



# Wired to the World

by Ralph Lee Scott

## Online *Rx* Information

**H**ave you ever had a patron come up to the reference desk with a prescription in hand and ask for "something about my drugs?" While a quick grab of the PDR (*Physician's Desk Reference*) is sometimes effective, newer and more patron friendly sources can be found on the Internet.

A good place to start is *RxList* at <[www.rxlist.com](http://www.rxlist.com)>. *RxList* list is linked to <[www.HealthCentral.com](http://www.HealthCentral.com)> which is run by "The Good Neighbor Pharmacy," a group of some 2,000 local pharmacies in the United States. At *RxList* — "The Internet Drug Index," you can search for prescription and OTC (Over the Counter) drug information by key word or NDC (National Drug Code) index. On the *RxList* home page there is an "Alternative Medicine FAQ," an "RxBoard" (drug specific discussion group), a "Health News" bulletin board featuring Dr. Dean, a "Patient Education" quick link to summary drug information, a disclaimer link "About *RXLIST*," a very brief user survey, an extensive list of medical information Web links, and finally a section of comics with pharmacist humor entitled "RXLAUGH." This last section of humor can get rather crude and I would be careful in suggesting it to patrons!

Searching *RxList* for information on the drug Halcion, one finds links to patient information on Benzodiazepine Halcion, as well as a fuzzy logic link to *Haley's M O FLV!* (Well I suppose someone could misspell Halcion for *Haley's MO*). Also listed are links to Hyalgan and Halog. When you go to the links on Halcion, you find answers to questions such as: "What do triazolam tablets do?"; "What should my health care professional know before I take ...?"; "How should I take this medicine?"; "What if I miss a dose?"; "What other medicines interact with ...?"; "What side effects may I notice from taking ...?"; "What do I need to watch for while I take ...?"; and "Where can I keep my medicine?"

If you link to the generic name for Halcion, you get a more detailed listing of Triazolam. Under the generic link, you will find the categories assigned to the drug (including DEA controlled substance class), brand names, estimated cost of the drug, description, clinical pharmacology, indications and usage, contraindications, warnings, precautions, drug interactions, drug abuse and dependence information, overdose, dosage and administration, and patient package insert information. In short, a much more detailed (in fact,

eleven printed pages) listing than one gets on the "Brand Name" link.

The authors of *RxList* hope that you will click next on their link to "Health Central" where you can order the prescription (or more correctly, your doctor can order it for you). At "Health Central" you can order the usual variety of health, personal care, vitamin supplement, beauty, prescription and "parenting" products. Weekly specials are listed along with product graphics. As mentioned, this site is sponsored by The Good Neighbor Pharmacy group. Other drug chains sponsor Web sites: RiteAid <[www.drugstore.com](http://www.drugstore.com)>; CVS <[www.cvs.com](http://www.cvs.com)>; Eckerd <[www.eckerd.com](http://www.eckerd.com)>; Walgreen <[www.walgreen.com](http://www.walgreen.com)>; DrugEmporium <[www.drugemporium.com](http://www.drugemporium.com)>; American Drug Stores [OSCO] <[www.osco.com](http://www.osco.com)>; World Drug Store <[www.worlddrugstore.com](http://www.worlddrugstore.com)>; and Medicap Drugs <[www.medicap.com](http://www.medicap.com)>. Most of these sites have been reviewed by "Trust-E" and provide some basic minimal level of privacy for your pharmacy records.

*RxList* also provides an online ad and a link to "Clinical Pharmacology Online" at a site called the "Integrated Medical Curriculum" located at <[www.imc.gsm.com](http://www.imc.gsm.com)> which bills itself as the "Finest Collection of Medical Information Online." While portions of this site appear to be free, users are requested to register and get a password after initial use. Yes, there is a use category for "non-medical professional," which I guess covers us chickens and most library patrons. "Clinical Pharmacology Online" provides in depth medical and pharmacological information on drugs. Sections include description, mechanism of action, pharmacokinetics, indications, dosage, contraindications/precautions, drug interactions, adverse reactions, costs, drug monitoring, product identification, and classification overview.

EBSCO host, available through NC LIVE, has several databases with medical information: *Health Sources Plus*, *Clinical Reference System*, and the *USP DI Volume II — Advice for the Patient* (United States Pharmacopeia), which provide some basic pharmacological information. The Web sites listed above are generally more comprehensive, and patrons do not have to come to the library to get the information. There is the added benefit of having the prescription delivered to your door. Just avoid the crude humor links at <[www.RxList.com](http://www.RxList.com)>.

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