The Patient Customer Journey:
Healthcare SEO Trends from Infants to Elder Care

2,965 keywords
Average Monthly Demand: 2.2M

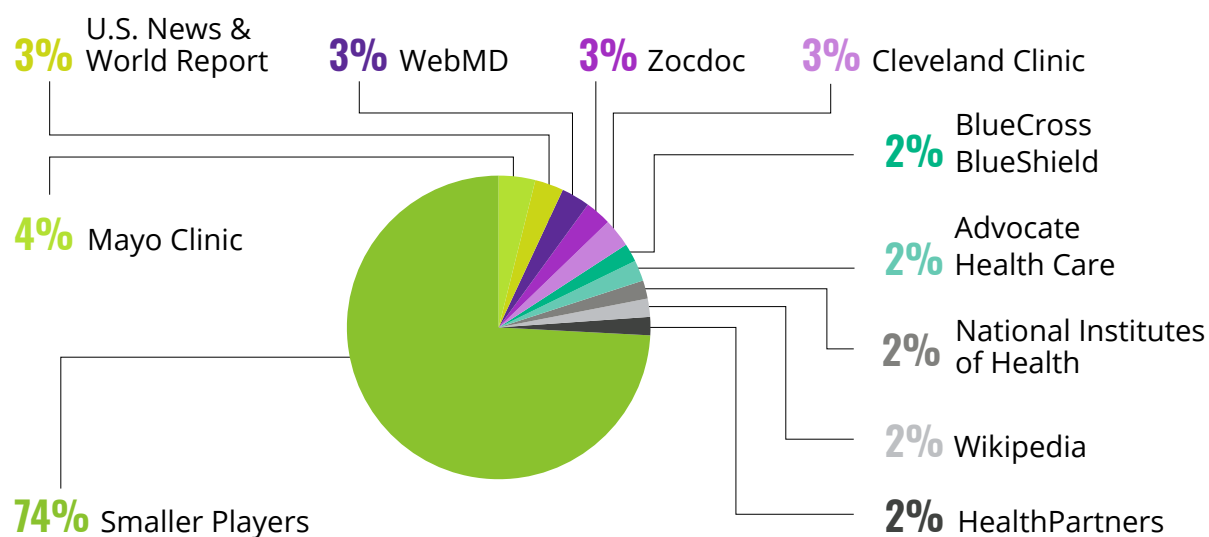Research & Insights by Andrew Kim, Imani Nichols, & Jonathan Bloom

GENERAL

359 keywords | Overall demand: 63,785

The Mayo Clinic is the best performer across a variety of non age-related health queries.

When consumers are searching for general doctors, **ZocDoc** is the top ranking site. They are followed by **Blue Cross Blue Shield** and **St. John Health System**.

Market Share

3% U.S. News & World Report

3% WebMD

3% Zocdoc

3% Cleveland Clinic

2% BlueCross BlueShield

4% Mayo Clinic

2% Advocate Health Care

2% National Institutes of Health

2% Wikipedia

74% Smaller Players

2% HealthPartners

CHECK IT OUT: St. John Health System is a regional hospital based in Oklahoma, but it's performing well at a national level in searches for doctors. This indicates that local hospitals can really compete with (and even beat) the major names like Healthgrades and U.S. News & World Report.

Mayo Clinic Creates Dedicated Pages for Each Aspect of the Learning Process

For every content topic, Mayo Clinic dedicates separate pages to each of the four sections it uses to organize information. For example, Mayo Clinic's page for coronary artery disease has sections for symptoms and causes, diagnosis and treatment, doctors and departments, and care at Mayo Clinic, each with its own URL.
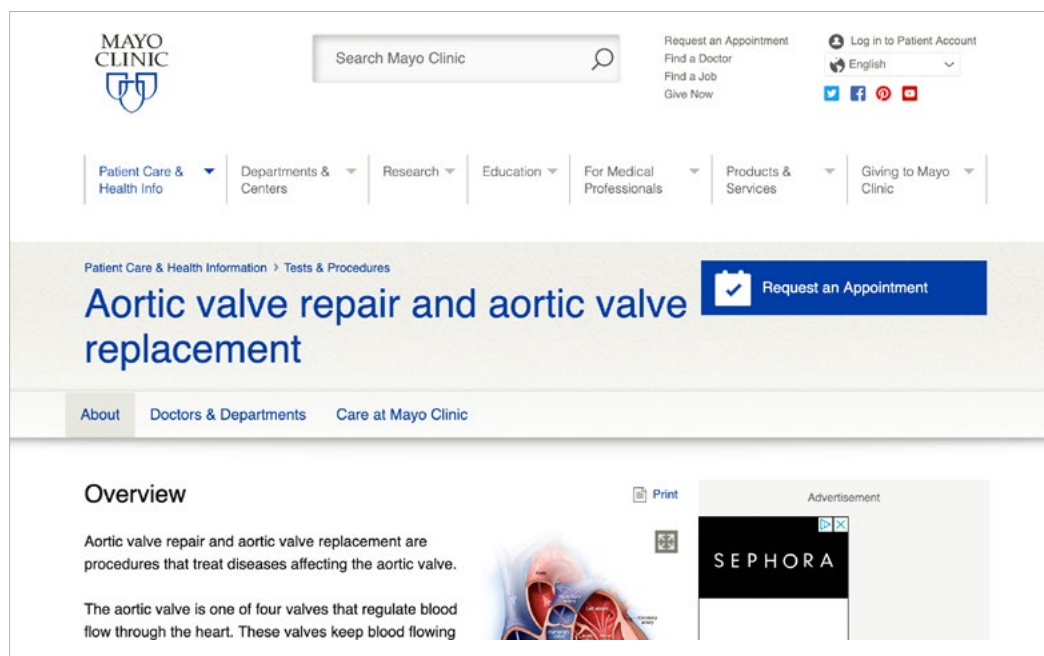
As a result, more than one of these pages can show up for a keyword as is the case for 'Coronary artery disease treatment' where the first result is the diagnosis & treatment page and the second result is the symptoms & causes page. Thanks to this strategy, Mayo Clinic can dominate the top of many SERPs.

