



Best Practices for Designing Medication Websites

In this guide, we'll share best practices for designing medication websites for both patients and healthcare professionals (HCPs) based on years of research conducted by the AnswerLab team.



Improving experiences with pharma medication websites

Brand medication websites can be a valuable resource for both patients and healthcare professionals (HCPs) seeking information about medications that treat or manage certain conditions. However, these sites often fall short of their potential because the needs of patients and HCPs aren't taken into consideration, resulting in websites that frustrate users.

AnswerLab has conducted a range of research studies for pharmaceutical clients to help understand what patients and HCPs want on medication websites. Based on our experiences, we've created a set of best practices that can help pharmaceutical companies deliver better user experiences for both patients and HCPs.

Designing Medication Websites for Patients

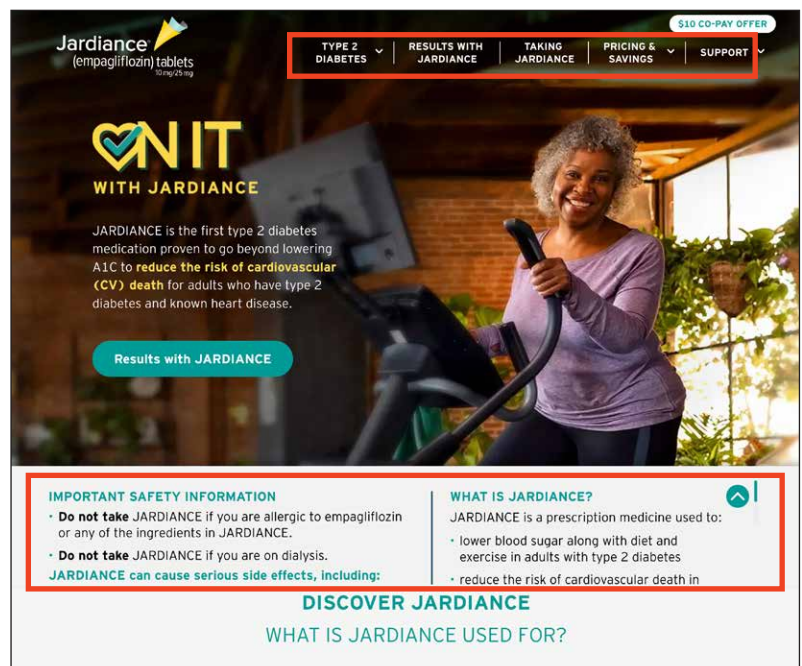
Pharmaceutical company brand websites for medications can be useful resources, both for prospective patients looking for medications that can help with their conditions and for current patients seeking information about the medication they are taking.

Organize the site around information patients need

Patients are often looking for specific types of information when they come to your site. To simplify their experience, organize your content and navigation into specific categories that match the information they're looking for.

We recommend creating sections about the following topics and questions:

- How the medication works and its efficacy
- Side effects and safety
- How to take the medication
- Drug interactions and long-term risks
- Paying for the medication, including insurance coverage and costs
- Patient stories and experiences



Jardiance's website highlights important safety information, side effects, explanations on how to take the medication, and pricing and savings in easy-to-find locations on their homepage. | [Jardiance.com](https://www.jardiance.com)

Provide clear pathways to answer patients' top questions directly on the homepage

Focus the homepage on answering prospective patients' key questions about how the medication is better than others they may have tried, what makes it unique or different, and how well it works. In addition to the navigation, provide calls to action on the homepage that lead to pages that answer these key questions.

The screenshot shows the Otezla (apremilast) homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'FOR US AUDIENCES ONLY', 'IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION', 'FULL PRESCRIBING INFORMATION', and 'HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS'. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with links for 'HOME', 'PLAQUE PSORIASIS', 'ABOUT OTEZLA', 'STARTING OTEZLA', 'SIDE EFFECTS', 'SUPPORT & SAVINGS', 'PAYING FOR OTEZLA', and 'ABOUT PLAQUE PSORIASIS'. The main content area features a large image of a smiling woman in a yellow dress. Overlaid on this image is a yellow box with the text 'Discover a choice you can make with Otezla' and a pill icon. Below this is a blue button labeled 'BENEFITS OF OTEZLA >'. To the right of the image is a section titled 'Otezla is for adult patients with plaque psoriasis' with a list of 'APPROVED USES'. Below the image is a section titled 'Otezla is the first and only pill approved by the FDA to treat all severities of plaque psoriasis—mild, moderate, and severe.' with a button labeled 'RESULTS WITH OTEZLA >'. To the right of this section is a section titled 'IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION' with text about allergic reactions and severe diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting.

