

Overview of HHS’s Office of Women’s Health Website Overhaul: Removal of Resources and Corresponding Link Alterations on the A-Z Health Topics Page

Access Assessment Report
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[See WIP’s Report Production Protocol for details of our review process](#)

Classification of Web content alterations and changes in access to Web resources:

Classification	Changed in this report?
1. Altering or removing text and non-text content	Yes
2. Altering or removing links	Yes
3. Moving an entire webpage or collection of webpages or establishing redirects	Yes
4. Altering or removing an entire pertinent section of a webpage or collection of webpages	Yes
5. Removing an entire webpage or document	Yes
6. Overhauling or removing an entire website	Yes
7. Altering or removing search engines and open data platforms	
8. Altering, removing, or deleting datasets	

Note: Unlike other [WIP website monitoring reports](#), this classification refers not only to the alterations detailed within this report, but subsequent reports assessing removals from and overhauls of particular portions of the OWH website.

The Sunlight Foundation’s Web Integrity Project does not intend to assess any government agency’s intentions in presenting the changes to webpages or other Web content that appear in this report.

The format of this report and the methodology used to generate it are based on those developed during 2017 by the [Environmental Data & Governance Initiative’s Website Monitoring Team](#), which our co-founders helped lead

Overview of HHS’s Office of Women’s Health Website Overhaul: Removal of Resources and Corresponding Link Alterations on the A-Z Health Topics Page

Overview

The Office of Women’s Health (OWH), under the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), removed portions of its website, including text, links, and entire pages and documents. Several links, corresponding to the changes throughout the OWH website, have been altered, added, or removed from a list on the website’s “A-Z Health Topics” page. Pages and links to pages related to lesbian and bisexual health, breast cancer, men’s health, interpersonal and domestic violence, and health topics relevant to the elderly have been removed.

Note: The findings within this report are accurate as of February 8, 2018. Certain changes occurring after that date have been noted and detailed, but minor changes that do not affect the overall findings may not have been noted. Links to archived versions of pages are provided in all cases for clarity.

Follow-up reports

An in-depth analysis of each of the substantial removals detailed within this report, each corresponding to changes on the “A-Z Health Topics” page, is not within the the scope of this report. Unlike other [WIP website monitoring reports](#), this report will not comprehensively assess each removal from the OWH website. Instead, these removals will be the subject of more extensive follow-up analysis in subsequent reports. These reports will include analyses of the removals relating to lesbian and bisexual women’s health, breast cancer, men’s health, and healthy aging. We will update the list here as the forthcoming reports are released:

1. [“Removal of Webpage and Corresponding Links Pertaining to Lesbian and Bisexual Health from HHS’s Office of Women’s Health Website,”](#) co-released with this report.

Background

Agency details: OWH was established in 1991 within HHS’s Office of the Assistant Secretary of Health. According to the [OWH website](#), the office “coordinates women’s health efforts across HHS and addresses critical women’s health issues by informing and advancing policies, educating health care professionals and consumers, and supporting model programs.”

Communications about changes: The office has not proactively communicated about or explained the changes described within this report.

Known archives: A public Web archive for the www.womenshealth.gov domain, collected by the Federal Depository Library Program Web Archive, can be found at https://wayback.archive-it.org/4438*/https://www.womenshealth.gov/. The materials can be found by navigating from the HHS archive at the URL <https://archive.hhs.gov>. The OWH website does not link to these archives and does not explain how to navigate to these archives. These archives are also incomplete and do not contain website snapshots pertaining to the dates of many of the changes detailed within this report.

Description of Most Notable Changes

Links from the OWH “A-Z Health Topics” page ([Webpage 1](#)) have been removed, altered, or added (compare the previous version from [May 12, 2017](#) to the current version from [February 8, 2018](#)). In some cases, these changes to the “A-Z Health Topics” page correspond to removals of pages and reduction in access to resources on other parts of the OWH website.

