current and up to date. For books this involves looking for a date on the title page. Most often this is near the publisher’s name. Journals will contain a volume and year of publication. Most often this is near the publisher’s name. Many times a book may not be the most current resource, due to the length of time involved with publishing. However; a book may have a numerous editions and is considered a standard or classic text on the topic. A standard or classical text may be a good place to start if background information is needed. Due to the publication lag time, it is important to utilize the current online journals and other evidence-based resources for patient care. Textbooks are great resources but be mindful of this publication time frame and know that additional, current resources may necessary.
Also remember the year may indicate a timely source, but, a review of the content within the resource is also necessary to determine if the data and information is truly up to date and current. Evidenced-based nursing practice requires the most current information for safe, quality patient care.
Always determine the currency of the information. Up to date information is critical for high quality and safe evidenced-based nursing practice. Out of date treatment information could endanger patient safety. Be mindful of when the information was created and decide whether it still has value.
Continue to visit the LISTEN website, at listenuphealth.org, for more helpful tips on using technology and seeking, evaluating, and applying information in nursing to support evidence-based nursing practice.
Developed by
Samantha B. Miles MSN, RN
LISTEN Clinical Champion

This project is supported by funds from the Division of Nursing (DN), Bureau of Health Professions (BHP), HRSA, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any official endorsement be inferred by, the DN, BHP, HRSA, DHHS, or the US Government.