

'How To' guide

There is a now vast amount of medical knowledge available on the Internet. The problem is unless you know what you're looking for or what your diagnosis is, it won't help very much. Isabel solves this problem by using Artificial Intelligence technology to help you narrow down your search to the most likely diagnoses.

The Isabel Symptom Checker is based on the professional Isabel Differential Diagnosis tool used by doctors around the world when they're unsure of a diagnosis. Isabel gives patients access to the most up-to-date and accurate information available online. Just feed in your symptoms (unlike most symptom checkers, you can put in as many symptoms as you wish) and Isabel will provide you with a list of the most likely diagnoses that could be the cause of those symptoms. Each diagnosis is linked to medical knowledge that you can read up on. Isabel isn't meant to replace your doctor. Instead, it will help you become more informed and, if necessary, have a more productive discussion with your doctor about your diagnosis.

This is a detailed 'How To' user guide explaining Isabel's various functions.

How to use Isabel?

What does Isabel do?

Isabel is designed to suggest a list of likely diagnoses based on your set of symptoms

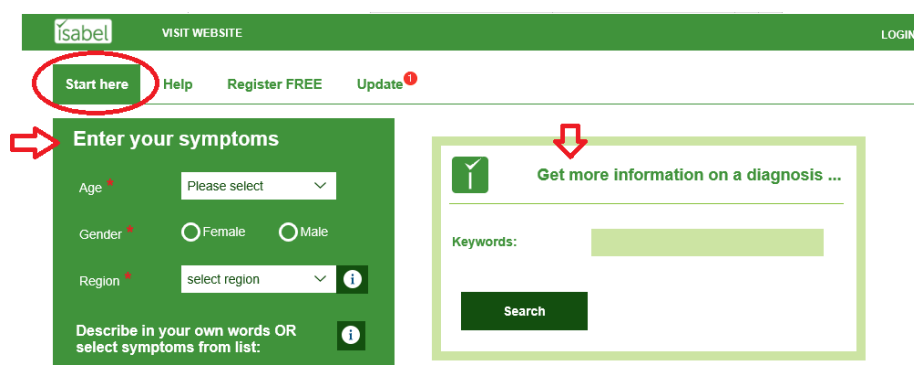
Where do I start?

The first screen is a landing page that offers 2 search options (see screen shot below).

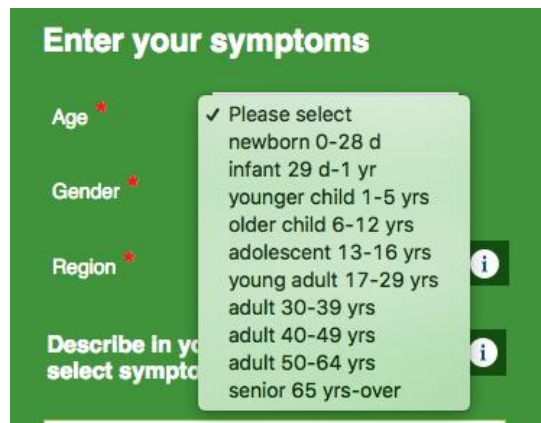
If you already know your diagnosis and just want to find additional information about it, use the right-hand box entitled 'Get more information on a diagnosis...'

If you are experiencing symptoms and wish to find the possible diagnoses that could be the cause of your symptoms, start with the left-hand box entitled 'Enter your symptoms'.

If, at any point, you want to start again – click on the 'Start Here' button on the top toolbar which will take you back to the landing page.



'Age' drop down box



Enter your symptoms

Age *

Gender *

Region *

Describe in your own words
select symptoms

- ✓ Please select
- newborn 0-28 d
- infant 29 d-1 yr
- younger child 1-5 yrs
- older child 6-12 yrs
- adolescent 13-16 yrs
- young adult 17-29 yrs
- adult 30-39 yrs
- adult 40-49 yrs
- adult 50-64 yrs
- senior 65 yrs-over

The age group field is required for all queries.

Gender buttons

You then need to specify a gender by clicking the relevant one.

If you are transgender this will depend on the medication or surgery you have undertaken and what stage you are at if you are undergoing gender reassignment. It may be best to run your symptoms in both genders and obtain a list which you can then discuss with your doctor depending on your own case history.

