



# The Social Life of Health Information, 2011

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## Summary of Findings

### **“I don’t know, but I can try to find out” is the default setting for people with health questions.**

The internet has changed people’s relationships with information. Our data consistently show that doctors, nurses, and other health professionals continue to be the first choice for most people with health concerns, but online resources, including advice from peers, are a significant source of health information in the U.S.

These findings are based on a national telephone survey conducted in August and September 2010 among 3,001 adults in the U.S. The complete methodology and results are appended to this report.

The survey finds that, of the 74% of adults who use the internet:

- 80% of internet users have looked online for information about any of 15 health topics such as a specific disease or treatment. This translates to 59% of all adults.
- 34% of internet users, or 25% of adults, have read someone else’s commentary or experience about health or medical issues on an online news group, website, or blog.
- 25% of internet users, or 19% of adults, have watched an online video about health or medical issues.
- 24% of internet users, or 18% of adults, have consulted online reviews of particular drugs or medical treatments.
- 18% of internet users, or 13% of adults, have gone online to find others who might have health concerns similar to theirs.
- 16% of internet users, or 12% of adults, have consulted online rankings or reviews of doctors or other providers.
- 15% of internet users, or 11% of adults, have consulted online rankings or reviews of hospitals or other medical facilities.

Of those who use social network sites (62% of adult internet users, or 46% of all adults):

- 23% of social network site users, or 11% of adults, have followed their friends’ personal health experiences or updates on the site.
- 17% of social network site users, or 8% of adults, have used social networking sites to remember or memorialize other people who suffered from a certain health condition.
- 15% of social network site users, or 7% of adults, have gotten any health information on the sites.

## **“I know, and I want to share my knowledge” is the leading edge of health care.**

As broadband and mobile access spreads, more people have the ability – and increasingly, the habit – of sharing what they are doing or thinking. In health care this translates to people tracking their workout routines, posting reviews of their medical treatments, and raising awareness about certain health conditions.

These are not yet mainstream activities, but there are pockets of highly-engaged patients and caregivers who are taking an active role in tracking and sharing what they have learned.

Of adults who use the internet:

- 27% of internet users, or 20% of adults, have tracked their weight, diet, exercise routine or some other health indicators or symptoms online.
- 6% of internet users, or 4% of adults, have posted comments, questions or information about health or medical issues on a website of any kind, such as a health site or news site that allows comments and discussion.
- 4% of internet users, or 3% of adults, have posted their experiences with a particular drug or medical treatment.
- 4% of internet users, or 3% of adults, have posted a review online of a doctor.
- 3% of internet users, or 2% of adults, have posted a review online of a hospital.

Of adults who use social network sites:

- 14% of social network site users, or 6% of adults, have raised money for or drawn attention to a health-related issue or cause.
- 11% of social network site users, or 5% of adults, have posted comments, queries, or information about health or medical matters.
- 9% of social network site users, or 4% of adults, have started or joined a health-related group on a social networking site.

The social life of health information is robust. The online conversation about health is being driven forward by two forces: 1) the availability of social tools and 2) the motivation, especially among people living with chronic conditions, to connect with each other.

## Acknowledgements

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The Pew Internet & American Life Project is an initiative of the Pew Research Center, a nonprofit “fact tank” that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. The Project is nonpartisan and takes no position on policy issues. Support is provided by The Pew Charitable Trusts.

The California HealthCare Foundation is an independent philanthropy committed to improving the way health care is delivered and financed in California.

**All quantitative, numerical data is based on a September 2010 national telephone survey conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI).**

PSRAI is an independent firm dedicated to high-quality research providing reliable, valid results for clients in the United States and around the world.

## Main Report

### Social Media in Context

**Health professionals and offline resources are central to health care, but people use online social tools to gather information, share stories, and discuss concerns.**

This report sets out to illuminate the different ways people seek health information as well as how people use online social tools to share knowledge with loved ones, fellow patients, and caregivers.

When asked to think about the last time they had a health issue, 71% of adults in the U.S. say they received information, care, or support from a health professional. Fifty-five percent of adults say they received such help from friends and family. Twenty-one percent of adults say they turned to others who have the same health condition for information, care, or support. The vast majority of respondents say those interactions happened offline.

The last time you had a health issue, did you get information, care, or support from...	Total yes	Yes, online	Yes, offline	Yes, both	Not a source
A doctor or other health care professional	<b>71%</b>	1%	66%	4%	<b>29%</b>
Friends and family	<b>55</b>	1	42	12	<b>44</b>
Others who have the same health condition	<b>21</b>	1	16	4	<b>77</b>

**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, August 9-September 13, 2010 Survey. N=3001 adults and the margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points for the full sample. Online questions were asked only of internet users (N=2065).

However, three-quarters of U.S. adults (74%) use the internet and, of those, many participate in an online conversation about health. For example:

- 80% of internet users have looked online for information about any one of 15 health topics such as a specific disease or treatment.<sup>1</sup> This translates to 59% of all adults.
- 34% of internet users have read someone else's commentary or experience about health or medical issues on an online news group, website, or blog.

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<sup>1</sup> For more details, see "Health Topics" (Pew Internet, 2011). Available at: <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/HealthTopics.aspx>

- 14% of internet users have signed up to receive email updates or alerts about health or medical issues.
- 6% of internet users have posted comments, questions or information about health or medical issues on a website of some kind, such as a health site or news site that allows comments and discussion.
- 5% of internet users have posted health-related comments, questions, or information in an online discussion, a listserv, or other online group forum.
- 4% of internet users have posted such comments, questions or information on a blog.

