AI health advice and the need for caution

artificial intelligence. You've probably asked chat GPT or some AI system a health question or two but is that virtual assistant giving you good advice is the question.

We've got Dr. Amy Duffy here from Carolina Integrative Medicine and you say AI is like the WebMD on steroids these days. What's happening? I mean, it's fantastic.

People are using AI for everything, right? And it can be really helpful for health things. But you have to sort of think twice, like if you go to the doctor and you a rash, we're going to ask you lots of different questions.

When did it start? Where is it? How does it feel? Is it painful? Itchy? What does look like? If you use chat and it is not asking you those clarifying questions, that's going go right to a solution that may not be the right one.

And to kind of highlight this, you devised a game to see if we can spot good advice from bad. So how's the game work? Well, I'm going to actually tell you a question that I put into AI about some health issue, right?

And then we're going say, red, yellow, or green. Green is like, yeah, that sounds like great advice. I would use that. Yellow is, maybe we should ask a couple questions or verify.

Fatigue question: why AI can miss key context

And red is sort of, ooh, sounds dangerous. move on from there, right? Let's go. What's the first question? Okay, so the 1st question is about fatigue.

So I'm exhausted all the time, even though I feel like I get enough sleep, is there something wrong with me? So the A. I. answer is this could be your thyroid, anemia, vitamin deficiency, maybe you have sleep apnea.

Well, anemia is common in women, so why don't you try taking iron, 65 milligrams a day. Make sure you add some vitamin C for absorption. All right, he's giving advice.

AI is telling this patient what to take without knowing what the patient's history is. Exactly, right? So you could have iron deficiency, but we dont know, we haven't done any testing, and we didn't ask any more specific questions.

So we really have to dig a little bit deeper there. Okay, dig deeper on that one. Another question you've asked is, what's your next? So the next one is an injury, right?

So I twisted my ankle playing tennis. What should I do?

Ankle injury advice and medical safety checks

And so AI says, oh, you should take ibuprofen, 600 milligrams, ice it for 48 hours, and elevate kind of the rice thing that we've heard about injury before, so.

seems okay to me but this yellow paddle goes up nicely. It's a little scary right so again no clarifying questions we know nothing about your medical history is ibuprofen safe for you are you on blood thinners do you have ulcers do have a kidney problem because ibiprofin can affect your kidneys right?

So and we don't know if that injury is something you shouldn't need evaluated a little bit deeper. Is it fractured? So you really have to consider that it could be dangerous depending on your medical history.

AI is not going to know you as a patient. One more question has to do with nutrition. The doctor recommends

eating a certain amount of protein. So my doctor said I should try eating 100 milligrams of a protein a day.

Can you give me some high protein meal ideas? does its magic there right?

Where AI helps most: nutrition and meal planning

So when we know specifically what we're looking for then AI is going to be able to generate you know not only eat this but why are we eating it how many milligrams or grams of protein does it have and it can add it all up and like this is really where it does this magic and he can even take it so far to being convenient by giving you a grocery list and all that kind of stuff so this where AI shines.

So this is where AI is its best. You have to have the information that you need to know about yourself and then you can ask recipes, you could ask nutrition questions.

And what I love about this is like, if you do have that fatigue question, right? Like you can ask and, and one of the things we're learning about AI in any business is to say, um, when you ask the question say ask me some clarifying questions or something like that.

So you kind of dig deep, then take that answer to your doctor's appointment to, say hey, you know, I have some ideas. And then that makes our conversation a little bit easier to kind come up with.

We've already, we've gone through some of those questions that we would have otherwise done at the office. Perfect, so you actually do like it when somebody brings their research.

Yeah, for sure. You're not saying don't do the research, you're saying bring it to the doctor, but some final advice on using AI safely. Don't use it for symptoms that scare you, right?

If something comes on quickly. If you have severe headache, if you chest pain, should I call 911 for this? And hopefully it gives you the right answer.

Using AI safely and when to call a doctor

But when it comes to something that's really significant or something scary, call somebody instead of just typing in a question there for sure. Okay, very good any other tips we should keep in mind overall that you know as we use this resource in our way.

I mean again just think about you no does this sound like it sound advice or not for for something like that so be more specific. Tell it to ask you some clarifying questions bring those questions to your doctor and use it where it shines is is giving you Some advice like about meal planning, you saving time that sort of thing that's where its going to be most helpful.

And this is something that's been on your radar lately, because you're seeing it with your patients. AI told me this, AI tell me that. And it's scary, you know?

We don't want AI to replace your doctor, and there are proper ways to use AI in medicine, just like there're proper way to us AI and anything, so just be aware.

A good tool, but not to replay some medical care. Dr. Amy Duffy, thank you very much. Learn more about Dr Duffey's integrative approach to your health.

You can find her at Carolina Integrative Medicine in Clemson.