HEALTHCARE STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT
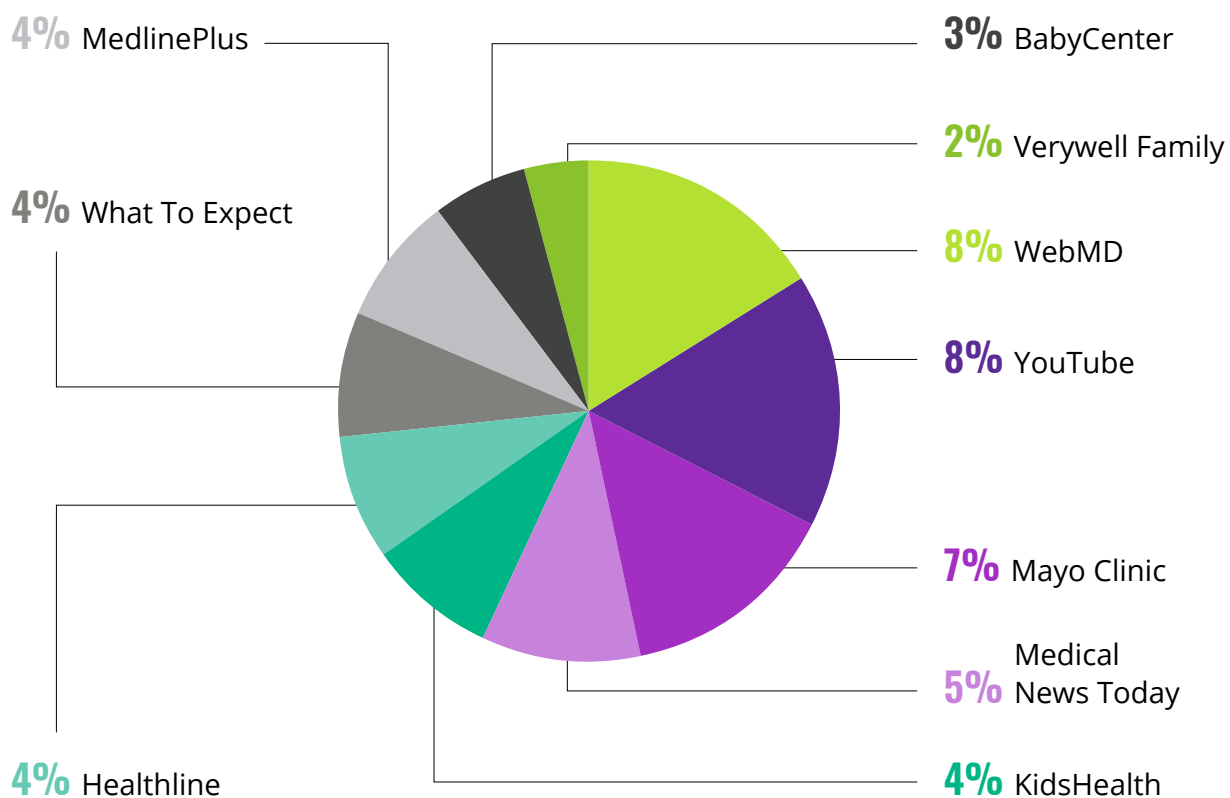
Mayo Clinic ranks on subjects like:

- Aortic valve repair and aortic valve replacement
    - Valve replacement surgery **(MSV 1,300)**
    - Aortic valve replacement surgery **(MSV 590)**
    - Aortic valve surgery **(MSV 480)**

- Coronary artery disease
    - Coronary artery disease treatment **(MSV 2,400**) - Ranks 1+2

- Cardiac ablation
    - What is ablation surgery? **(MSV 1,000)**
    - Heart ablation surgery **(MSV 390)** - Ranks 1+2

BABIES

400 keywords | Overall demand: 269,800

Market Share

4% MedlinePlus

4% What To Expect

4% Healthline

3% BabyCenter

2% Verywell Family

8% WebMD

8% YouTube

7% Mayo Clinic

5% Medical News Today

4% KidsHealth

In searches related to baby and infant health, Youtube and WebMD are competing for the greatest market share. Of these top 10 domains, only 20% are specifically targeting baby or infant health. This implies that there aren't many organizations specifically targeting search terms related to babies.

Analyzing infant health related search terms indicated that searchers for this type of content are more reactive than proactive—preventive or proactive keywords (for example, searches with "prevent" in the query) account for 3,004 average monthly searches compared to reactive keywords (for example, searches with "treatment" in the query) which account for more than three times as many, with 9,057.

In both of these categories, however, the top results were not domains focused specifically on baby health. The top ranking preventative page is an article on Positional Plagiocephaly from KidsHealth, which targets children's health issues, but not babies in particular. Among reactive searches, the top ranking page is Baby Acne: Causes, Treatments, and More, an article from general health site Healthline.

Search behavior also provides insight into how parents might prefer to pursue treatment for their babies. For instance, keywords including 'how to bring down baby fever,' 'how to reduce baby fever,' and 'what to do if baby has fever' yield a combined average monthly search total of 3,982, suggesting that parents are actively looking for action steps in the SERP results. Understanding the patterns in groups of search results can help you pinpoint the kind of content to serve your patients.

