Google Introduces Google Health
Category : Living Well
Published by Chapster **on 2008/6/1**

In my efforts to lose a couple of tons of excess weight, I signed up for one of Google's newest children, Google Health. It allows you to store your medical records online.

Initially, I felt some caution about putting this stuff on the internet. But I judged the pros to outweigh the cons in my effort to be healthier.

What can you do with Google Health? First, with cutting edge facilities (like Cleveland Clinic) you can import your medical records into your Google Health profile.

You can also create a summary of your medical history (previous procedures), your current medications, test results (like your cholesterol tests, blood pressure, etc.), immunizations, and conditions that you've had. Based on your medications, the web site offers drug interaction warnings.

Google Health is still in development: That is, it is still a beta project. But, even now there is a tremendous amount of value to recommend it's use by our visitors. Enrolling is as simple as setting up an account with Google Health (go to the link we cite several times in this article).

Why should you enroll? Because health is ever changing and you never know when you''ll be confronted by an emergency. Knowing what medications you're taking and in what amounts as well as the conditions and allergies you have is essential to insuring you get the best possible care. You can't depend on your memory or worse yet, the memory of a loved one. With Google Health you have medical records available in an instant even if you're far away from home.

Additionally, when you have to go in for a procedure, all your records are in one place and easily accessed. I recently had to do this when I had yet another kidney stone (I've had over 21 of them). I didn't enjoy having to repeat or rewrite every thing I was taking, every surgery I've ever had and every condition I've experienced at every doctor.

I have set up my own account and am already using it. My wife will have access to it in case of emergency.

There are still some improvements to come. Indeed, I made several suggestions myself within the past hours to developers. You can see can see my comments to the developers on the next page if you are interested. Check it out!

Thanks for offering Google Health. I think it's an interface whose time has come. I am writing an article on it for my website, ElderHope.com, as I write these comments.

First, can I suggest that on the medication records you include a place to record the prescription number? Some medical items like inhalers don't have a label on the outside so having a place to record the prescription number would be great.

Indeed, if prescription refills could be ordered from within Google Health via partnering health providers, that would be a win for everybody.

Third, on the test results, there is a spot for recording not just the test results but the desirable range (such as total cholesterol less than 200). But, there is no way to add results to that box set up for desirable results nor is it auto-populated. Could it be auto-populated?

Fourth, on the medications area, it would be helpful to add the dosage amount. Physicians are always going to ask that.

As an employee at Baylor Hamilton Heart and Vascular Hospital, I am pleased to see the development taking place by Google.

Thanks,

Mike Davis

PS. As I think about the above comments and my recent experiences with my kidney stone, I think it would be awesome if Google would take a lead in developing a standardized medical chart which facilities, practices and health care systems would embrace. We would be able to save reams of trees and tons of paper and enormous amounts of time. I suspect it won't be under the Christmas tree next Holiday Season, though. ■