These findings are similar to those we reported in 2009.<sup>2</sup>

This survey is the first time we collected the following data point:

- 25% of internet users have watched an online video about health or medical issues.

Internet users living with one or more chronic conditions<sup>3</sup> are more likely than those who report no conditions to have done three of the above activities: 37% have read someone else's health commentary online (vs. 31% of those reporting no chronic conditions), 31% have watched a health video online (vs. 22% of those reporting no chronic conditions), and 23% have signed up to receive email updates about certain health topics (vs. 9% of those reporting no chronic conditions).

Wireless users outpace other internet users on every one of the above activities by significant margins. For example, 37% of wireless users have read about someone else's health experience online, compared with 24% of other internet users. Twenty-seven percent of wireless users have watched an online health video, compared with 21% of other users.

## **Social network sites are popular, but used only sparingly for health updates and queries.**

As of September 2010, 62% of adult internet users report using a social network site like MySpace or Facebook. Of that group:

- 23% of social networking site users have followed their friends' personal health experiences or updates on the site. This translates to 11% of all adults.
- 17% have used social network sites to remember or memorialize other people who suffered from a certain health condition.
- 15% have gotten any health information on the sites.
- 14% have raised money for or drawn attention to a health-related issue or cause.

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<sup>2</sup> "The Social Life of Health Information" (Pew Internet: 2009). Available at:

<http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/8-The-Social-Life-of-Health-Information.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> Respondents were asked if they have high blood pressure; diabetes; asthma, bronchitis, emphysema, or other lung conditions; heart disease, heart failure, or heart attack; cancer; or any other chronic health problem or condition.

- 11% have posted comments, queries, or information about health or medical matters.
- 9% have started or joined a health-related group on a social networking site.

## People caring for loved ones are more likely than other adults to use social network sites to gather and share health information and support.

More than a quarter of adults in the U.S. provide unpaid care to a loved one. Twenty-seven percent of adults care for an adult relative or friend; 5% of adults care for a child with a health condition or disability.<sup>4</sup>

Caregivers are one group that is significantly more likely than others to use social network sites for health-related pursuits: 28% of caregivers who use social networks sites say they follow friends' health updates, compared with 21% of other social network site users. Twenty percent of caregivers who use social network sites say they have gathered health information on such a site, compared with 12% of other users.

Social network sites are not a significant source of health information for most people, but they can be a source of encouragement and care. In a book about social support, *Consequential Strangers*, authors Melinda Blau and Karen Fingerman write about how people in our wide circles of acquaintance “offer practical assistance, firsthand information, and a special brand of no-strings emotional comfort.”<sup>5</sup>

On a practical level, the vast majority of people living with chronic conditions never attend traditional, in-person support group meetings, although studies show they could benefit from such groups.<sup>6</sup> Instead, people often mobilize their “social convoy” of family members, friends, colleagues, fellow patients, and fellow caregivers – many of whom are now connected online via email, social network sites, or by other means. As Blau and Fingerman describe it:

A natural network provides a safety net and puts the patient in charge—a good balance in any situation. Think of it as customizing your convoy. If people who are already on board don't have the information, experience, or empathy you need, you enlist others who do.<sup>7</sup>

In a pattern that matches this observation, people living with one or more chronic conditions and those living with disability<sup>8</sup> are significantly more likely than other social network site users to gather health

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<sup>4</sup> The word “caregivers” is used throughout this report to refer to people who, in the past 12 months, have provided unpaid care to a parent, child, friend, or other loved one. Unpaid care for an adult may include help with personal needs or household chores, managing finances, arranging for outside services, or visiting regularly to see how they are doing. Unpaid care to a child includes care for an ongoing or serious short-term condition, emotional or behavioral problems, or developmental problems.

<sup>5</sup> Melinda Blau and Karen L. Fingerman, PhD, *Consequential Strangers: The Power of People Who Don't Seem to Matter. . . But Really Do* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2009). See: <http://www.consequentialstrangers.com/about/>

<sup>6</sup> Jason E. Owen et al., “Use of Health-Related and Cancer-Specific Support Groups Among Adult Cancer Survivors” (Cancer 69, 2007). See: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17503435>

<sup>7</sup> Blau and Fingerman (2009).

<sup>8</sup> Respondents were asked six separate questions about physical and mental abilities.

information on these sites. Twenty percent of social network site users living with chronic conditions do so, compared with 12% of social network site users who report no chronic conditions. Twenty-three percent of social network site users living with disability get health information on these sites, compared with 13% of those who report no disability.

## Relatively few use hospital ranking and doctor review sites.

Hospital and doctor review sites have not yet become health care decision-making tools for most consumers. One national survey found that only 6% of American adults are aware of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid's Hospital Compare tool.<sup>9</sup> Our current survey finds a similarly low usage of such sites among adult internet users, matching trends we first reported in 2009.<sup>10</sup>

- 16% of internet users have consulted online rankings or reviews of doctors or other providers.
- 15% of internet users have consulted online rankings or reviews of hospitals or other medical facilities.
- 4% of internet users have posted a review online of a doctor.
- 3% of internet users have posted a review online of a hospital.

Again, caregivers are more likely than other groups to engage in these activities. For example, 21% of online caregivers consult online doctor reviews, compared with 13% of internet users not currently caring for a loved one. Twenty percent of online caregivers consult online hospital reviews, compared with 12% of other internet users.