CHILDREN

392 keywords | Overall demand: 109K

A lot of the content around specific diseases and conditions in children have similar formats that are easy to follow and usually cover areas such as symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment.

The most frequently appearing domains for the subcategory of children's health searches are KidsHealth and WebMD. However, across our 10 subcategories in children's keywords (cancer, chickenpox, allergies, autism, diabetes, croup, fetal alcohol syndrome, fever, sore throat, vaccination), there is no one domain that appears as a top ranker in all of them (even WebMD). This means that even within the children's segment of healthcare keywords, there is a lot of opportunity to specialize and appear to audiences that even the bigger players are not currently reaching.
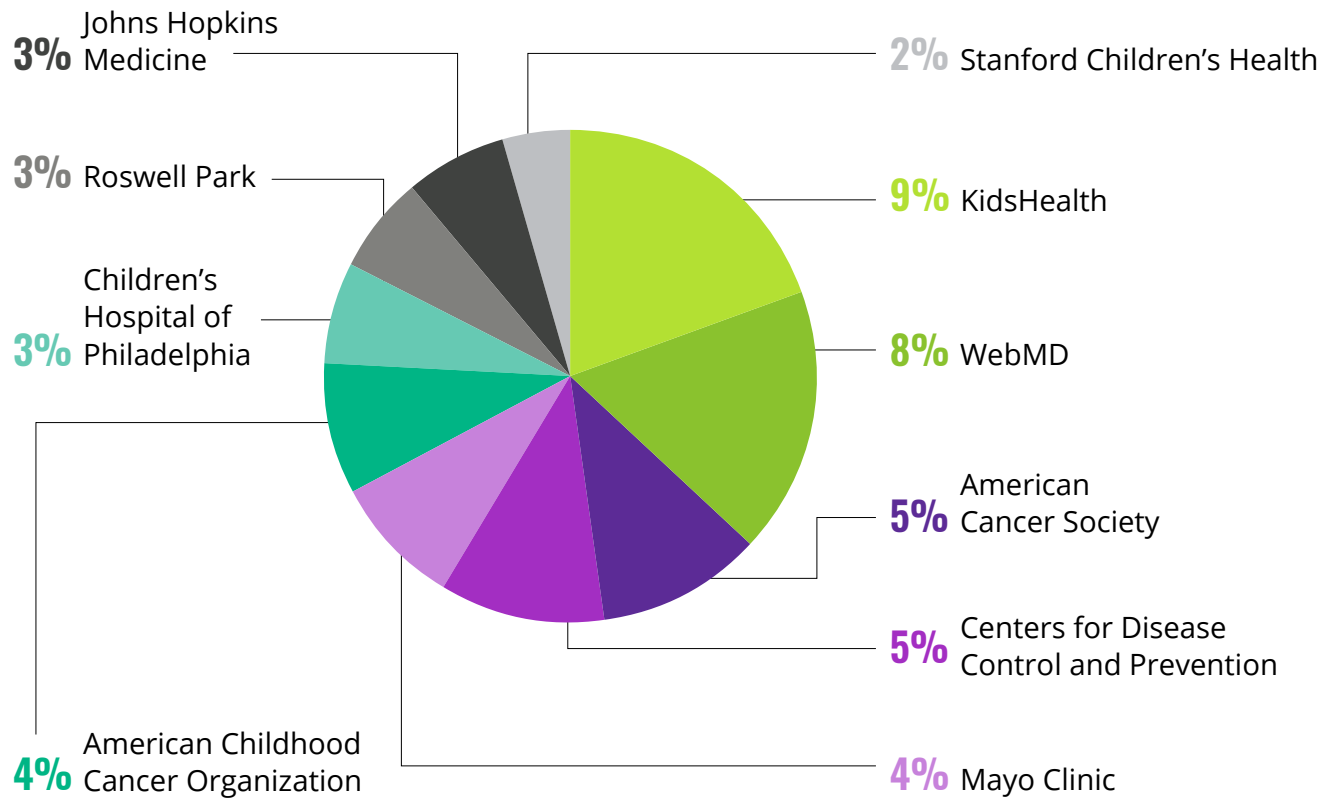
For example, the top ranking sites for autism are completely different than the top ranking sites for cancer.

HEALTHCARE HOT TIP:

Of the 43 keywords returning video result types, 31 of them relate to autism. Keywords like 'signs of autism in kids', 'how to tell if your child is autistic' return videos of people whose children display signs of autism or organizations creating informational content and inform parents on what changes in lifestyle and behavior might take place. Understanding how different result types populate the SERP for specific categories of keywords is key to organizations looking to deliver their content to the right audience.

Market Share

3% Johns Hopkins Medicine

3% Roswell Park

3% Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

4% American Childhood Cancer Organization

2% Stanford Children's Health

9% KidsHealth

8% WebMD

5% American Cancer Society

5% Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

4% Mayo Clinic

Several of the top ranking sites for children's health searches—KidsHealth, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and Johns Hopkins Medicine—are healthcare providers that also publish informational content. Some of the most visible content for all three sites related to fevers in children, using keywords such as 'fevers in children' and 'fevers in kids.

KidsHealth and Other Hospitals Create Spaces for Useful Information, Separate from Their Parent Organizations' Healthcare Services

KidsHealth is a dedicated content hub run by the Nemours Children's Health System. It provides information on physical, emotional and behavioral topics from birth to teenage years, separated into sections for kids, teens and parents.