Otezla® (apremilast) ORAL PILLS

FOR US AUDIENCES ONLY | IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION | FULL PRESCRIBING INFORMATION | HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

1-844-4OTEZLA | \$0 CO-PAY* OFFER

HOME | PLAQUE PSORIASIS | ABOUT OTEZLA | STARTING OTEZLA | SIDE EFFECTS | SUPPORT & SAVINGS | PAYING FOR OTEZLA | ABOUT PLAQUE PSORIASIS

Discover a choice you can make with Otezla

It's a pill—not an injection, biologic, or cream

BENEFITS OF OTEZLA >

Benefits of Otezla for PSORIATIC ARTHRITIS >

Benefits of Otezla for ORAL ULCERS IN BEHÇET'S DISEASE >

Otezla is for adult patients with plaque psoriasis

APPROVED USES

Otezla® (apremilast) is a prescription medicine used to treat adult patients with:

- Plaque psoriasis for whom phototherapy or systemic therapy is appropriate.
- Active psoriatic arthritis.
- Oral ulcers associated with Behçet's Disease.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

You must not take Otezla if you are allergic to apremilast or to any of the ingredients in Otezla.

Otezla can cause allergic reactions, sometimes severe. Stop using Otezla and call your healthcare provider or seek emergency help right away if you develop any of the following symptoms of a serious allergic reaction: trouble breathing or swallowing, raised bumps (hives), rash or itching, swelling of the face, lips, tongue, throat or arms.

Otezla can cause severe diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting, especially within the first few weeks of treatment. Use in elderly patients and the use of certain medications with Otezla

Otezla is the first and only pill approved by the FDA to treat all severities of plaque psoriasis—mild, moderate, and severe.

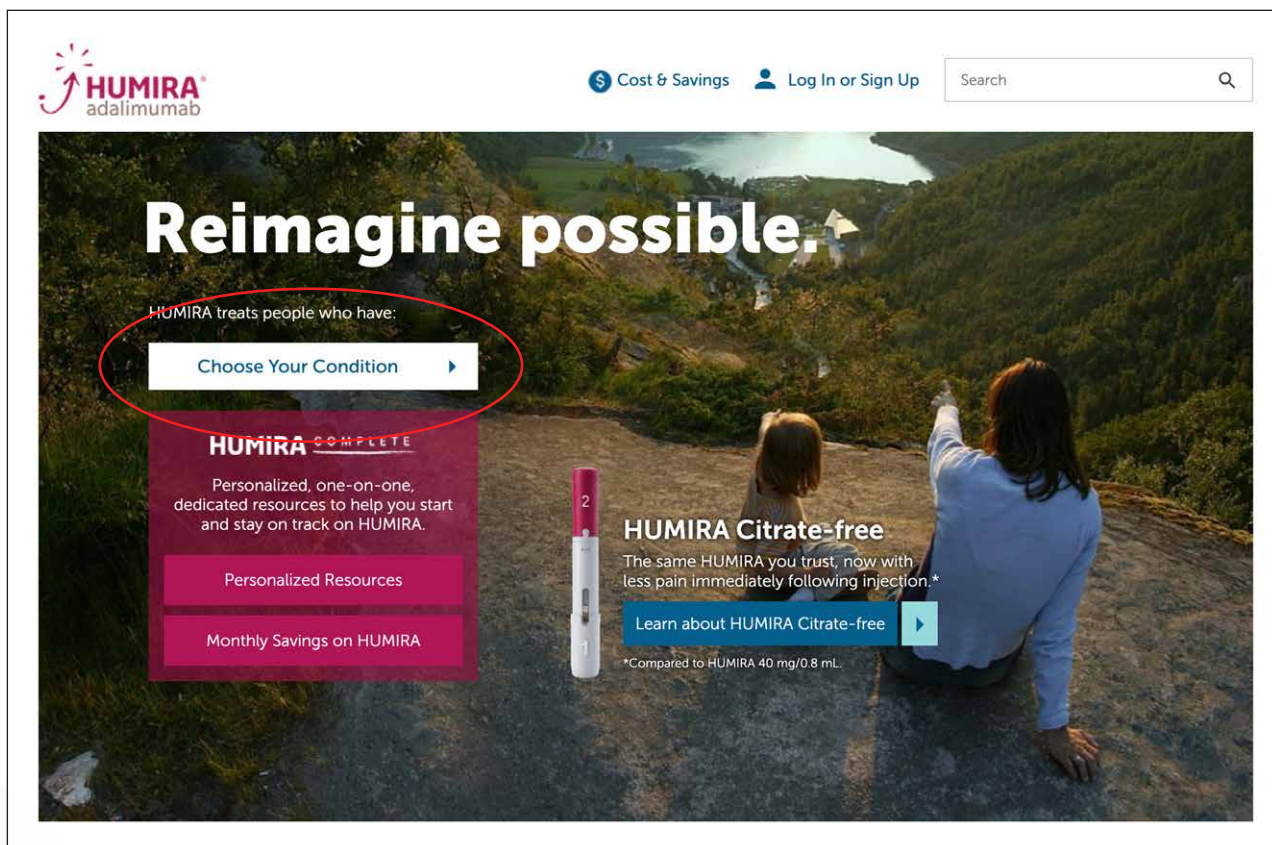
See Before and After photos of real patients getting real results with Otezla.

