

# Social Recommendations Influence One in Three Mothers to Buy

## ARTICLE |

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When it comes to shopping, **social media seems to have somewhat limited influence on parents' purchasing behavior**—but they'll use it (and other online resources) for research.

A survey from **MRI Simmons** concluded in August 2018 (prior to the MRI and Simmons Research merger) found that 27.4% of parents, on average, said they were more likely to buy products they see used or recommended by friends on social sites, higher than the one-fifth of total adult respondents who said the same. Mothers were almost twice as likely as fathers to say they'd buy products they see their friends posting about on social media, but that could be because mothers have a larger social media network and more responsibility purchasing things for the household.

**US Mothers vs. Fathers Who Agree They Are More Likely to Buy Products They See Used/Recommended by Friends on Social Media, Aug 2018**

% of mothers, % of fathers and % of total adults

Mothers	34.8%
Fathers	18.3%
Total adult population	20.1%

*Note: mothers and fathers with children under 18 in the household  
Source: Simmons Research, "Summer 2018 National Consumer Study," Feb 5, 2019*

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"Temperament may come into play here, too," eMarketer principal analyst Mark Dolliver said. "Fathers probably need more guidance than mothers do when it comes to buying things for the household. But they're probably less willing to admit this to anyone, including themselves. It's a bit like the notorious aversion men have to asking for directions, no matter how lost they are."

Similar to consumers in general, parents don't love ads on social media. According to the MRI Simmons study, 21.7% of mothers and 12.1% of fathers said they were "more likely to buy products I see advertised on a social sharing/networking site." But parents were more likely to be influenced by social ads vs. adults overall, among whom just 13.0% said they were more likely to buy goods they see advertised on social. This may largely reflect the fact that parents of small children tend to be younger than the adult population and, hence, are more open to the influence of digital media.

Regarding advertising in general, the MRI Simmons survey found that 44.7% of mothers and 36.4% of fathers acknowledged that advertising "helps me learn about the products companies have to offer." And a September 2018 survey conducted by [The Harris Poll](#) for [OpenX](#) found that 59% of mothers and 67% of fathers regarded online ads as a source of information about new products in particular.

[Ever-changing concerns around topics like health and safety also have new parents turning online to gather research](#), especially if their immediate circle of friends and family aren't at the same life stage or aren't as digitally savvy. Also, advice from family and friends is often not as up to date as what social media or the internet can provide.

“New parents use social media to inform their shopping decisions and considering products recommended by those they follow, including their friends, brands, influencers and social media personalities,” said Jaime Schwartz Cohen, senior vice president and director of nutrition at public relations firm **Ketchum**. “They typically do research online before going to a family member or friend for recommendations.”