KidsHealth ranks for 230 unique keywords with three particularly high-trafficked pages.
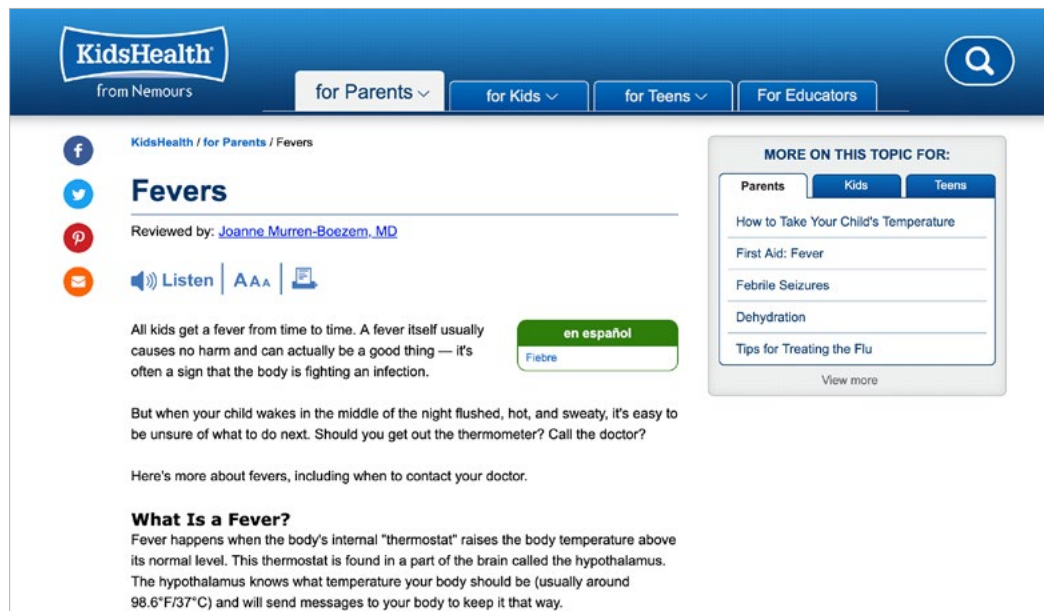

- The top-performing page is "Fevers," which explains how to identify a fever in a child, what causes fevers, and what to do about them.
  It ranks for:
  - Fever in children **(MSV 6,600)**
  - Fever in kids **(MSV 3,700)**
  - When is a fever too high for a child? **(MSV 2,900)**

- The second highest-performing page is the page for "Leukemia," which ranks for:
    - Symptoms of leukemia in children **(MSV 6,600)**
    - Sign of leukemia in children **(MSV 1,500)**

- The third high performer is the page for "Childhood Cancer" which ranks for:
    - Childhood cancer **(MSV 2,900)**
    - Most common childhood cancer **(MSV 473)**

Similarly, the website for the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia has dedicated pieces of content for specific conditions and diseases found in children.
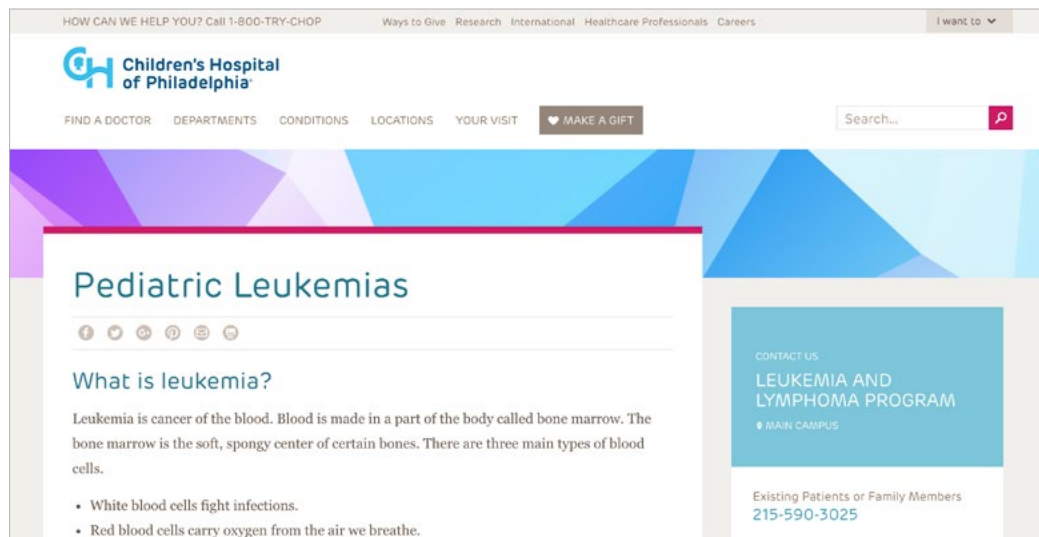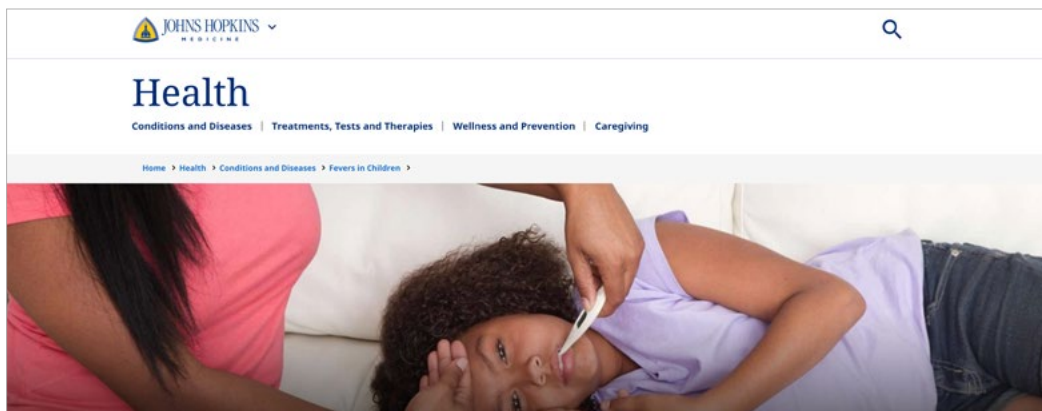