'Pregnancy option'

If you have selected female and the pregnancy option appears, you can leave it as 'unspecified'. However, your results may not be as relevant. If you do know you are pregnant, select 'pregnant' or are sure you are not pregnant then select, 'not pregnant' to obtain the most accurate results.



Enter your symptoms

Age *

Gender * Female Male

Pregnancy

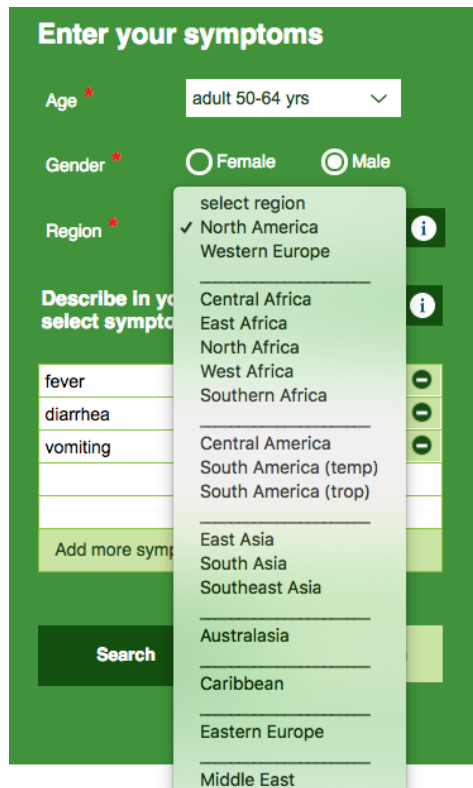
- ✓ Not specified
- not-pregnant
- pregnant

Region *

Region drop down box

This should be set for the region where you live, for example, living in the USA the region should be set for North America or if you live in Spain set it to Western Europe.

The system is set to pick up your country of registration but please check that it is set correctly.



Enter your symptoms

Age ^{*} adult 50-64 yrs

Gender ^{*} Female Male

Region ^{*}

- North America i
- Western Europe
- Central Africa i
- East Africa i
- North Africa
- West Africa
- Southern Africa
- Central America
- South America (temp)
- South America (trop)
- East Asia
- South Asia
- Southeast Asia
- Australasia
- Caribbean
- Eastern Europe
- Middle East

Describe in your own words OR select symptoms from list:

fever

diarrhea

vomiting

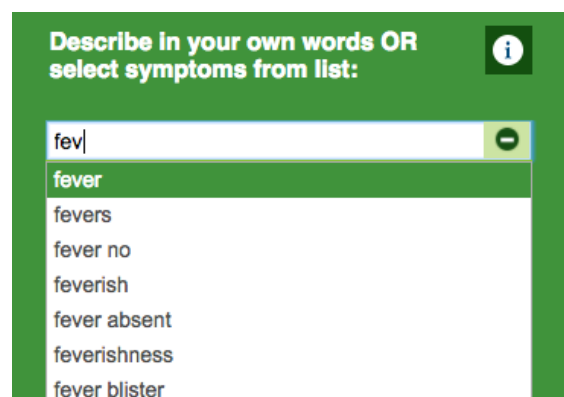
Add more symptoms

Search

If you have been abroad and become ill shortly after returning home, you may be affected by a disease more common in that region. This would be particularly likely if you have been to a tropical region. In this case, you can use this function to modify the results according to the region you have visited. If you have recently travelled to Kenya, for example, set the region to East Africa. The regions are those as defined by the World Health Organisation. This could be very important to mention to your doctor, as they may not have considered the fact you have travelled recently.

What symptoms can I type in?

You can enter any combination of symptoms or results of laboratory tests you may have had, as long as you describe them in words rather than numbers. It is best to place each symptom on a separate line by using the 'Enter' or 'Return' key to do this.



Describe in your own words OR select symptoms from list: i

fev

- fever
- fevers
- fever no
- feverish
- fever absent
- feverishness
- fever blister

You will see the predictive text function working after you type in the 3rd letter. This works very much like it does in Google. If you see what you want in that list then just click on it. If the word or phrase you want is not on the list then just type it in.