1. Some removed links on the “A-Z Health Topics” page correspond to removed pages and documents on other parts of the OWH website ([Webpage 1](#), [Table 1](#)).
 - a. Removals include a webpage titled “[Lesbian and bisexual health](#),” which contained substantial information for lesbian and bisexual populations. The page answered questions such as “what challenges do lesbian and bisexual women face in the health care system?” and “what can lesbian and bisexual women do to protect their health?” The resource was also removed from a list on the OWH’s “[Fact sheets](#)” page. A PDF with very similar content, but which is not linked from elsewhere in the OWH website, rendering it inaccessible through navigation, is still live (see “[Removal of Webpage and Corresponding Links Pertaining to Lesbian and Bisexual Health from HHS’s Office of Women’s Health Website](#)” report and the [Additional Information](#) section for details).
 - b. Additional page removals include a fact sheet relating to [interpersonal and domestic violence](#), as well as pages titled “[Breast cancer](#),” “[Men’s health](#),” and “[Healthy aging](#),” which aggregated information and links to pages about health issues related to each respective topic.
2. Some removed links on the “A-Z Health Topics” page redirect to different pages with unrelated or only partially related content ([Table 1](#)). For example, the “Screening tests for women” link [currently redirects](#) to a new page with some, but not all, of the same content.
3. Some links have not been removed from the “A-Z Health Topics” page, but correspond to removed pages ([Table 3](#)). For example, the “Early-stage breast cancer treatment” link currently redirects to the [OWH home page](#).
4. The “[Health data](#)” and “[Quick Health Online Data](#)” links (which linked to the same URL) have been removed from the “A-Z Health Topics” page and the data portal that the link URL previously directed to has been removed and replaced with the “[Health Information Gateway](#)”. **Note:** *The “Health Information Gateway” has not been cross-referenced with the previous “Quick Health Data Online” to check for matching or related content.*
 - a. The URL that corresponded to both the “Health data” and “Quick Health Online Data” links does not redirect to the new “Health Information Gateway” page.
5. The OWH repository of fact sheets was moved from the previous “ePublications” page to the current “Fact sheets” page (See the [Additional Information](#) section). During this move, multiple links to fact sheets and resources were added, removed, and reorganized. OWH did not, however, provide a public notice and no link to an archive was made available. This overhaul, which altered how many resources were accessed and reduced access to some, occurred as other parts of the OWH website were being removed, complicating overall use of the website.

Table of Contents

Report Section	Webpage Title	URL(s)
Webpage 1	A-Z Health Topics	https://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics
Additional Information	Reorganization, addition, and removal of fact sheet and other resource links on the OWH website during the move from the “ePublications” page to the “Fact sheets” page	http://womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/index.html and https://www.womenshealth.gov/printables-and-shareables/resource/fact-sheets

Detailed Description of Changes in Access

Note: Throughout the entire report, links to the Internet Archive’s Wayback Machine’s (IAWM) versions of corresponding pages are provided for reference. IAWM displays time in GMT.

Webpage 1: A-Z Health Topics

- URL: <https://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics>
- Changes occurred between [May 12, 2017](#) and [January 12, 2018](#)
Note: The large date range is because changes occurred throughout this period, not all at once. See Tables 1 and 2 below for dates of specific changes. Some changes have occurred since January 12, 2018, but are not documented within this report.
- Federal Depository Library Program Web Archive: previous version available from [April 6, 2017](#) (The Depository is not linked from the OWH website.)

Section 1: Link changes, removals, and additions on the “A-Z Health Topics” page, and corresponding page status

The tables below detail select links and alterations to links, as well as the corresponding page status for each link, on the OWH’s “A-Z Health Topics” page. The corresponding pages for each link are classified as “Live” or “Page removed.” If the URL redirects to a different page, it is classified as “Redirects to A-Z Health Topics,” “Redirects to OWH main page,” “Redirects to a related page,” or “Redirects to page with same content.” These distinctions demonstrate the varying ways that redirects have been used to alter access to information — all have been done without providing notice of the redirect or explanation of why it has been set up.

Table 1: Removed links from the “A-Z Health Topics” page and corresponding page status. The following table details the links removed from the OWH’s “A-Z Health Topics” page between [May 12, 2017](#) and [December 13, 2017](#), along with the associated status of the page corresponding to each link URL. The link text and link URLs included reflect those that were on the “A-Z Health Topics” page on or before May 12, 2017. For the most part, the link text is listed alphabetically as it appeared on the “A-Z Health Topics” page, with the exception of links with the same link URL, which are listed next to each other.