Top content includes:

- "Pediatric leukemia," which ranks for:
    - Symptoms of leukemia in children **(MSV 6,600)**
    - Leukemia symptoms in children **(MSV 5,200)**
    - Signs of leukemia in children **(MSV 1,500)**

- "Fever," which ranks for:
  - Fever in children **(MSV 5,400)**
  - Fever in kids **(MSV 3,700)**
  - What is a fever in a child? **(MSV 480)**

- "Pediatric brain tumors," which ranks for:
  - Brain tumors in children **(MSV 1,400)**
  - Brain tumor in children **(MSV 720)**
  - Brain tumor child **(MSV 140)**

The website for Johns Hopkins Medicine is also among the highest ranking domains for children's health. Though the site in general is not specifically targeted toward children, it contains relevant content, also organized into subject pages on specific health issues in children.

Top performing content includes:

- "Fever in children," which ranks for:
  - Fever in children **(MSV 5,400)**
  - Fever in kids **(MSV 3,700)**
  - When is a fever too high for a child? **(MSV 2,900)**

- "Brain tumors in children," which ranks for:
  - Brain tumor symptoms in children **(MSV 1,600)**
  - Brain cancer symptoms in children **(MSV 140)**

MEN

787 keywords | Overall demand: 759,327

The search data on men's health reveal several areas where content providers have an opportunity to supply crucial information to patients, including comparing treatment options.
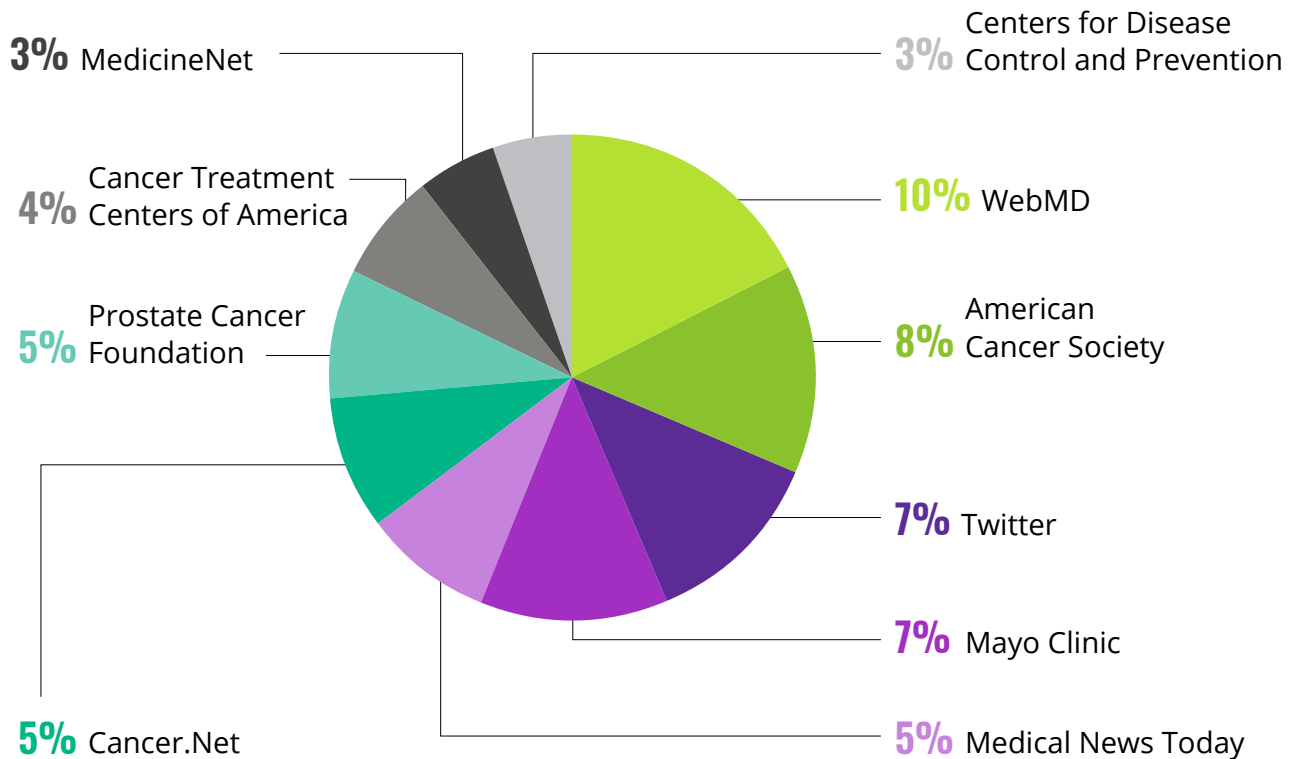
Michigan Medicine addresses the common search term "prostate cancer surgery or radiation" (MSV 210) with in-depth content that guides users through the decision-making process and answers frequently asked questions. The page, Prostate Cancer: Should I Have Radiation or Surgery for Localized Prostate Cancer? ranks for 930 keywords and drives an estimated 547 clicks per month.