Simple rules for entering your symptoms:

1. Use medical terms as far as possible. “Abdominal pain” is better than “tummy hurts” for example.
2. Do not use numbers in the query box. If you have been given a test result, then enter into the system the meaning in words and not the numbers. For example, if you have been given a test result of blood pressure 160/100, then type in “high blood pressure”.
3. Enter only abnormal test results. Do not enter the ones you have been told are normal.
4. Check your spelling. If a word is mis-spelt, Isabel will highlight this on the results page.

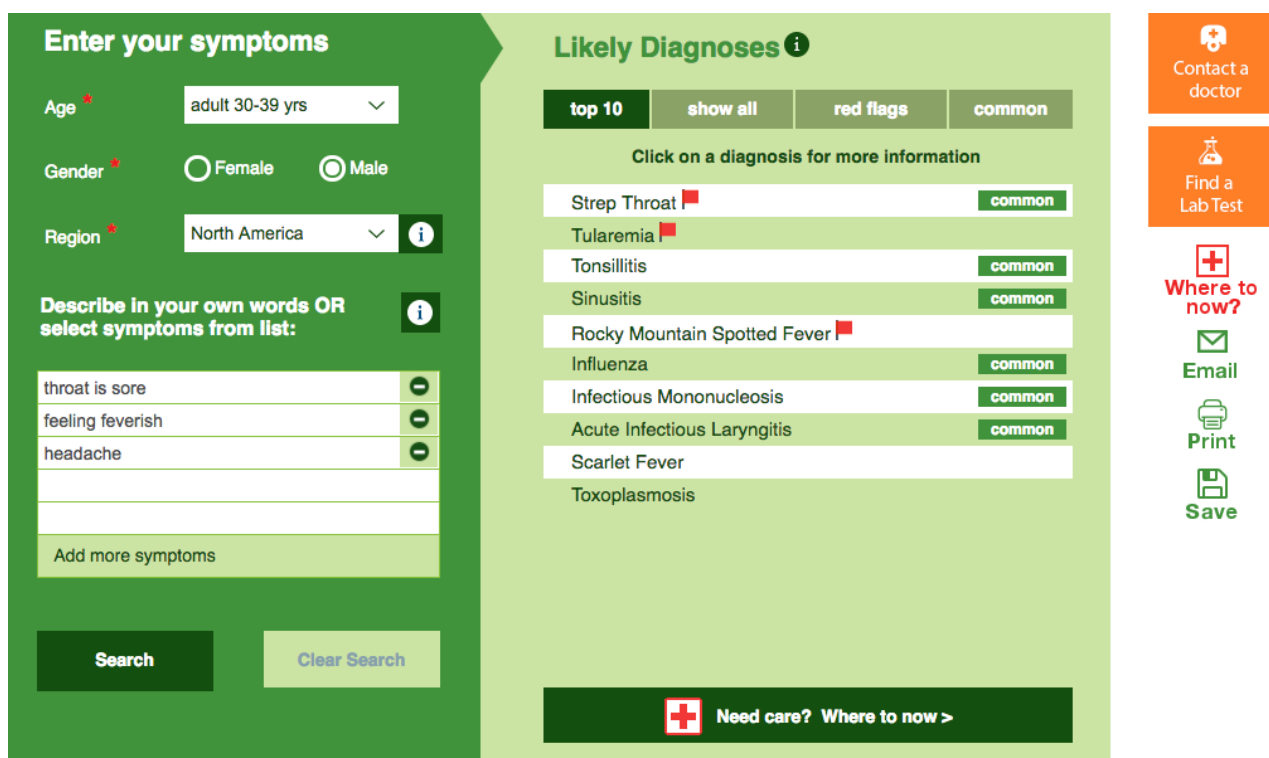
There are only 5 lines, what if I have more symptoms?

If you have more than 5 symptoms, you can add any number of additional lines by clicking on ‘Add more symptoms’ button.

When you’ve entered all your symptoms, press the Search button

Results Layout Explanation

What do the results mean?



The screenshot displays the Isabel symptom checker interface. On the left, the 'Enter your symptoms' section includes fields for Age (adult 30-39 yrs), Gender (Female/Male), and Region (North America). Below these are text input fields for symptoms, with 'throat is sore', 'feeling feverish', and 'headache' already entered. A 'Search' button and a 'Clear Search' button are at the bottom of this section.