Eighteen percent of internet users living with one or more chronic conditions have looked online for doctor rankings or reviews, compared with 14% of internet users who report no conditions. Six percent of internet users living with chronic disease have posted such a review, compared with 3% of those who report no conditions. Both of those differences are statistically significant, but more importantly, they are significant because of the context of who is most likely to be a frequent health care consumer: someone living with a chronic condition.

Internet users living with disability do not report a higher or lower likelihood to consult hospital rankings and doctor reviews. However, they are more likely than other internet users to post reviews of doctors and other health professionals online: 8% do so, compared with 4% of those who report no disability.

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<sup>9</sup> Tara Lagu and Peter K. Lindenauer, "Putting the Public Back in Public Reporting of Health Care Quality." (Journal of the American Medical Association: 2010;304(15):1711-1712.) See: <http://jama.ama-assn.org/content/304/15/1711.extract>

<sup>10</sup> The Social Life of Health Information, 2009.



## One in four adult internet users have consulted online reviews of drugs or treatments.

In November 2009, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration held a public hearing on how companies use the internet, particularly social media, to promote prescription drugs, medical devices, and other regulated products.<sup>11</sup> No regulations have been issued to date. But because of this heightened interest in how consumers gather and share information about drugs, we added a new category of online reviews to the current survey and find:

- 24% of internet users have consulted online reviews of particular drugs or medical treatments.
- 4% of internet users have posted their experiences with a particular drug or medical treatment.

Fully 38% of online caregivers have consulted online drug reviews, compared with 18% of internet users who do not take care of a loved one. Seven percent of online caregivers have posted such a review, compared with just 2% of other internet users.

Thirty-one percent of internet users living with one or more chronic conditions have looked at online drug reviews, compared with 20% of internet users reporting no conditions. Six percent of internet users living with chronic disease have posted an online review of a drug or treatment, compared with 2% of those with no conditions.

Internet users living with disability are just as likely as other people to look up drug reviews, but they are more likely than other people to say they have posted their own treatment experiences online. Nine percent of internet users living with disability say they have posted a review of a drug or treatment, compared with 2% of those who report no disability.

In a separate question we find that 24% of internet users say they go online to look for information about drug safety or recalls.<sup>12</sup>

## One in four adult internet users track their own health data online.

Carol Torgan, a health science strategist, points out that anyone who makes note of their blood pressure, weight, or menstrual cycle could be categorized as a “self-tracker.”<sup>13</sup> Add an online component, and you have the ingredients for a social health application or an electronic health record. Our survey finds that 15% of internet users have tracked their weight, diet, or exercise routine online. In addition, 17% of internet users have tracked any other health indicators or symptoms online. Fully 27% of adult internet users say yes to either question.

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<sup>11</sup> See: <http://www.fda.gov/AboutFDA/CentersOffices/CDER/ucm184250.htm>

<sup>12</sup> For more details, please see “Health Topics” (Pew Internet: 2011). Available at: <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/HealthTopics.aspx>

<sup>13</sup> Carol Torgan, “Self-tracking, Sensors, and mHealth: Trends and Opportunities.” (Presentation to the 2011 mHealth Networking Conference.) See: <http://www.caroltorgan.com/self-tracking-sensors-mhealth/>

Wireless users are more likely than other internet users to track health data online. Eighteen percent of wireless users have tracked their weight, diet, or exercise routine online, compared with 9% of internet users who do not have a wireless-enabled laptop or other device. Nineteen percent of wireless users have tracked any other health indicators or symptoms online, compared with 11% of non-wireless internet users.

Separately, looking just at the 85% of adults who own a cell phone, 9% say they have software applications or “apps” on their phones that help them track or manage their health.

## Mobile health apps

Percentage of cell phone users in each group who have a software application or "app" on their phone to help them track or manage their health

Total cell phone users	9%
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	10
Female	8
<b>Race</b>	
White	7
African American	15*
Hispanic	11
<b>Age (at time of survey)</b>	
18-29	15*
30-49	8
50-64	6
65+	5
<b>Education</b>	
Some high school	9
High school graduate	6
Some college	13*
College graduate or more	9
<b>Household Income</b>	
< \$30,000	7
\$30,000 - \$49,999	8
\$50,000 - \$74,999	12
\$75,000+	11
<b>Language</b>	
English	9*
Spanish	1
<b>Community Type</b>	
Rural	4
Suburban	9
Urban	12*

\* indicates a significant difference

**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, August 9-September 13, 2010 Tracking Survey. N=3,001 adults and N for cell phone users=2,485. The margin of error is +/- 2.5 percentage points for all adults and 3 points for cell phone users.

## More people report being helped, rather than harmed, by online health information.

One in three adults in the U.S. (30%) say they or someone they know has been helped by following medical advice or health information found online.

Have you or anyone you know been helped by following medical advice or health information found on the internet?		
	All adults	Total helped
Yes, major help	6%	30%
Yes, moderate help	15	
Yes, minor help	9	
No/don't know/refused	69	-

**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, August 9-September 13, 2010 Survey. N=3001 adults and the margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points for the full sample.

Fully 44% of caregivers report that online health resources have been helpful. Adults who went through a recent personal health change – gaining or losing a lot of weight, becoming pregnant, or quitting smoking – are also especially likely to report being helped by online resources: 40% do so, compared with 28% of other adults.

Ten percent of adults living with two or more chronic conditions – unfortunately a large and growing slice of the population in the U.S. – say they or someone they know has received major help from online health information, compared with 5% of adults who report no conditions.