Info about links removed from “A-Z Health Topics” page					Info about pages and content corresponding to removed link URLs*			
Index	Link Text	Link URL	Is link text still listed?	Link removal date range	Does URL currently redirect?	Page status	Is content elsewhere on OWH site?	Page removal date range
1	Bisexual and lesbian health	www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/lesbian-bisexual-health.html ¹	No	09/26/17-10/10/17	Redirects to “A-Z Health Topics”	Page removed	Yes, but not linked from any other pages ¹	09/19/17-10/13/17

2	Lesbian and bisexual health	www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/lesbian-bisexual-health.html ¹	No	09/26/17-10/10/17	Redirects to “A-Z Health Topics”	Page removed	Yes, but not linked from any other pages ¹	09/19/17 - 10/13/17
3	Breast cancer	www.womenshealth.gov/breast-cancer/	No	11/30/17-12/13/17	Redirects to OWH main page	Page removed	No	06/27/17 - 02/05/18
4	Early-stage breast cancer treatment (sub-bullet of “Breast cancer”)	www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/early-stage-breast-cancer.html	No, but identical link still present ²	11/30/17-12/13/17	Redirects to OWH main page	Page removed	No	07/28/17 - 02/05/18
5	Health Care Providers' Role in Screening and Counseling for Interpersonal and Domestic Violence (sub-bullets of both “Domestic violence/abuse” and “Violence against women”)	www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/screening-counseling-fact-sheet.html ³	No	09/26/17-10/10/17	Redirects to “A-Z Health Topics” ⁴	Page removed	Yes	06/27/17 - 01/17/18
6	Health data	http://52.207.219.3/qhdo/index.html	No	10/10/17-10/16/17	No ⁴	Page removed	New data portal not evaluated ⁵	06/21/17 - No after version
7	Quick Health Data Online	http://52.207.219.3/qhdo/index.html	Yes, but unlinked	10/10/17-10/16/17	No ⁴	Page removed	New data portal not evaluated ⁵	06/21/17 - No after version
8	Healthy aging	www.womenshealth.gov/aging/index.html	No	05/12/17-05/28/17	Redirects to “A-Z Health Topics”	Page removed	No	05/12/17 - 06/27/17
9	Men's health	www.womenshealth.gov/mens-health/index.html	No	05/12/17-05/28/17	Redirects to related page	Page removed	No	05/12/17-11/16/17
10	Screening tests for women	www.womenshealth.gov/screening-tests-and-vaccines/index.html ⁶	No	05/12/17-05/28/17	Redirects to related page	Page removed	Partially, on page that link URL redirects to ⁶	05/12/17-06/27/17

***Important note:** Some of the link URLs on the “A-Z Health Topics” page at the “womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/” subdomain listed above began redirecting to “womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/” subdomain URLs, which correspond to new pages that contain the same or very similar content. In these cases, the “Info about pages and content corresponding to removed link URLs” column in the tables below refers to the most recent pages that the listed link URL corresponds to. These redirects and the date range when they occurred are specified in the “Additional Notes for Table 1” section below. See the [Additional Information](#) section for more details about this URL path change.

Additional Notes for Table 1:

¹ Before the link was removed, between [May 13, 2017](#) and [June 27, 2017](#), the link URL began redirecting to a page with the same information and with the following URL:

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/lesbian-and-bisexual-health>. A PDF with very similar content to the page, but which is not linked from any other OWH page, is currently [live](#) on the website, making it inaccessible through navigation.

² An identical link that was also present on the page has not been removed and is documented in [Table 3](#).

³ Before the link was removed, between [May 12, 2017](#) and [June 27, 2017](#), the link URL began redirecting to a page with the same information and with the following URL:

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/screening-and-counseling>

⁴ Internet Archive’s Wayback Machine does not store this webpage or redirect information for the webpage

⁵ The “[Health Information Gateway](#)” has not been cross-referenced with the previous “Quick Health Data Online” to check for matching or related content.

⁶ The “Screening tests for women” link led to a page titled “Screening Tests and Vaccines”, which contained a link to the “[Screening tests for women](#)” page at the URL

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/screening-tests-and-vaccines/screening-tests-for-women/index.html>. Both pages are no longer live. The redirect leads to pages with suggested tests and vaccines for women, which contains some, but not all, of the information from the removed page.

Table 2: Altered and added links on the “A-Z Health Topics” page and corresponding page status. The following table details links altered and added on the OWH’s “A-Z Health Topics” page, along with the associated status of the page corresponding to each link URL.