Search behavior also reveals common misconceptions. This provides healthcare companies an opportunity to both identify these misconceptions and create valuable content that debunks or clarifies them. For instance, search terms like "does masturbation cause prostate cancer" (MSV 720) suggest that men want to know if masturbation can cause prostate cancer (it does not). Similarly, the search term "testicular cancer pregnancy test" (MSV 260) suggests that men want to know whether pregnancy tests can be used to detect testicular cancer, which they cannot do reliably.

Market Share

3% MedicineNet

3% Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

4% Cancer Treatment Centers of America

10% WebMD

5% Prostate Cancer Foundation

8% American Cancer Society

5% Cancer.Net

7% Twitter

7% Mayo Clinic

5% Medical News Today

HEALTHCARE HOT TIP:

Patients frequently research calculators to determine life expectancy or recurrence of cancer with terms like "prostate cancer recurrence calculator" (MSV 260). Developing those tools would be a compelling way to help those searchers.
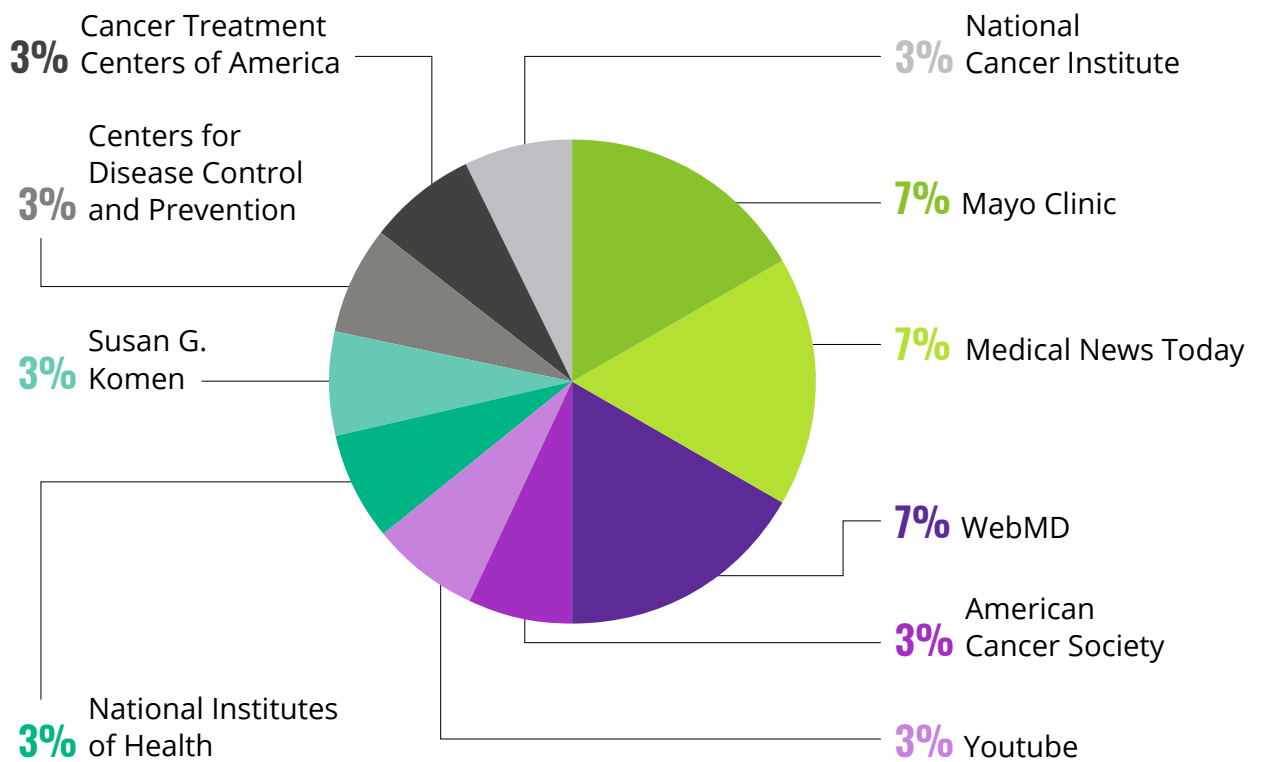
- Sloan Kettering (a cancer treatment hospital) creates a number of calculators specific to different types of cancer. The hospital's **Prostate Cancer Nomograms** page, which provides several calculators addressing different variables, helps an impressive 1,900 searchers per month.

WOMEN

400 keywords | Overall demand: 390,452

Market Share

3% Cancer Treatment Centers of America

3% Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

3% Susan G. Komen

3% National Institutes of Health

3% National Cancer Institute

7% Mayo Clinic

7% Medical News Today

7% WebMD

3% American Cancer Society

3% Youtube

For keywords relating to women's health, only one of the 10 top ranking domains is a site that specifically targets women (the website for the Susan G. Komen organization, which is focused on breast cancer). This means that the female patient is currently getting most of her information on specific

women's health issues like pregnancy and breastfeeding from general health sites.