Just 3% of adults say they or someone they know has been harmed.

Have you or anyone you know been harmed by following medical advice or health information found on the internet?		
	All adults	Total harmed
No/don't know/refused	97%	-
Yes, minor harm	1	3%
Yes, moderate harm	1	
Yes, serious harm	1	

**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, August 9-September 13, 2010 Survey. N=3001 adults and the margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points for the full sample.

## Health Topics

### Eight in ten adult internet users look for information online.

Again, 80% of internet users have looked online for information about at least one of the following topics:<sup>14</sup>

<b>The % of adult internet users who have looked online for information about...</b>	
66	specific disease or medical problem
56	certain medical treatment or procedure
44	doctors or other health professionals
36	hospitals or other medical facilities
33	health insurance, including private insurance, Medicare or Medicaid
29	food safety or recalls
24	drug safety or recalls
22	environmental health hazards
19	pregnancy and childbirth
17	memory loss, dementia, or Alzheimer's
16	medical test results
14	how to manage chronic pain
12	long-term care for an elderly or disabled person
7	end-of-life decisions
28	another health topic not included in the survey
<b>80</b>	<b>at least one of the above topics</b>

**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, August 9-September 13, 2010 Survey. N=3001 adults and the margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points for the full sample.

### Internet access drives information access.

Since one-quarter of U.S. adults do not go online, the percentage of health information seekers is lower when calculated as a percentage of the total population: 59% of all adults in the U.S. look online for health information.

Women, non-Hispanic whites, younger adults, and those with higher levels of education and income are more likely than other demographic groups to gather health information online.

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<sup>14</sup> "Health Topics" (2011). See: <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/HealthTopics.aspx>

There are two forces at play in the data: access to the internet and interest in health information. For example, women and men are equally likely to have access to the internet, but women are more likely than men to report gathering health information online, which explains the gender gap in the chart below. For the other groups, their overall lower rate of internet adoption combined with lower levels of health information seeking online drives their numbers down significantly when compared with other adults.

### Looking online for health information: Demographics

	Percentage who go online	Percentage who look online for health information
<b>All adults in the U.S.</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>59%</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	73	53
Female	75	65
<b>Race</b>		
White	77	63
African American	66	47
Latino	62	45
<b>Age</b>		
18-29	92	71
30-49	79	66
50-64	71	58
65+	40	29
<b>Education</b>		
Some high school	38	24
High school	64	45
Some college	84	70
College graduate	91	81
<b>Household income</b>		
< \$30,000	57	41
\$30,000 - \$49,999	80	66
\$50,000 - \$74,999	86	71
\$75,000+	95	83

**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, August 9-September 13, 2010 Survey. N=3001 adults and the margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points for the full sample. Margins of error for sub-populations are higher.

As we have reported in the past, people who are living with chronic disease or disability are likely, if they have internet access, to be highly interested in online health information.<sup>15</sup> For those two groups, it is their lack of access to the internet which holds them back from parity with people who report no chronic conditions or disability.

Two other groups with higher rates of online health information gathering include caregivers and people who went through a recent medical emergency.

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### Looking online for health information: Health status

	Percentage who go online	Percentage who look online for health information
<b>All adults in the U.S.</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>59%</b>
<b>Caregiver status</b>		
Currently caring for a loved one (N=860)	79	70
Not a caregiver	71	54
<b>Recent medical crisis</b>		
Experienced within past year – self or someone close (N=982)	76	65
No recent experience	72	55
<b>Recent personal health change</b>		
Experienced within past year (N=499)	68	56
No recent experience	75	59
<b>Chronic disease status</b>		
One or more chronic conditions (N=1488)	64	53
No conditions	81	62
<b>Disability status</b>		
One or more disabilities (N=906)	54	42
No disabilities	81	65

**Source:** Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project, August 9-September 13, 2010 Survey. N=3001 adults and the margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points for the full sample. Margins of error for sub-populations are higher.

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<sup>15</sup> “Chronic Disease and the Internet” (Pew Internet Project: March 24, 2010). Available at: <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Chronic-Disease.aspx>

## Health information is going mobile.

Eighty-five percent of adults in the U.S. own a cell phone. Of those, 17% have used their phone to look up health or medical information. By comparison, seven in ten cell phone owners send or receive text messages; seven in ten use their phones to take pictures; four in ten access the internet on their phones; and 35% have software applications or “apps” on their phones.<sup>16</sup>

	Percentage who own a cell phone	Percentage who use a cell phone to look for health info
<b>All adults in the U.S.</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	88	15
Female	82	13
<b>Race</b>		
White	85	13
African American	79	15
Latino	84	21
<b>Age</b>		
18-29	96	28
30-49	90	16
50-64	85	6
65+	58	5
<b>Education</b>		
Some high school	69	16
High school	82	10
Some college	91	19
College graduate	90	18
<b>Household income</b>		
< \$30,000	75	11
\$30,000 - \$49,999	90	15
\$50,000 - \$74,999	93	16
\$75,000+	95	18
<b>Language</b>		
English	85	15
Spanish (N=197)	74	10
<b>Community type</b>		
Rural	77	9
Suburban	86	14
Urban	84	18

**Source:** Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project, August 9-September 13, 2010 Survey. N=3001 adults and the margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points for the full sample. Margins of error for sub-populations are higher.

