



FACT SHEET

Upopolis® is a therapeutic, safe, and secure online support network for youth living with medical diagnosis or navigating a stressful life event; it aims to help alleviate fear and anxiety, and positively impact outcomes by helping youth to:

CONNECT

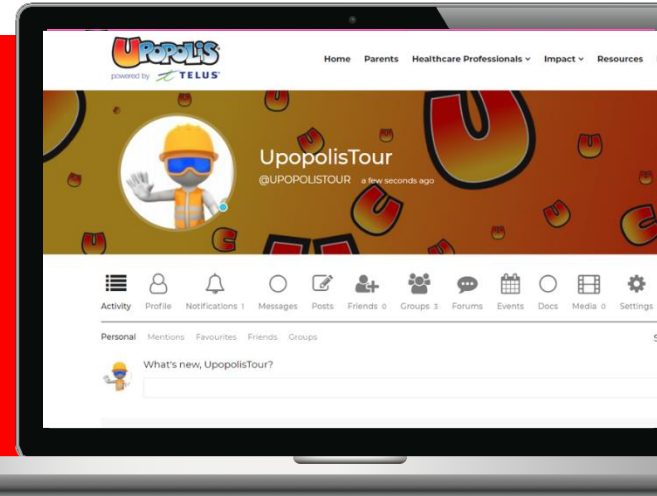
- peers with similar experiences and a team of certified child life specialists

LEARN

- coping skills and access information on procedures, diagnoses, disabilities, and life events.

SHARE

- create/join discussions with other Upopolis members.



Overview:

Upopolis provides youth across North America with a private, safe, and secure network where they can connect with peers who are having similar experiences e.g., youth with chronic illness, critical illness, their siblings, and youth experiencing grief due to the death of a loved one. This therapeutic online network is comprised of youth aged 10 - 18 years, youth mentors, child life specialists and other professionals.

Upopolis gives youth the opportunity to access resources that are created for them by reliable sources which are vetted by child life specialists. Upopolis also offers programming to foster expression of feelings, processing of information and experiences, the chance to share their experiences and knowledge with others, and more. Upopolis offers “groups” which youth may use to feature personal blogs, private forums to discuss their experiences, hospital specific information and activities for fun and entertainment.

About Upopolis:

Upopolis began in 2007 at McMaster Children's Hospital and has since grown to include a network of 25+ hospitals, health care centres and organizations across Canada – and continues to grow. Each hospital and organization have an opportunity to a space within Upopolis to connect and share information with the youth they refer.

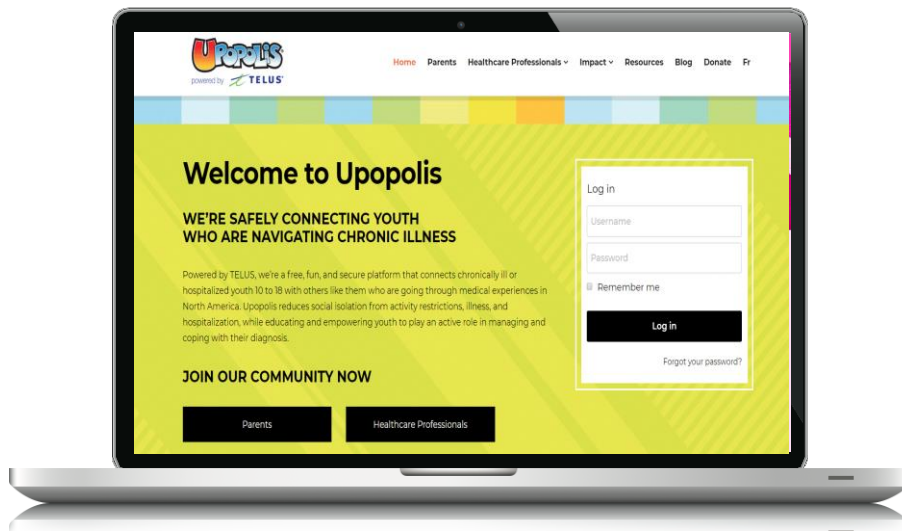
Upopolis Island:

In 2021, the Upopolis team launched a second private network to provide a place for youth to connect who were navigating stressful life events e.g., grief and sibling illness. Having a second network allows the team to set up groups to better meet the needs of the youth and organizations referring to this community.

Therapeutic Goals of Upopolis

The therapeutic goals of Upopolis are:

- to provide a safe and therapeutic online outlet for youth with medical diagnosis, their siblings, and youth who have experienced the death of a loved one to connect with one another.
- to promote creativity for youth by allowing them to create their own groups on Upopolis to share experiences and interests with other users.
- to access trusted medical, health and wellness information provided by individual hospitals/clinics/centres that is vetted by health care professionals.
- to encourage youth to express themselves through blogging, group projects, photos, live chats and online activities always with the support and supervision of mentors and health care staff who understand their unique struggles and experiences.
- to enhance the experience of a social support platform to one that is therapeutic and unique in meeting the needs of youth with medical diagnosis or navigating a stressful life event.



"Outside of Upopolis I don't know many people that know what it's like having to miss out on things because of my condition."
-CharLee

"Upopolis is one of the key things that got me through all my hospitalizations...I have turned to Upopolis for medical information, access to child life specialists, and connections." - Maggie

"I'm honored to be able to help siblings feel a sense of belonging during their family's medical journey. There are others who are experiencing the same isolation and want to help." - Tija, Sibling Group Lead

"If you struggle with your symptoms and want to find more people like you, get on Upopolis, it's really fun!" - Addison

"Upopolis makes you feel less alone. You get to meet others and help each other through tough times." - Bee

"Upopolis has made me feel less alone and more confident." - Jenna

About Kids' Health Links Foundation

Kids' Health Links Foundation (KHLF) is a registered Canadian charity that, through the use of technology, helps young hospital patients stay connected to their family, friends and schools, and with other patients across Canada (www.upopolis.com). Upopolis was developed in partnership with TELUS. KHLF has also developed and offers online resources for front line pediatric care professions (www.upedia.ca) and child and youth mental health professionals (www.UMIND.ca), across Canada. Find out more at www.kidshealthlinks.org. UPOPOLIS®, UPEDIA®, and UMIND® are registered trade-marks of Kids' Health Links Foundation.