Changes were made between [May 12, 2017](#) and [January 12, 2018](#). In cases of altered link text, the corresponding link URLs included reflect those that were on the “A-Z Health Topics” page prior to the link changes. Any link text that has remained unchanged is not listed, but as described in the “Important note” above, in some cases the corresponding link URL has changed or now redirects from the “womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/” subdomain to the “womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/” subdomain — see the [Additional Information](#) section for further explanation. (**Note:** For ease, Table 2 has been formatted to match the format of Table 1 above and corresponding pages have been evaluated in the same way):

Index	Info about links altered or added on “A-Z Health Topics” page				Info about pages and content corresponding to removed link URLs*			
	Link Text	Link URL	Link text altered or added?	Link change/addition date range	Does URL currently redirect?	Page status	Is content elsewhere on OWH site?	Page change date range
11	Anemia <i>Changed to:</i> Iron-deficiency anemia	www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/anemia	Altered	05/28/17-06/27/17	Redirects to page with same content ¹	Live	Yes (some alterations) ¹	05/12/17 - 06/13/17
12	Asthma	www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/asthma	Added	01/07/18-01/12/18	No	Live	--	No before version - 02/05/18
13	Chronic fatigue syndrome	www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/chronic-fatigue-syndrome	Altered	09/26/17-	Redirects to	Live	Yes	06/02/17-

	<i>Changed to:</i> Chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME/CFS)	gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/chronic-fatigue-syndrome.html		10/10/17	page with same content ²			12/17/17
14	Myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS)	www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/chronic-fatigue-syndrome.html	Added	09/26/17-10/10/17	Redirects to page with same content ²	Live	Yes	06/02/17-12/17/17
15	Health Information Gateway	https://gateway.womenshealth.gov/	Added	10/10/17-10/16/17	No	Live	--	No before version - 02/10/18
16	Pelvic organ prolapse	www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/pelvic-organ-prolapse	Added	11/30/17-12/13/17	No	Live	--	No before version - 12/23/17

***Important note:** Some of the link URLs on the “A-Z Health Topics” page at the “womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/” subdomain listed above began redirecting to “womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/” subdomain URLs, which correspond to new pages that contain the same or very similar content. In these cases, the “Info about pages and content corresponding to removed link URLs” column in the tables below refers to the most recent pages that the listed link URL corresponds to. These redirects and the date range when they occurred are specified in the “Additional Notes for Table 2” section below. See the [Additional Information](#) section for more details about this URL path change.

Additional Notes for Table 2:

¹ The content on the “Anemia” page is not identical to the content now on the “Iron-deficiency anemia” page. Some information has been added or removed to reflect the shifted focus on iron-deficiency anemia. For instance, information about other forms of anemia, such as vitamin deficiency anemia and anemias caused by underlying diseases or inherited blood disorders, has been removed.

² Between [February 05, 2018](#) and [February 08, 2018](#), the link URL on the “A-Z Health Topics” page was changed to <https://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/chronic-fatigue-syndrome>. The link URL listed in the table now redirects to this new URL.

Section 2: Assessment of page status corresponding to links on the “A-Z Health Topics” page as of February 2018

With the exception of the links noted in Table 3, below, all links found on the “A-Z Health Topics” page on [February 8, 2018](#) lead to live pages related to the content of the link text.

Table 3: Links on the “A-Z Health Topics” page corresponding to removed pages, including redirects as of February 2018. The following table details the links on OWH’s “A-Z Health Topics” page, found on [February 8, 2018](#), that correspond to removed pages. (**Note:** For ease, Table 3 has been formatted to match the format of Table 1 above and corresponding pages have been evaluated in the same way):

Info about links on "A-Z Health Topics" page				Info about removed pages and content corresponding to listed link URLs				
Index	Link Text	Link URL	Is link text still listed on A-Z page?	Link change date range	Does URL currently redirect?	Page status	Is content elsewhere on OWH site?	Page removal date range
17	Early-stage breast cancer treatment	www.womenshealth.gov/cancer/breast-cancer/early-stage-breast-cancer	Yes	02/05/18 - 02/08/18 ¹	No, the URL gives a 404 error	Page removed	No	07/28/17 - 02/05/18
18	Screening tests and vaccines	www.womenshealth.gov/nwhw/by-age Previously: www.womenshealth.gov/screening-tests-and-vaccines/index.html	Yes	02/05/18 - 02/08/18	No, but previous link URL redirects to current URL	Live, but page for previous URL removed	Partially ²	05/12/17 - 06/27/17