The central 'Likely Diagnoses' section shows a list of 10 conditions, with the top 10 highlighted. The conditions listed are: Strep Throat (common), Tularemia, Tonsillitis (common), Sinusitis (common), Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Influenza (common), Infectious Mononucleosis (common), Acute Infectious Laryngitis (common), Scarlet Fever, and Toxoplasmosis. A 'Need care? Where to now >' button is located at the bottom of this section.

On the right side, there are several utility buttons: 'Contact a doctor', 'Find a Lab Test', 'Where to now?' (with a red cross icon), 'Email', 'Print', and 'Save'.

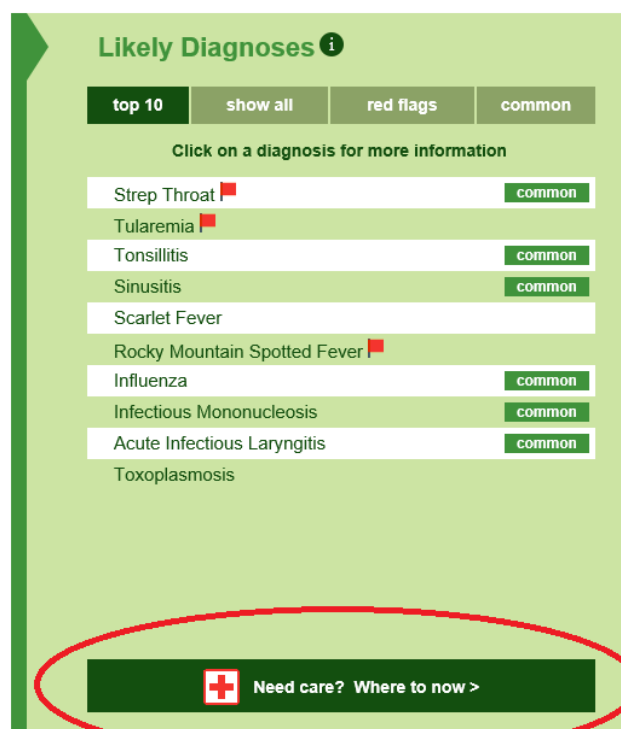
The first list of diagnoses will appear as in the screen shot below. These are the system's top 10 suggestions based on how well the symptoms you entered matched our database of diseases. In other words, they are not shown in order of how medically likely they are for you in particular but displayed in order of relevance to the disease database. The results may appear alarming as they will often include cancers and other diagnoses you may not have heard of. At this stage, you should focus on learning more about the diagnoses suggested by clicking on the diagnosis names (see below for more detail).

You can then sort this list in various ways:


- **Top 10** - the top 10 possible diagnoses ranked according to relevance.
- **Show all**- this shows all the suggested diagnoses so will include many that are much less likely. This list normally includes about 30 diagnoses.
- **Red flags** (🚩)- these are diagnoses that can cause severe harm if not treated quickly. If you suspect that you may have one of these red flagged diseases, then call or visit the emergency service immediately.
- **Common** - The diseases that are marked as common are, in general, those where there are more than 50 per 100,000 of population with the disease. The diseases not marked as common are rare and are, generally, those where there are fewer than 50 per 100,000 of population.

Need Care? Where to now

The **'Where to now?'** button takes you to a triage tool which helps you decide where to get care now and whether you need to go to the Emergency Department, see your family doctor or go to the local Walk in/Urgent Care clinic.



Once you have answered the 7 general clinical questions and clicked the 'Where to now' button again, the system will present back the answer on a dial as in the screen shot below. This tool is designed to help you decide where to present. In this case, the result looks borderline but if you are really feeling bad then it would be sensible to go to the ED.

+ Where to now? 

i This tool is designed to help you decide where to seek professional medical advice. The tool uses the results from symptoms you have just entered and then combines this with your answers to the 7 questions below to give a total score which is displayed on the dial below. This is just a suggestion of where you should go now and should not be relied on over and above your own instinct and judgement.

How quickly did your symptoms develop?

1

How long have you had your symptoms?

2

How have your symptoms changed over the last few hours/days?

3

How much pain or discomfort are you in?

4

How are your symptoms affecting your daily activities?

5


Do you feel better after taking medication for your symptoms? i

6

Do you have any other serious, long term conditions such as diabetes, cancer, heart condition etc?