<sup>16</sup> “The Rise of Apps Culture” (Pew Internet Project: September 14, 2010). Available at: <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/The-Rise-of-Apps-Culture.aspx>



## **The typical search for health information is on behalf of someone else.**

Half of internet users (48%) who go online for health information say their last search was on behalf of another person, 36% say their last search was on behalf of themselves, and 11% say it was both for themselves and someone else. Thus, while eight in ten internet users go online for health information, the impact of their inquiries may be even broader. And while some groups, such as the chronically ill and those living with disability, are less likely to be online and searching for health information, it does not mean that this information does not reach them through a surrogate of some kind.

## Peer-to-peer Healthcare

### One in five adult internet users have gone online to find others with health concerns similar to their own.

The internet connects people who share interests of all kinds and health is no exception. Eighteen percent of internet users have gone online to find others who might have health concerns similar to theirs.<sup>17</sup> Twenty-three percent of internet users living with at least one of five chronic conditions named in the survey have looked online for someone with similar health concerns, compared with 15% of those who report no conditions.

#### Looking online for someone like you: Health status

Percentage of internet users in each group who have looked online for others with similar health concerns	
<b>All internet users</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>Caregiver status</b>	
Currently caring for a loved one	26*
Not a caregiver	15
<b>Recent medical crisis</b>	
Experienced within past year – self or someone close	23*
No recent experience	16
<b>Recent personal health change</b>	
Experienced within past year	24*
No recent experience	17
<b>Chronic disease status</b>	
One or more chronic conditions	23*
No conditions	15
<b>Disability status</b>	
One or more disabilities (N=439)	20
No disabilities	18

\* indicates a significant difference

**Source:** Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project, August 9-September 13, 2010 Survey. N=2065 internet users age 18+. Margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points for the full sample. Margins of error for sub-populations are higher.

<sup>17</sup> “Peer-to-peer Healthcare” (Pew Internet Project: February 28, 2011). Available at: <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/P2PHealthcare.aspx>

Internet users who have experienced a recent medical emergency, their own or someone else’s, are also more likely than other internet users to go online to try to find someone who shares their situation: 23%, compared with 16%. This fits the pattern observed in Pew Internet’s other research that people going through a medical crisis are voracious information consumers: 85% say they look online for health information, compared with 77% of internet users who have not had that experience in the past year.

Internet users who have experienced a significant change in their physical health, such as weight loss or gain, pregnancy, or quitting smoking are also more likely than other internet users to have looked online for someone like them.

### Health professionals, friends, family members, and fellow patients are all part of the mix.

Even with the proliferation of mobile and online opportunities, however, most adults’ search for health information remains anchored in the offline world. Most people turn to a health professional, friend, or family member when they have a health question; the internet plays a growing but still supplemental role – and mobile connectivity has not changed that.

Again, when asked about the last time they had a health issue, 71% of adults in the U.S. say they received information, care, or support from a health professional. Fifty-five percent of adults say they turned to friends and family. Twenty-one percent of adults say they turned to others who have the same health condition.

The majority of these interactions happen offline: just 5% of adults say they received online information, care, or support from a health professional, 13% say they had online contact with friends and family, and 5% say they interacted online with fellow patients.

The last time you had a health issue, did you get information, care, or support from...	Total yes	Yes, online	Yes, offline	Yes, both	Not a source
A doctor or other health care professional	<b>71%</b>	1%	66%	4%	<b>29%</b>
Friends and family	<b>55</b>	1	42	12	<b>44</b>
Others who have the same health condition	<b>21</b>	1	16	4	<b>77</b>

**Source:** Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project, August 9-September 13, 2010 Survey. N=3001 adults and the margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points for the full sample. Online questions were asked only of internet users (N=2065).

## People turn to different sources for different kinds of information.

All adults were asked which group is more helpful when they need certain types of information or support: health professionals like doctors and nurses or peers like fellow patients, friends, and family.

The pattern of responses was pretty clear: When the item involved technical issues related to a health issue, professionals held sway. When the item involved more personal issues of how to cope with a health issue or get quick relief, then non-professionals were preferred by most patients.

Who is more helpful when you need...	Professional sources like doctors and nurses	Fellow patients, friends, and family	Both equally
Times when professionals matter most			
An accurate medical diagnosis	91%	5%	2%
Information about prescription drugs	85	9	3
Information about alternative treatments	63	24	5
A recommendation for a doctor or specialist	62	27	6
A recommendation for a hospital or other medical facility	62	27	6
Times when non-professionals matter most			
Emotional support in dealing with a health issue	30	59	5
A quick remedy for an everyday health issue	41	51	4
Times when the two groups are equally helpful			
Practical advice for coping with day-to-day health situations	43	46	6

**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, August 9-September 13, 2010 Survey. N=3001 adults and the margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points for the full sample.

Many people find the internet to be a valuable tool, whether they are using it to search for a quick answer or gain a deeper understanding of a new treatment option or prescription. The internet is also, as this study shows, a way to tap into our instincts to gather together, help other people, and be helped ourselves.

## Methodology

### National Telephone Survey

All numerical results in this report are based on data from telephone interviews conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International between August 9 and September 13, 2010, among a sample of 3,001 adults, age 18 and older. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points. For results based on internet users (n=2,065), the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 2.9 percentage points. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting telephone surveys may introduce some error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

A combination of landline and cellular random digit dial (RDD) samples was used to represent all adults in the continental United States who have access to either a landline or cellular telephone. Both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International, LLC (SSI) according to PSRAI specifications. The landline sample for this survey was designed to generalize to the U.S. adult population and to oversample African Americans and Hispanics. To achieve these objectives in a cost effective manner, the design uses standard *list-assisted random digit dialing* (RDD) methodology, but telephone numbers are drawn disproportionately from telephone exchanges with higher than average density of African American and/or Hispanic households. The cellular sample was not list-assisted, but was drawn through a systematic sampling from dedicated wireless 100-blocks and shared service 100-blocks with no directory-listed landline numbers.

