

Moms Internet Guide

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Hi, I'm Sarah. Welcome to Moms Internet Guide—the place to find straightforward answers to all your questions about the Web. There are so many great sites on the Internet that it's hard for me to keep up with my favorites. I probably have 20 bookmarks that I'd love to visit everyday, but I rarely have that kind of free time. Instead, I squeeze in my online browsing at lunch or after the kids go to bed. Luckily, I learned about RSS a few months ago. This technology lets you go to one place to read all the new headlines from your favorite websites. It's a bit like a TV guide for the Internet. Instead of randomly flipping through the channels, you can see what's going on, then click right through to the content that catches your eye. It saves me a lot of time because I don't have to check out the sites one at a time.

There are tons of websites that offer RSS, and you can subscribe to them for free. Imagine: all your favorite news outlets—CNN, *The New York Times*, *USA Today*®—automatically delivered to your desktop. Even many blogs offer this service, and you can subscribe to the latest health news at HealthExpressions.com. It's as easy as a few mouse clicks, and you can choose as many or few subscriptions as you like.

To get started, all you need is an RSS reader or aggregator. It's just a simple tool that lets you capture all those headlines. It's not any harder to use than email. I like Web-based readers, because I can access them from any computer. You just type in an Internet address, and your updates pop up on the page.

You might try www.google.com/reader. Or go to www.newsgator.com and click on “free online RSS reader” on the left. Both sites will walk you through the sign-up process and help you get started. You'll be reading personalized Web updates in minutes.

If you prefer to download software to your computer, there are still free choices—as well as low-cost options. Using these readers to keep track of your headlines is a lot like checking out your email with Outlook.

You can download my favorite free programs at www.feedreader.com and www.sharpreader.net.

Using online or desktop readers are my favorite options, but there are other ways to take advantage of RSS. You can add feeds to your My Yahoo!® or iGoogle™ home page, or subscribe through Outlook and even some Web browsers. Just take a look through your software's menu options to see what's available, or visit Google or Yahoo! for information on creating a customized home page.

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Once you've chosen a reader, all you need to do is start subscribing. Most sites that offer RSS will have a prominent link. You might see the term RSS or an invitation to subscribe to the site.

Sometimes there's also a small orange icon that stands for RSS. On the Health Expressions site, there's a symbol and invitation to subscribe to the Daily Buzz. Once you locate one of these links, you simply click on it to find out how to subscribe. There's usually a simple set of instructions that lets you start receiving updates to your reader right away. There are lots of options for organizing and managing your subscriptions, but it doesn't take long to get the hang of things. Plus, you're sure to save time no matter how you get your RSS feeds. I can check out the latest from all my favorite sites in just a few minutes—it's something I look forward to every day.

Sites to Try:

www.google.com/reader

www.newsgator.com

www.feedreader.com

www.sharpreader.net