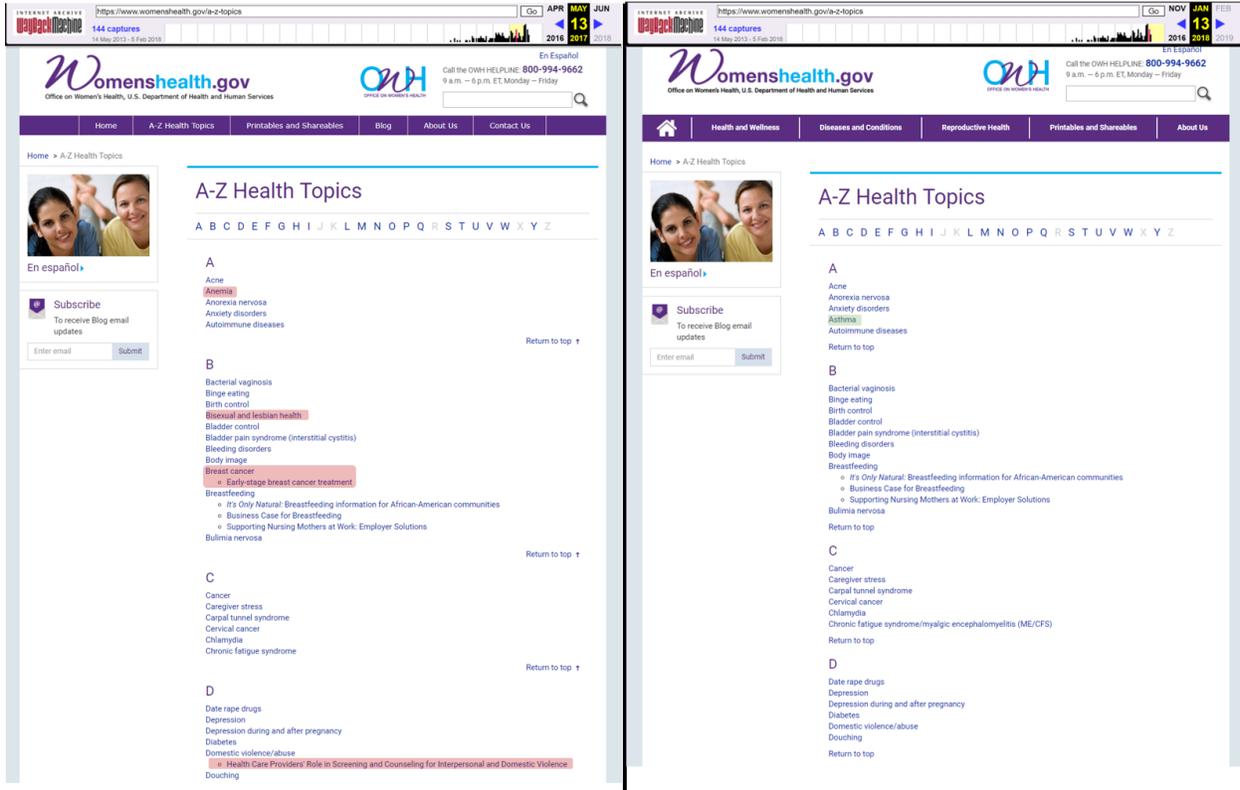
Additional Notes for Table 3:

¹ The previous link URL for this link text was the same as the link URL listed in [Table 1](#) (Index 4), which was removed as a sub-bullet of "Cancer":

www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/early-stage-breast-cancer.html

² The removed page was a repository of links to pages on topics related to screening tests and vaccines. Some of these pages, or pages with the same content, are still live, such as those for [pap smears](#) and [osteoporosis](#). Others are no longer live, such as the "[Lesbian and bisexual health](#)" and "[The environment and women's health](#)" pages, though content from some of these pages may be live elsewhere on the OWH website. The current link URL leads to a page with suggested tests and vaccines for women, which contains some, but not all, of the information from the removed page.

Screenshot 1: A side-by-side comparison of the [May 12, 2017](#) version and the [January 12, 2018](#) version of the “A-Z Health Topics” page from the Internet Archive’s Wayback Machine (**Note: IAWM records versions in GMT.**) Sections A-D are presented below as a representative example of the page’s contents, and sections beyond “D” are not displayed. Red highlighting indicates removed links and green highlighting indicates added links.



Note: For legibility, this screenshot represents only a portion of the content on this page, and does not show all of the links that have been removed since May 12, 2017. The linked dates listed in the tables above—which show the windows of time in which each link was removed, altered, or added—can be used to see navigate different versions, in full, of this page.