New sample was released daily and was kept in the field for at least five days. The sample was released in replicates, which are representative subsamples of the larger population. This ensures that complete call procedures were followed for the entire sample. At least 7 attempts were made to complete an interview at a sampled telephone number. The calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chances of making contact with a potential respondent. Each number received at least one daytime call in an attempt to find someone available. For the landline sample, half of the time interviewers first asked to speak with the youngest adult male currently at home. If no male was at home at the time of the call, interviewers asked to speak with the youngest adult female. For the other half of the contacts interviewers first asked to speak with the youngest adult female currently at home. If no female was available, interviewers asked to speak with the youngest adult male at home. For the cellular sample, interviews were conducted with the person who answered the phone. Interviewers verified that the person was an adult and in a safe place before administering the survey. Cellular sample respondents were offered a post-paid cash incentive for their participation. All interviews completed on any given day were considered to be the final sample for that day.

Disproportionate sampling and non-response in telephone interviews can produce biases in survey-derived estimates. The dataset was weighted in two stages. The first stage of weighting corrected for the disproportionate landline sample design and also accounted for the overlapping landline and cellular sample frames as well as different probabilities of selection associated with the number of adults in the household. The second stage of weighting matched overall sample demographics to population parameters. The demographic weighting parameters are derived from a special analysis of the most recently available Census Bureau's March 2009 Annual Social and Economic Supplement. This analysis produces population parameters for the demographic characteristics of adults age 18 or older. These

parameters are then compared with the sample characteristics to construct sample weights. The weights are derived using an iterative technique that simultaneously balances the distribution of all weighting parameters. Following is the full disposition of all sampled telephone numbers:

**Table 1: Sample Disposition**

Landline	Cell	
53,160	17,075	Total Numbers Dialed
2,613	441	Non-residential
2,430	32	Computer/Fax
21	---	Cell phone
27,936	6,428	Other not working
4,308	311	Additional projected not working
15,852	9,863	Working numbers
29.8%	57.8%	Working Rate
1,436	104	No Answer / Busy
2,734	2,370	Voice Mail
84	17	Other Non-Contact
11,598	7,372	Contacted numbers
73.2%	74.7%	Contact Rate
1,020	1,027	Callback
8,303	4,597	Refusal
2,275	1,748	Cooperating numbers
19.6%	23.7%	Cooperation Rate
158	60	Language Barrier
---	646	Child's cell phone
2,117	1,042	Eligible numbers
93.1%	59.6%	Eligibility Rate
116	42	Break-off
2,001	1,000	Completes
94.5%	96.0%	Completion Rate
13.6%	17.0%	Response Rate

The disposition reports all of the sampled telephone numbers ever dialed from the original telephone number samples. The response rate estimates the fraction of all eligible respondents in the sample that were ultimately interviewed. At PSRAI it is calculated by taking the product of three component rates:

- Contact rate – the proportion of working numbers where a request for interview was made

- Cooperation rate – the proportion of contacted numbers where a consent for interview was at least initially obtained, versus those refused
- Completion rate – the proportion of initially cooperating and eligible interviews that were completed

Thus the response rate for the landline sample was 13.6 percent. The response rate for the cellular sample was 17.0 percent.

## Questions

### August Health Tracking Survey 2010

Final Topline

9/17/10

Data for August 9 – September 13, 2010

Princeton Survey Research Associates International  
for the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project

Sample: n= 3,001 national adults, age 18 and older, including 1,000 cell phone interviews  
Interviewing dates: 08.09.10 – 09.13.10

Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on Total [n=3,001]

Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on internet users [n=2,065]

Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on cell phone users [n=2,485]

Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on online health seekers [n=1,655]

**Q1** Overall, how would you rate the quality of life for you and your family today? Would you say it is... excellent, very good, good, fair or poor?

	CURRENT	
%	17	Excellent
	26	Very good
	34	Good
	16	Fair
	6	Poor
	*	Don't know
	*	Refused

**Q6a** Do you use the internet, at least occasionally?

**Q6b** Do you send or receive email, at least occasionally?

	USES INTERNET	DOES NOT USE INTERNET
Current	74	26

**Q7** Did you happen to use the internet YESTERDAY?

Based on all internet users [N=2,065]

	YES, USED INTERNET YESTERDAY	NO, DID NOT USE INTERNET YESTERDAY	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
Current	76	24	*	0



**Q8** About how often do you use the internet or email from ... [INSERT IN ORDER] – several times a day, about once a day, 3-5 days a week, 1-2 days a week, every few weeks, less often or never?

Based on all internet users [N=2,065]

		SEVERAL TIMES A DAY	ABOUT ONCE A DAY	3-5 DAYS A WEEK	1-2 DAYS A WEEK	EVERY FEW WEEKS	LESS OFTEN	NEVER	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. Home	Current	43	21	13	12	3	3	5	*	*
b. Work	Current	34	7	4	4	1	2	48	*	1

*There is no Question Q9.*

**Q10** As I read the following list of items, please tell me if you happen to have each one, or not. Do you have... [INSERT ITEMS IN ORDER]?

		YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. A desktop computer	Current	59	40	*	*
b. A laptop computer or netbook	Current	52	48	*	*
c. A cell phone or a Blackberry or iPhone or other device that is also a cell phone	Current	85	15	*	*
d. An electronic book device or e-Book reader, such as a Kindle or Sony Digital Book	Current	5	95	*	*
e. An iPod or other MP3 player	Current	47	53	*	*
f. A game console like Xbox or Play Station	Current	42	57	*	*
g. A tablet computer like an iPad	Current	4	96	*	*

**Q11** Does anyone in your household have a working cell phone?

Based on non-cell phone users

	CURRENT	
%	33	Yes
	67	No
	*	Don't know
	*	Refused

[n=516]

**Q12** On your laptop computer or netbook, do you ever use a wireless connection such as WIFI or mobile wireless broadband to access the internet?

Based on internet users who have a laptop or netbook

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
Current [N=1,327]	84	16	1	*

**Q13** Thinking now just about your cell phone... Please tell me if you ever use your cell phone to do any of the following things. Do you ever use your cell phone to [INSERT ITEMS; ALWAYS ASK a-b FIRST in order; RANDOMIZE c-e]?

Based on cell phone users

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. Send or receive email				
Current [N=2,485]	34	66	*	0
b. Send or receive text messages				
Current	74	26	*	0
c. Send or receive Instant Messages				
Current	30	70	*	*
d. Access the internet				
Current	39	61	*	0
e. Participate in a video call, video chat or teleconference				
Current	7	93	*	*

**WIRELESS** Wireless internet use<sup>18</sup>

	WIRELESS INTERNET USER	INTERNET USER BUT NOT WIRELESS	ALL OTHERS
Current	57	20	23

**Q14** On your cell phone, do you happen to have any software applications or “apps” that help you track or manage your health, or not?

Based on cell phone users [N=2,485]

	CURRENT	
%	9	Yes
	90	No
	1	Don’t know
	*	Refused

**Q15** Do you ever use your cell phone to look up health or medical information?

Based on cell phone users [N=2,485]

	CURRENT	
%	17	Yes, do this
	83	No, do not do this
	*	Don’t know
	0	Refused

**WEB1** Next... Please tell me if you ever use the internet to do any of the following things. Do you ever use the internet to...? / Did you happen to do this **yesterday**, or not?

Based on all internet users [N=2,065]

	TOTAL HAVE EVER DONE THIS	----- DID YESTERDAY	HAVE NOT DONE THIS	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
Send or read e-mail					
Current	91	61	9	*	*
Get news online					
Current	72	39	28	*	0
Research a product or service online					
Current	78	28	22	*	*
Take part in chat rooms or online discussions with other people					

<sup>18</sup> Definitions for wireless internet use may vary from survey to survey.

Current	22	7	78	*	0
Play online games					
Current	36	13	64	0	*
Search online for a map or driving directions					
Current	82	14	18	*	*
PAY to access or download digital content online, such as music, video, or newspaper articles					
Current	43	10	56	*	0
Pay bills online					
Current	57	15	43	*	*
Use a social networking site like MySpace, Facebook or LinkedIn.com					
Current	62	39	38	*	0
Categorize or tag online content like a photo, news story or blog post					
Current	33	11	66	1	*
Post a comment or review online about a product you bought or a service you received					
Current	32	4	67	*	*
Use Twitter or another service to share updates about yourself or to see updates about others					
Current	24	13	76	*	0
Participate in a video call, video chat or teleconference					
Current	23	4	77	*	0
Use a service such as Foursquare or Gowalla that allows you to share your location with friends and to find others who are near you					
Current	4	1	96	*	0

**Q16** In general, how would you rate your own health — excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

	CURRENT	
%	30	Excellent
	49	Good
	16	Only fair
	5	Poor
	*	Don't know
	*	Refused

**Q17** Are you now living with any of the following health problems or conditions — [INSERT; RANDOMIZE a-e; ASK f LAST]?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. Diabetes or sugar diabetes				
Current	11	89	*	*
b. High blood pressure				
Current	24	75	1	*
c. Asthma, bronchitis, emphysema, or other lung conditions				
Current	12	88	*	*
d. Heart disease, heart failure or heart attack				
Current	6	94	*	*
e. Cancer				
Current	2	97	*	*
f. Any other chronic health problem or condition I haven't already mentioned				
Current	17	82	*	1

**Q18** In the last 12 months, have you personally faced a serious medical emergency or crisis?

	CURRENT	
%	12	Yes
	88	No
	*	Don't know
	*	Refused

**Q19** And in the last 12 months, have you experienced any other significant change in your physical health, such as gaining or losing a lot of weight, becoming pregnant, or quitting smoking?

	CURRENT	
%	17	Yes
	83	No
	*	Don't know
	*	Refused

**Q20** Is there anyone close to you who has a CHRONIC medical condition, such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, or another chronic condition?

	CURRENT	
%	47	Yes
	53	No
	*	Don't know
	*	Refused

**Q21** In the last 12 months, has anyone close to you faced a serious medical emergency or crisis?<sup>19</sup>

	CURRENT		DEC 2008	AUGUST 2006
%	27	Yes	31	34
	72	No	69	65
	*	Don't know	*	1
	*	Refused	*	--

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<sup>19</sup> Trend question wording was "And in the last 12 months, have you or has someone close to you faced a serious medical emergency or crisis?"

