For years Google has been experimenting with new ways to display medical information in search results. In 2009, Google Health introduced the Google Health OneBox, a small box of information appearing among organic listings for Google search queries relating to medical conditions, symptoms and medications. The box contained a small definition of the condition and a set of links to healthcare-related sites such as the Mayo Clinic or WebMD.

In 2012, with the introduction of Knowledge Graph, Google’s health care-related on-page information improved by including either a large box on the sidebar of the search engine’s result page (SERP), which gives information for queries about medications, or a large box above the organic listings, which gives information for queries about diseases.
This new knowledge graph **medicine information** box gives a description of the drug, side effects, related medications, and links to in-depth sources, drug class, brand names and other information about specific medication. The information is scraped from the U.S. FDA, the National Library of Medicine, DailyMed, and Micromedex, among other sources.

![Google's Medicine Knowledge Graph](image)

The new knowledge graph **disease information** box gives information about a disease from multiple sources including WebMD.com, the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and Drugs.com.

Why add this information? “We get a lot of queries for medicine on Google,” a Google spokesperson explains, “so to make it quick and easy for you to learn about medications, we’ll start showing key facts – side effects, related medications, links to in-depth resources, and more – right on the search results page.” Critics, however, argue that while increasing user experience, the knowledge graph unfairly places original content from a website onto Google, therefore making a large negative impact in terms of actual traffic sent to those sites from Google.
How This Affects Pharma and CMI/Compas Recommendations

Knowledge Graph, ultimately, is a way for Google to preserve traffic on Google, rather than directing it to Pharma or healthcare information websites. By scraping information from outside sources and posting it on their SERP, Google effectively allows users searching for medical information to avoid leaving Google properties. The existence of this information has a large impact on searches for those terms. First, the information contained will inform the very top of the funnel users – the least engaged users, or those looking for the most basic information – who will no longer require clicking a link to get to the information they need. This means lower click-through-rates on top-level keywords. To put this in perspective, CMI/Compas Media Vitals research found that 73% of physicians use search for professional purposes at least once per day, many more than 10 times per day. If two of those daily searches do not lead to clicks because the information a user finds necessary is located on the Knowledge Graph, a HCP-focused Pharma site will have missed out more than 20% of that day’s potential HCP traffic.

Despite this loss in traffic, HCP-focused Pharma advertisers can still benefit from the Knowledge Graph placement. By providing only basic information, the Knowledge Graph captures only the least engaged users, leaving users who require more information to click through to qualified sites. This means that the Knowledge Graph will ensure that only engaged, qualified clicks will continue searching to an HCP site. In order to capture this audience, it would be advisable for a HCP-focused Pharma website to optimize for the long-tailed – detailed and in-depth – keywords and optimizing their website for these long-tailed terms. By focusing on these less-searched terms, instead of very generic (and expensive) keywords, and keeping their websites tailored to these keywords, Pharma websites will be able to find more qualified clicks, for less money. By utilizing a combined SEO and Paid Search marketing strategy targeting these keywords, Pharma advertisers will be able to take up more space on the SERP, driving more brand awareness and traffic to their page. Additionally, taking up more space on the SERP could allow the advertiser to drive more clicks away from the Knowledge Graph, and toward their listings.