

Consumers' high use of digital health tools doesn't match their data privacy concerns

Article

The data: Consumers are hesitant to [share their medical data](#) with technology companies inside and outside healthcare, according to Rock Health's 2022 Digital Health Consumer

Adoption Survey of 8,000+ US adults.

Digging into the data: We summarized the key data points on who patients do and don't trust with their health data.

- **70% of consumers will share** health information such as **medication history, health records, lab results, and physical activity data** with their clinicians.
- **Few consumers are willing to share** these types of data with **health technology companies (15%) and tech players outside of healthcare (7%)**.
- Patients were more willing to share medical data with these types of companies in 2020. So, consumers' privacy and trust concerns have grown in the past two years.

Yes, but: Consumers may not trust tech players with their data, but they're using tech companies' tools and services for health-related purposes.

- For example, **79% of US adults have used a mobile health app** in the past year, and **39% use wearables that have health-tracking capabilities**, per a December 2022 Insider Intelligence survey.

Why the disconnect? Patients are using digital health tools—including ones from Big Tech—that require inputting data to track weight loss, mood, blood pressure, medication intake, and more. But at the same time, they say they don't want to share health data with these companies.

We think that's because tech companies' data security mishaps have been in the spotlight. So, when asked if they're willing to share sensitive health data with a tech entity, consumers' natural reaction is to express distrust.

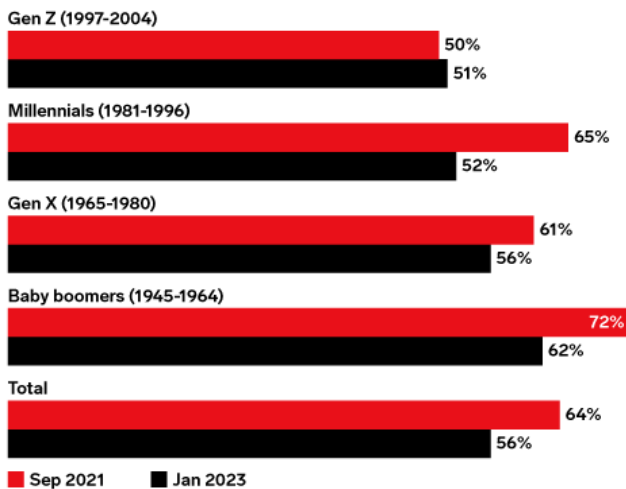
But patients who are already using health-tracking apps and wearables are split on being concerned about the security of their data, per Morning Consult's January 2023 National Tracking Poll.

- **52% of health app users said they're very or somewhat concerned about the privacy of their health information**, while **45% said they're not worried**.
- Wearable owners were also evenly divided between the two sentiments, with **49%** on one side and **48%** on the other.

Digital health players aren't out of the woods, though. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) recently delivered a warning shot to industry players when it charged GoodRx with violating the Health Breach Notification Rule. The FTC claims GoodRx broke its promise that it wouldn't share personal health data with advertisers or other third parties. Some digital health apps could be next to face the music.

US Adults Who Are Concerned About the Privacy of Their Health Data on Smartphone Apps, by Generation, Sep 2021 & Jan 2023

% of respondents in each group



Note: "very" or "somewhat concerned"

Source: Morning Consult as cited in company blog, Feb 9, 2023

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