RESULTS WITH OTEZLA >

In this example, there are sections showing the benefits, short explanations of what makes Otezla different, approved uses, and more, clearly defined on the homepage. | *Otezla.com*

Use patient-friendly terminology

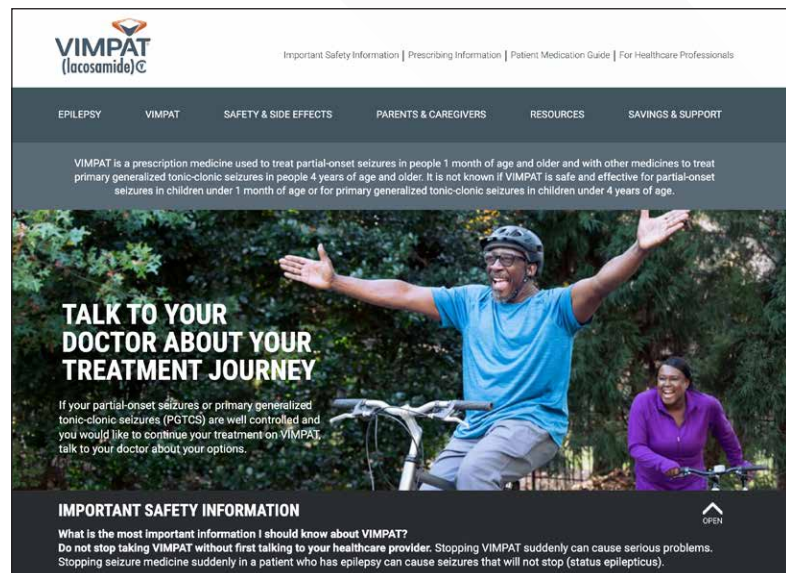
Avoid using medical jargon in the navigation labels. For example, for a medication that treats multiple medical conditions, avoid using the term “indications,” as most patients aren’t familiar with the term. Instead, use the term “medical conditions” or the names of the conditions themselves. In general, avoiding medical terminology when possible and using patient-friendly, clear language helps visitors find what they need.