Additional Information: Reorganization, addition, and removal of fact sheet and other resource links on the OWH website during the move from the “ePublications” page to the “Fact sheets” page

This section is devoted to comparing the OWH website’s previous and current repository of fact sheet and other resource links. The repository was moved from the “ePublications” page to the “Fact sheets” page:

- Previously, the “ePublications” page was at the URL <https://womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/index.html> (Removed between [April 26, 2017](#) and [May 13, 2017](#)).
- Currently, the “Fact sheets” page is at the URL <https://www.womenshealth.gov/printables-and-shareables/resource/fact-sheets> (Live since at least [April 27, 2017](#)).

The information below is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of the changes made to the repository or access to resources linked from the repository, but is rather intended to provide context for changes to some of links described in [Webpage 1](#). Specific information about fact sheets and other resources that have been removed from the OWH website will be detailed in future reports about those specific parts of the website.

Information about the “ePublications” page

1. The “[ePublications](#)” page was a repository of informational fact sheets about women’s health topics organized by 22 broad health categories.
2. Each broad health category section listed links that led to pages with informational text about the corresponding health topic. Some links appeared under multiple categories. The URLs for these pages, which were referred to as “fact sheets” corresponded to the “womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/” subdomain. Each fact sheet page had a link to a PDF containing the same or similar content to the informational text on the page.
3. There were also links on the page, found by clicking on drop-down sections within each health category, with URLs that led to PDFs. The URLs corresponded to the “womenshealth.gov/files/assets/docs/” subdomain. Some of the corresponding PDFs were factsheets, while others provided informational charts. For some, but not all of these resources, there were links corresponding to both an English and Spanish language version of the PDF. These PDFs are no longer live at the previous URLs, however a comprehensive analysis has not been conducted to determine if the content can be found elsewhere on the OWH website.

Information about the “Fact sheets” page

1. The “[Fact sheets](#)” page links from the OWH website’s “Printables and shareables” menu item, and is the current repository of informational fact sheets about women’s health

topics organized by 14 broad health categories. The repository was first stored on the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine on [April 27, 2017](#).

2. Under each broad health category section, there are links that correspond to PDFs with informational text about the health topics. The URLs for these pages correspond to the "womenshealth.gov/files/documents/" subdomain.
3. On [April 27, 2017](#), there were no links to Spanish language PDFs. Since then, the number of fact sheet links has increased and each fact sheet now has a corresponding link to both an English and a Spanish language PDF.

Information about move from the "ePublications" page to the "Fact sheets" page

1. Between [April 26, 2017](#) and [May 13, 2017](#), the "ePublications" URL, <http://womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/index.html>, began redirecting to the "Printables and Shareables" URL, <https://www.womenshealth.gov/printables-and-shareables>, and the "ePublications" page was removed from the OWH website. The "Printables and Shareables" page leads to the "Fact sheets" page via the "Browse by resource" link or icon.
2. Some health categories that were on the "ePublications" page have been removed, such as "[Healthy aging](#)" and "[Sleep disorders](#)." Some categories have remained the same, such as "Pregnancy" and "Reproductive Health." Other health categories have been added to "Fact sheets" that were not previously on "ePublications," such as "Breastfeeding" and "HIV and AIDS" (see Screenshot 2).
3. Some resources listed in the repositories have remained the same, although some have been moved to different health categories on the "Fact sheets" page. For example, "[Bacterial vaginosis](#)" ([April 26, 2017](#) version) has moved from "Reproductive health" to "Sexual health" section. Other resources have been removed from the repository, such as the "[Date Rape Drugs Fact Sheet](#)," whose URL now redirects to a related page, and the "[Lesbian and bisexual health fact sheet](#)" (see "[Removal of Webpage and Corresponding Links Pertaining to Lesbian and Bisexual Health from HHS's Office of Women's Health Website](#)" report).
4. For some of the health topics that correspond to link URLs listed on the "ePublications" page, but removed from the "Fact sheets" page, there are different pages that are still live with the same or similar content. For example, the "[Depression During and After Pregnancy](#)" page was previously listed under the "Pregnancy" section, but a page with the same content can now be found on the "A-Z Health Topics" page.
5. For health topic fact sheets that are still associated with live pages, the corresponding previous "womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/" subdomain URLs now redirect to new pages with the same or similar content corresponding to "womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/" subdomain URLs. (See [Table 1](#) and "Additional Notes for Table 1" above for examples of redirects.)
6. Pages corresponding to "womenshealth.gov/files/assets/docs/" subdomain URLs, linked from the drop-down sections on the "ePublications" page, appear to have been removed. The existence of similar or identical content elsewhere on the OWH website has not been evaluated.