Of those top 10 sites, Medical News Today is the only news outlet, accounting for 7% of market share, while websites for government entities such as the Centers for Disease Control and Preventable and the National Institutes of Health account for 6% of market share.
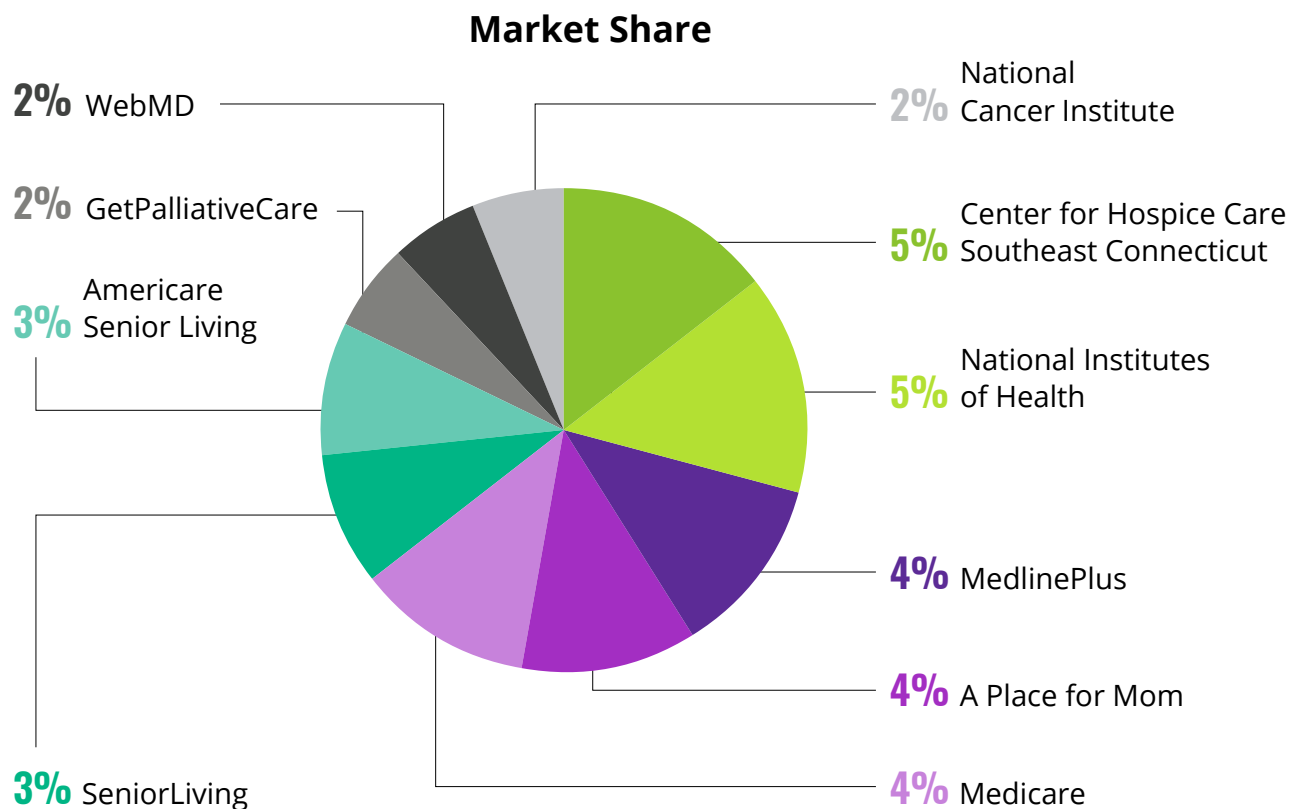
In addition to searches about preventative care and treatment for particular health issues, frequently used keywords in the women's health sphere point to concerns about medical ethics and accessibility of care. Questions around the ethics and legality of surrogacy yield 50 average monthly searches as reflected in keywords such as 'do surrogate mothers have the right to keep the baby,' 'surrogate parents rights,' 'human rights and ethical issues related to surrogacy,' and 'can a surrogate decides to keep the baby.'

ELDERLY

629 keywords | Overall demand: 695K

There are many options when it comes to elder care, ranging from in-home care to independent living to hospice. It's important for providers in this space to have pages dedicated to each of these options in order to best inform users about these crucial choices and to have more visibility across the wide range of keywords associated with elder care.

Market Share

2% WebMD

2% GetPalliativeCare

3% Americare Senior Living

3% SeniorLiving

2% National Cancer Institute

5% Center for Hospice Care Southeast Connecticut

5% National Institutes of Health

4% MedlinePlus

4% A Place for Mom

4% Medicare

If you are a service provider in this space, it is important to have a customer-first mindset when structuring your website's user experience - have a repository of content that users can learn from before making a challenging decision. For example, the best performing domain for this subset, the Center for Hospice Care Southeast Connecticut, is both a service and content provider. The site aims to provide information and is not trying to sell any of its services to users before ensuring they are well-informed.

Two of our top domains, A Place for Mom and SeniorLiving, are not service providers but instead aggregate information on senior living options across the US and present them in one place for users to search. Additionally they both have excellent content on their website across a wide range of topics under elder care.

The Center for Hospice Care Southeast Connecticut Puts the User First

Although they are a regional organization, the website for the Center for Hospice Care Southeast Connecticut is the leading domain for searches relating to elder care. The site hosts a wealth of content about hospice and palliative care that is broken into focused subsections including care options for specific illnesses and stages of hospice. The site makes it clear that their first priority is not trying to sell services, it is providing quality information to patients and caregivers to help them understand their options while they contemplate an incredibly difficult decision.

By providing well-written content across all areas of hospice and palliative care, Center for Hospice Care Southeast Connecticut is able to rank for a wide range of terms related to elder care. One piece of content that performs particularly well for our keyword set is Hospice vs. Palliative Care, which is the first article featured in the site's Hospice & Palliative Care section and outlines the main differences between those two terms.

Ranks for:

- Palliative care **(MSV 165,000)**
- What is palliative care? **(MSV 18,100)**
- What is included in palliative care? **(MSV 1,300)**
- Palliative care services **(MSV 110)**

HEALTHCARE HOT TIP: Having dedicated localized pages can make your website appear for 'near me' modified terms. Nearly half of our elder care related search terms including keywords like 'nursing home,' senior home care,' and 'elderly home care' feature local businesses in "snack packs" at the top of the SERP, so service providers should ensure that their site has the correct information and optimizations to appear in this featured result for localized searches.

