**Experts’ Guidelines for Writing Answers**

Welcome! As a Sharecare expert, you play a critical role in sharing important health information with millions of online users. Following the guidelines below will help save you time in creating answers that are clear, engaging and ready to publish.

**1. Writing Do’s and Don’ts**

***Do:***

* Know the Sharecare audience: mostly women, age 35+
* Write for a 6th-to 8th-grade reading level.
* Use a friendly, conversational tone. The Sharecare voice is that of a trusted, knowledgeable friend.
* Put the most relevant info in the first two sentences.
* Check character counts: Answers must be 500 to 2500 characters, including spaces. *Ideal target range:* 500-1750 characters
* Avoid medical jargon. Use simple language that the average layperson can understand.
* Answer the question completely. Be concise, but cover the topic.
* Use bulleted or numbered lists, as appropriate.
* Answer existing questions whenever possible. Adding additional answers to a single question boosts SEO value and, by adding more voices to the conversation, provides better context for the user. Please limit your answers to questions within your specialty.
* Address the reader directly. Use “you” and “your” instead of “the patient.”
* Make sure your answer is 100% original.
* Write so that each answer can stand alone.
* Maintain a professional tone. Avoid disparaging remarks toward other healthcare specialties or professions.
* If you have a commercial interest in any products, tests or treatments you discuss in the answer—for example, if your company produces a supplement you're recommending—please say so in the answer
* When citing a study, please include the PubMed source whenever possible—it helps our fact-checkers.

***Don’t:***

* Include brand names or products.
* Recommend specific dosages of medications or supplements.
* Mention personal web sites (government health sites are OK).
* Talk over the user’s head.
* Copy text verbatim from another blog or web site, even if it’s your own. Using text from elsewhere online creates duplicate content issues and hurts both sides in SEO.

**3. Sample Answers**

***Not This:***

Q. How is angina diagnosed?  
A. Doctors use a combination of exam, medical history and testing to diagnose stable angina. A diagnosis of stable angina often begins with a physical exam and a discussion of your medical history and symptoms. Then, one or more tests may be used for diagnosis. Among other tests, X-rays, computerized tomography scans (CT scans) and echocardiograms are used to make an image of the heart, while electrocardiograms and stress tests measure how well the heart is functioning. Blood tests can also provide data to help with diagnosis.

The symptoms of unstable and variant angina -- such as sudden pain or pressure in the chest and shortness of breath -- are similar to the symptoms of a heart attack. Both of these are conditions needing emergency medical attention and are often diagnosed in the hospital when people go to the emergency room for care. An electrocardiogram (ECG) gives doctors information about the electrical signal that tells your heart to beat. Irregularities in this electrical signal can show that you are having a heart attack, rather than an episode of angina.

***But This:***Q. How is angina diagnosed?  
A. To diagnose angina, your doctor will begin by performing a physical exam and asking questions about your medical history and symptoms. He or she may use a variety of tests to help confirm the diagnosis. These tests may include x-rays, computerized tomography scans (CT scans) and echocardiograms, which create pictures of the heart. Electrocardiograms and stress tests may also be used to see how well your heart is functioning. In addition, your doctor may order blood tests to measure levels of heart enzymes in the blood.

**4. Style and Format**Sharecare follows the *Chicago Manual of Style.* A few reminders:

* Single space between sentences
* Double line between paragraphs
* Italicize titles of books, magazines, newspapers and movies.
* Avoid underlines and boldface type.
* No serial commas. Example: Avoid foods with sugar, too much salt, artificial colors and hydrogenated oils.  (No comma before “and”)
* Limit ALL CAPS to acronyms.
* Lowercase all medical conditions except for those that include proper nouns. Examples: tuberculosis, hypothyroidism, Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease
* When citing a group, first give the organization’s complete name, followed by the acronym in parentheses. Example: **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).** Then use the acronym in the remainder of your answer. Please follow this convention for each answer you write. Each answer must be able to stand on its own.

**5. Medical Review**Our medical review team reviews all answers prior to publication and periodically thereafter. Please note that Sharecare reserves the right to reject, remove or request revisions to answers for any reason, including those that contain:

* inaccurate or out-of-date information
* claims not supported by medical evidence
* advice outside a contributor’s area of expertise
* unfair criticisms of other experts or specialties

**6. If You Get Stuck**For technical assistance, please visit [User Support](http://www.sharecare.com/static/help) and click “Submit A Request.”

*-Updated 7/20/15*