On Humira’s website, the homepage features a dropdown for “Choose Your Condition” to allow patients to select their condition to learn more. | *Humira.com*

Use imagery that makes your site look credible *and* relatable

Include images of diverse patients. In multiple studies, we've heard patients express they wanted to hear patient stories from people like them – those around the same age, gender, race or ethnicity, and with similar medical conditions. Patients were generally turned off when they see that all of the patients featured were male, white, older, and out of shape.



This homepage shows positive photos of active people outdoors in natural contexts. | Vimpat.com

In one study, with a website that featured images of older people, middle-aged participants concluded that the medication was only aimed at older people already in poor health and wasn't for people like them. By providing photos and imagery of diverse groups of patients, you create a website that a variety of people can identify with.

Visually differentiate the Important Safety Information from other content on the page

On most medication websites, the full Important Safety Information (ISI) is displayed at the bottom of every page. Users occasionally scroll down the page and begin reading the ISI, assuming they're still reading the page content. To prevent this error, visually differentiate the ISI from the rest of the page content. This can be done by giving the ISI section a visual style that is distinguishable from the rest of the page content. This could be as simple as a unique background color and a prominent "Important Safety Information" heading at the top of this section.

Designing Medication Websites for Healthcare Professionals

Pharmaceutical company brand websites for medications can be useful resources for healthcare professionals (HCPs) checking dosing requirements, learning about the latest clinical trials, and getting insurance coverage resources for their patients.

How HCPs utilize medication websites

We've found that HCPs visit pharmaceutical company medication websites in two different modes: quick look up mode and research mode. Understanding these two use cases, HCPs' mindsets, the devices involved, and the information they seek, can help you design medication websites to facilitate information finding.



Quick Look Up Mode

In quick look up mode, HCPs need to find specific information about a medication, often in the middle of a busy workday during or between patient visits.