A Place for Mom Helps Families Navigate Their Options in Specific Localities

A Place for Mom is the largest assisted living referral service and aims "to help families navigate the maze of senior living options." They have dedicated search pages for various senior living options including assisted living, memory care, nursing homes, and independent living.
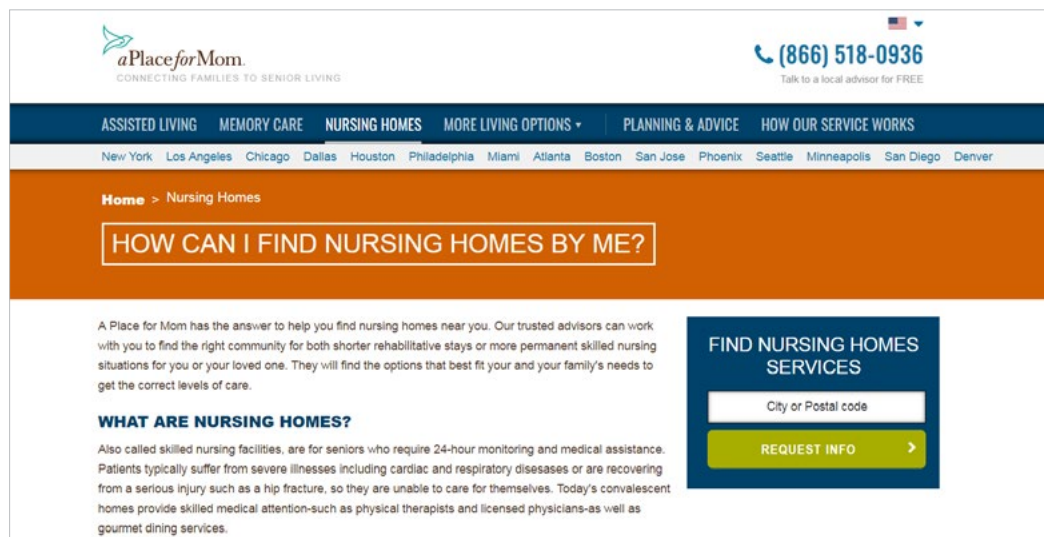
Their nursing home search page ranks for 14 of our keywords and is visible to 223,000 people on the first page of search results. The page allows users to search for homes by dozens of metro areas or by state. Due to this wide coverage, it is appears to searchers all over the U.S. using 'near me' modified terms.
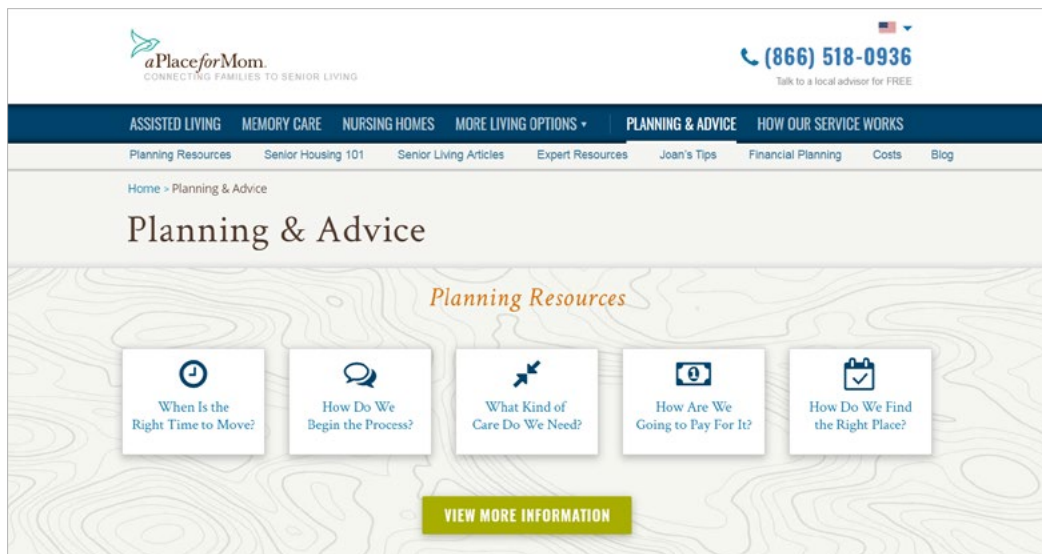
Ranks for:

- Nursing home **(MSV 74,000)**
- Nursing homes **(MSV 60,500)**
- Nursing homes near me **(MSV 60,000)**
- Nursing home facilities near me **(MSV 27,000)**

This trend of ranking for 'near me' terms is echoed throughout their other search pages as seen with their independent living search page which ranks for:

- Senior living near me **(MSV 14,800)**
- Independent living near me **(MSV 3,700)**
- Senior homes near me **(MSV 2,900)**

They also have a dedicated content hub under 'Planning & Advice.' These articles aim to inform the searcher on various aspects of senior living and are catered mainly toward families or caregivers rather than the patient themselves.

Their most visible articles that turned up in our keyword searches are:

- Parenting the Parent: Caring for Elderly Parents ranks for:

  - Caring of elderly **(MSV 9,900)**
  - Caring for elderly parents **(MSV 720)**
  - Taking care of parents **(MSV 210)**

HEALTHCARE STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT

- [Home Health vs Home Care](#) ranks for:

  - Home health care services **(MSV 5,500)**
  - Home health care service **(MSV 4,400)**
  - Senior home health care **(MSV 720)**

- [Elder Care Costs Comparison](#) ranks for:

  - In home elderly care **(MSV 3,600)**
  - 24 hour elderly care **(MSV 110)**

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