


Consumers are taking healthcare into their own hands

Article



The trend: Consumers are taking more health management activities into their own hands, sometimes supervised by physicians—but often not, [per](#) Kaufman Hall.

- About 3,500 US adults were asked how often they performed seven specific health management activities. Only the “always” or “often” results were reported.
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Digging into the data: The top three areas where consumers are managing their own health aren't surprising.

- **Diet and nutrition topped the chart.** 34% said they always or often ate healthy foods, saw a nutritionist, used a meal prep or delivery programs, or took daily supplements and vitamins.
- 31% said they **use fitness wearables or other devices** to track their health.
- And 29% said they **exercise at home or a gym**, or see a physical therapist.

But wait, there's more! The top three activities are easy enough to do, so those results don't yield new insight.

It's the remaining categories that caught our interest:

- **Mental health:** Seeing a mental health counselor or therapist was a regular health maintenance activity for 22%.
- **Self-care:** Defined as using wellness or meditation mobile apps, and self-diagnosing health issues using websites like **WebMD**—18% said they did this always or often.
- **Using diagnostic tests at home:** The pandemic boosted consumers' appreciation for in-home test kits to detect COVID-19, which took their place alongside lab-quality test kits for genetics, fertility, and colon cancer. Now, 12% said they use these kits always or often.
- **Alternative therapies:** Another 12% said they used therapies like acupuncture, massage, and cryotherapy, or saw a chiropractor.

The bigger picture: Now consumers are **going beyond simple diet and exercise regimens** to find ways to stay balanced and healthy.

- Doctors are still the most trusted source of health information—but they're not the only source.
- Digital health companies can reach wider audiences with self-care and wellness therapies.
- But their messages—and products—must create trust to gain consumer loyalty.

US Adults' Attitudes Toward Online Health, March 2022

% of respondents

Very cautious about which websites accessed for health and wellness information

73%

More likely to visit a health website that was recommended by doctor or that was seen in doctor's office

64%

Researching online provides confidence to speak knowledgeably about a medical condition

56%

The internet is the first source used when researching for health and wellness

54%

Typically conduct research online prior to doctor's appointment

49%

Refer friends to websites

47%

Comfortable registering on a website which consistently offers useful information about particular condition

44%

Feel the internet is a good way to confirm a diagnosis

32%

More comfortable talking about health and wellness concerns online than face-to-face

32%

Feel health and wellness advertising on the internet is trustworthy

31%

Trust the medical information other people share on social media

23%

Note: ages 18+

Source: Kantar, "2022 MARS Consumer Health Study," May 24, 2022

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