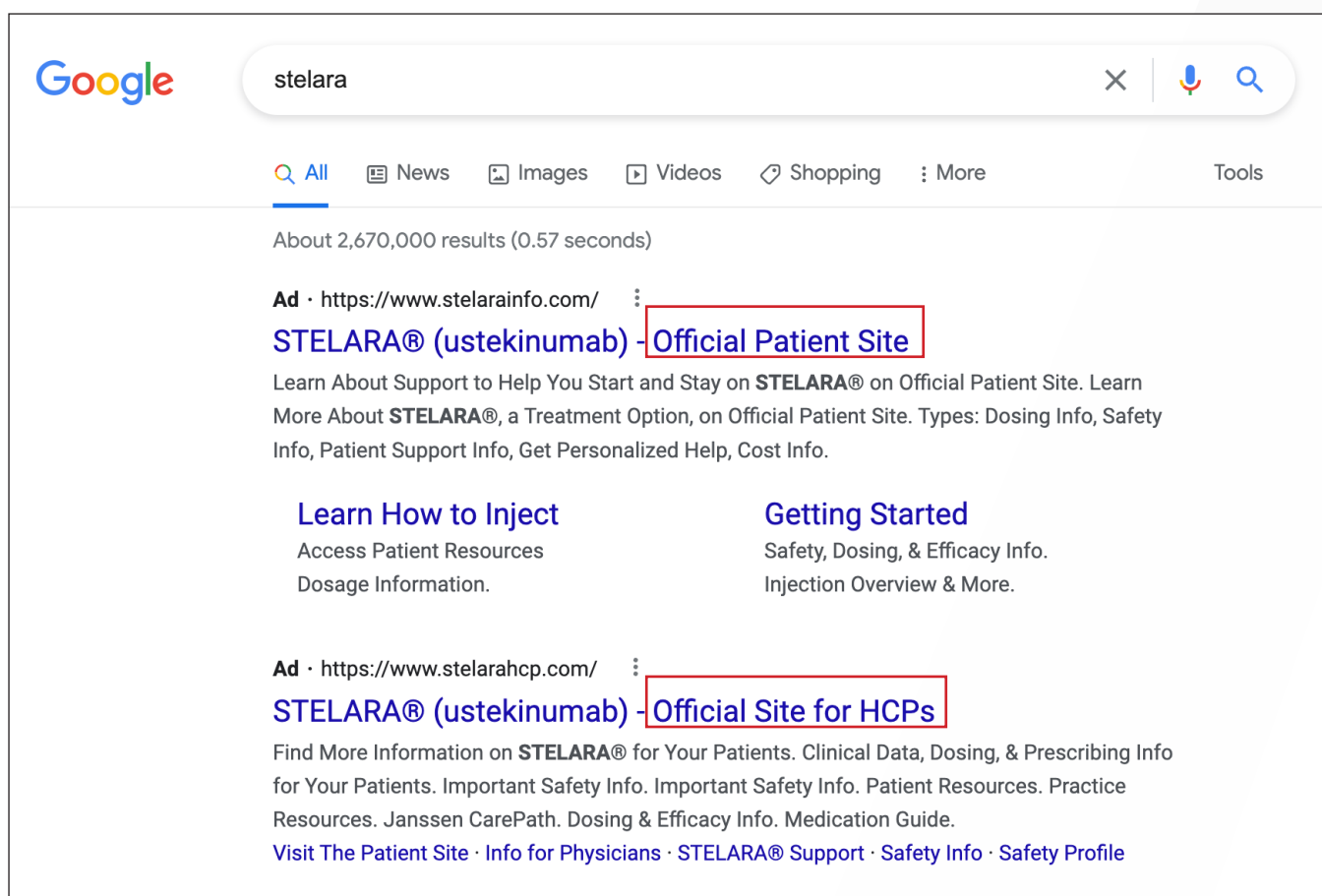


Research Mode

In research and learning mode, HCPs have more time to dive in and read about medications. They are typically in their office at a time when they're not seeing patients. This is when they take the time to learn about a new medication or about a new indication for an existing medication.

Make the website easy to find

A challenge for HCPs is finding the version of the medication website designed for them. This may sound inaccurate when you can easily Google the name of the medication, but often the first search result is an ad for the patient site, then a non-ad result for the patient site. Following those, it's usually links to pages about the medication on other sites like WebMD and Drugs.com. The link to the HCP website often appears far down the first or second page of search results. Making your website easier to find through better SEO practices or HCP specific ads can help.



The screenshot shows a Google search for "stelara". The search bar at the top contains "stelara" with a clear button (X) and a voice search button (microphone icon). Below the search bar are tabs for "All", "News", "Images", "Videos", "Shopping", and "More". The search results indicate "About 2,670,000 results (0.57 seconds)".

The first two results are advertisements:

- Ad · <https://www.stelarainfo.com/>**
STELARA® (ustekinumab) - Official Patient Site
Learn About Support to Help You Start and Stay on **STELARA®** on Official Patient Site. Learn More About **STELARA®**, a Treatment Option, on Official Patient Site. Types: Dosing Info, Safety Info, Patient Support Info, Get Personalized Help, Cost Info.
[Learn How to Inject](#)
Access Patient Resources
Dosage Information.
- Ad · <https://www.stelarahcp.com/>**
STELARA® (ustekinumab) - Official Site for HCPs
Find More Information on **STELARA®** for Your Patients. Clinical Data, Dosing, & Prescribing Info for Your Patients. Important Safety Info. Patient Resources. Practice Resources. Janssen CarePath. Dosing & Efficacy Info. Medication Guide.
[Visit The Patient Site](#) · [Info for Physicians](#) · [STELARA® Support](#) · [Safety Info](#) · [Safety Profile](#)