7


[Reset](#)



Where to now?

Walk in clinic / Telemedicine

Family Physician / Urgent Care Clinic / Minor Injuries Unit

 Contact a doctor

'Action' icons

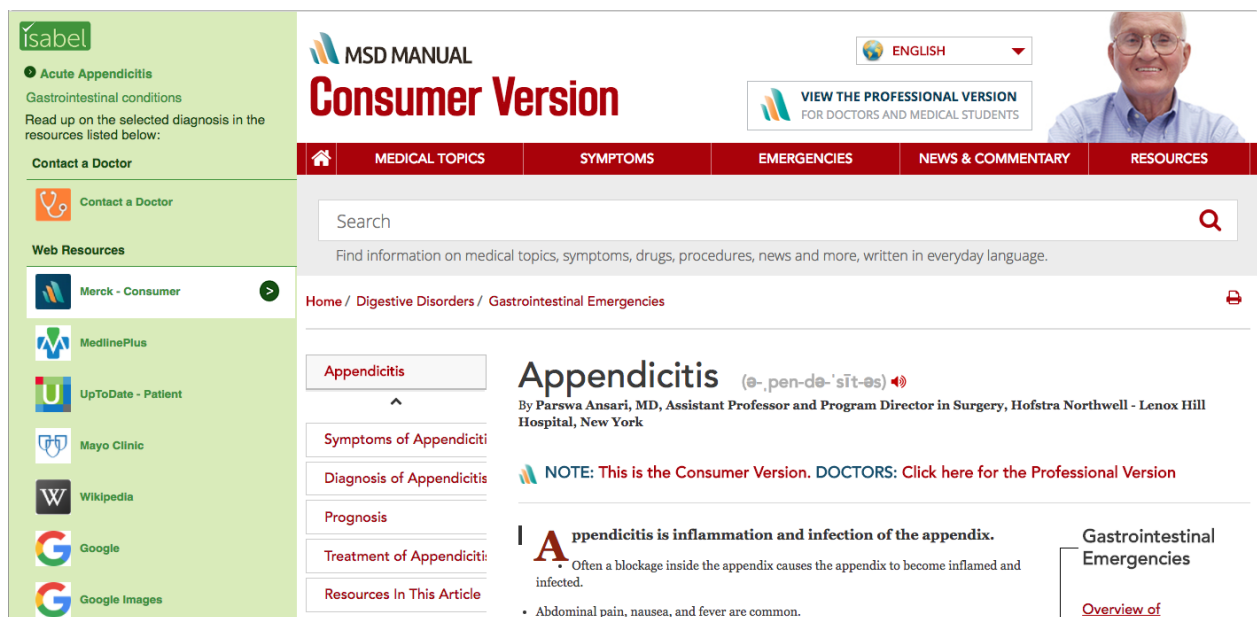
These enable you to save, print or email results so that you can share them more easily with your doctor or family, for example.

Refining your results

Once you get the results you can modify the symptoms you entered and press the 'search' button again. You can use this as an opportunity to reconsider what you have entered in the light of the diagnoses suggested and any reading you have done about the symptoms normally associated with those diseases. Also, if you develop additional symptoms at a later date, you can just add them to your list.

More information about each diagnosis

Each of the diagnoses listed is linked to medical knowledge from other websites. If you click on a diagnosis name, it will initially link to information on that diagnosis from the Merck Manual consumer version. In the left-hand panel, you will also see links to other well-known web resources with information on the diagnosis you are researching. Please note that this page opens up in another window so if nothing appears when you click on a diagnosis then it is likely that it is being blocked by your 'pop up' blocker. You will need to make sure that pop ups from the Isabel Symptom Checker are allowed in your web browser.



Finding a doctor or Lab test

Once you have researched your symptoms and read the various resources, you will hopefully have a good idea of 2-3 diseases that appear likely which you can discuss further with your doctor. It is extremely important that you discuss your thoughts with your doctor before changing, stopping or ordering any medications or planned treatment

To the right of the page titled 'Likely diagnoses' you will see headings called 'Find a doctor' and 'Find a Lab Test' with links to various web resources that offer to help with this. Where possible we will offer links that automatically take the diagnosis you have selected, the medical specialty and your location and return to you a list of relevant specialists in your area.