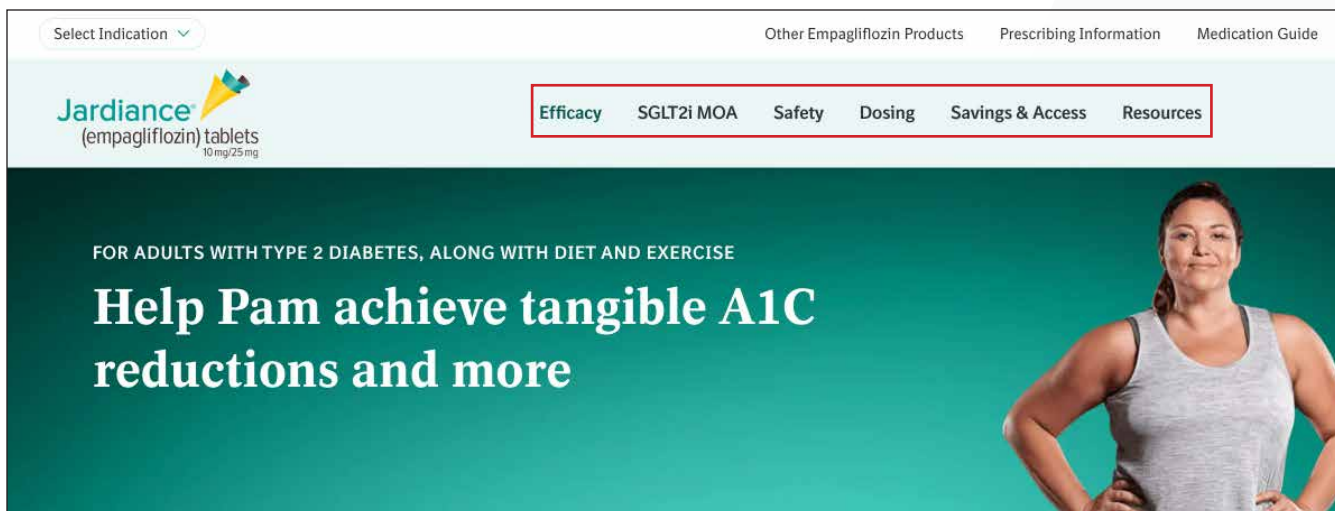
The two top search results for Stelara in Google are ads for the Official Patient Site and the Official Site for HCPs. | *Google.com*

Organize your site into sections healthcare professionals are familiar with

When learning about medications, healthcare professionals are used to reading through a standard set of topics that they encounter through journals, conferences, and medical resources. Mirroring those familiar topics in the site's information architecture and navigation helps HCPs understand the site at a glance, so they can easily find what they're looking for.

These topics are often presented in this order:

- Mechanism of Action
- Efficacy
- Safety
- Dosing
- Patient Support
- Contact

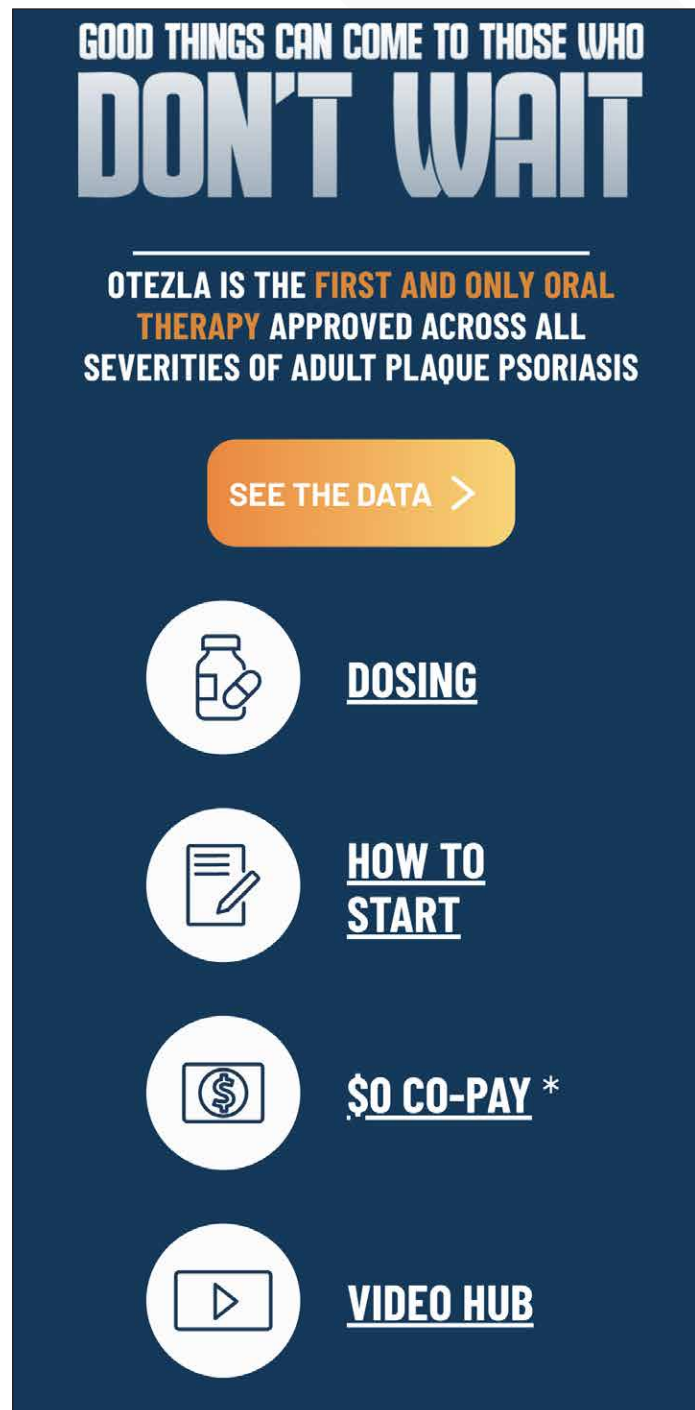


The navigation on Jardiance's HCP site follows this topic order with only slight variations, keeping information easy to find for HCPs. | pro.boehringer-ingelheim.com/us/products/jardiance/t2d/efficacy

On mobile, include links to the primary navigation menu items in the body of the homepage

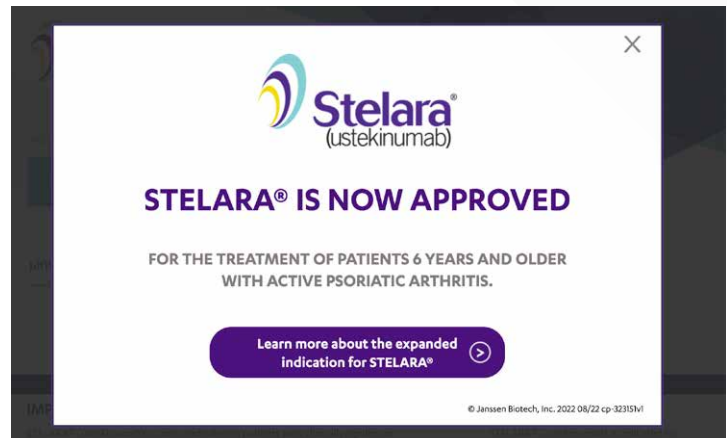
When accessing a site on their phones, HCPs often initially overlook hamburger menus and instead focus on the body of the homepage. When sites also display links to the primary menu items in the body of the homepage, users can find those links more quickly and easily. The site should still have the standard hamburger menu, but these links serve as an additional, sometimes more helpful way, to find information from the homepage.

On Otezla's mobile page for HCPs, this center section shows a number of big quick links to answer common questions and offer resources. | otezlapro.com



Highlight new information and updates about the medication on the homepage

Our research has found that HCPs appreciate reading new information about medications, such as new study data, new indications it's been approved for, or new administration devices. However, they expect to see that new information highlighted prominently on the homepage. They aren't normally going to browse the website to find that information—they expect it to be brought to their attention. The homepage is the best location to highlight that kind of new information.



A pop-up on stelarahcp.com shows a news update for expanded use of their medication.

About the author:



Jim Ross is a Principal UX Researcher at AnswerLab where he leads research to help his clients better understand their customers, in order to create experiences that people love. He has over 20 years of experience in UX research and design, is a frequent speaker at UX conferences, and is a prolific author for UX magazines and blogs. Check out more of Jim's work at answerlab.com/insights.



Get Started with UX Research

These best practices can help you design an effective medication site, but it's always important to check the usability and usefulness of your designs by conducting UX research and usability testing with your audience.

AnswerLab can help

AnswerLab provides enterprise user experience research services that deliver user insights at scale across every stage of product development. We leverage qualitative and quantitative UX research to get companies the firsthand insights that shape better products and better results at the scale and speed business demands.

Learn more by visiting our website:

AnswerLab.com/pharma-healthcare-ux-research