22 Now, we'd like to ask if you've looked for information ONLINE about certain health or medical issues. Specifically, have you ever looked online for... [INSERT ITEM; ASK a-d IN ORDER; RANDOMIZE e-n; ASK o LAST]?

Based on all internet users [N=2,065]

	YES, HAVE DONE THIS	NO, HAVE NOT DONE THIS	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. Information about a specific disease or medical problem				
Current	66	34	*	*
December 2008	66	34	*	0
August 2006	64	36	*	--
November 23-30, 2004	66	34	*	--
December 2002	63	37	*	--
b. Information about a certain medical treatment or procedure				
Current	56	44	*	*
December 2008	55	45	*	*
August 2006	51	48	1	--
November 23-30, 2004	51	48	*	--
December 2002	47	53	0	--
c. Information about doctors or other health professionals				
Current	44	56	*	*
December 2008	47	53	*	*
d. Information about hospitals or other medical facilities				
Current	36	64	*	*
December 2008	38	62	*	*
e. Information related to health insurance, including private insurance, Medicare or Medicaid				
Current	33	67	*	*
December 2008	37	63	0	*
August 2006 <sup>20</sup>	33	67	*	--

Q22 continued...

<sup>20</sup> August 2006 trend was recalculated to reflect combined responses for two separate items: "Information related to health insurance" and "Information about Medicare or Medicaid"

Q22 continued...

	YES, HAVE DONE THIS	NO, HAVE NOT DONE THIS	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
f. Information about environmental health hazards				
Current	22	77	*	*
August 2006	22	78	*	--
November 23-30, 2004	18	82	0	--
December 2002	17	83	*	--
g. Information about pregnancy and childbirth				
Current	19	81	*	*
h. Information about end-of-life decisions				
Current	7	93	*	*
i. Information about long-term care for an elderly or disabled person				
Current	12	88	*	*
j. Information about food safety or recalls				
Current	29	70	*	*
k. Information about drug safety or recalls				
Current	24	76	*	*
l. Information about how to manage chronic pain				
Current	14	86	*	*
m. Information about medical test results				
Current	16	83	*	*
n. Information about memory loss, dementia, or Alzheimer's				
Current	17	83	*	*
o. Information about any other health issue				
Current	28	72	*	*
December 2008	26	73	1	*
Total yes to any item above	<b>80</b>			
Total no to all items	<b>20</b>			



**Q23** Thinking about the LAST time you went online for health or medical information... Did you go online to look for information related to YOUR OWN health or medical situation or SOMEONE ELSE'S health or medical situation?

Based on online health seekers

	CURRENT		DECEMBER 2008	AUGUST 2006	DECEMBER 2002
%	36	Own	41	36	37
	48	Someone else's	43	48	49
	11	Both (VOL.)	9	8	8
	4	Don't know	4	8	7
	2	Refused	2	--	--
	[1,655]		[1,356]	[1,594]	[1,017]

**Q24** Apart from looking for information online, there are many different activities related to health and medical issues a person might do on the internet. I'm going to read a list of online health-related activities you may or may not have done. Just tell me if you happen to do each one, or not. (First,/Next,) have you... [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE; ALWAYS ASK e-f TOGETHER, IN ORDER]?<sup>21</sup>

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. Signed up to receive email updates or alerts about health or medical issues <sup>22</sup>				
Current internet users [N=2,065]	14	86	*	*
Current online health seekers [N=1,655]	17	82	*	*
Dec 2008 online health seekers [N=1,356]	19	81	*	*
b. Read someone else's commentary or experience about health or medical issues on an online news group, website or blog				
Current internet users	34	66	*	*
Current online health seekers	41	58	*	*
Dec 2008 online health seekers	41	59	0	*
c. Watched an online video about health or medical issues				
Current internet users	25	75	*	*
Current online health seekers	31	69	*	*
d. Gone online to find others who might have health concerns similar to yours				
Current internet users	18	82	0	*
Current online health seekers	23	77	0	*
e. Tracked your weight, diet or exercise routine online				
Current internet users	15	84	0	*
Current online health seekers	19	81	0	*
f. Tracked any other health indicators or symptoms online				
Current internet users	17	83	*	*
Current online health seekers	21	79	*	*

<sup>21</sup> Current question was asked of all internet users [N=2,065]. December 2008 trend question wording was "There are many different activities related to health and medical issues a person might do on the internet. I'm going to read a list of things you may or may not have ever done online related to health and medical issues. Just tell me if you happened to do each one, or not. Have you... [INSERT ITEM; ROTATE]?" Question was asked of online health seekers [N=1,356].

<sup>22</sup> December 2008 trend item wording was "Signed up to receive updates about health or medical issues"

**Q25** We're also interested in any health-related material you may have posted online. Have you posted comments, questions or information about health or medical issues... [INSERT; RANDOMIZE; ALWAYS ASK e LAST]?

Based on all internet users

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. In an online discussion, a listserv, or other online group forum				
Current [N=2,065]	5	95	0	*
Dec 2008 [N=1,650]	5	94	*	*
b. On a blog				
Current	4	96	*	*
Dec 2008	4	96	*	*
<i>Item C: Based on SNS users</i>				
c. On a social networking site such as Facebook, MySpace or LinkedIn				
Current [N=1,202]	11	89	0	*
Dec 2008 [N=459]	15	85	*	0
<i>Item D: Based on Twitter users</i>				
d. On Twitter or another status update site <sup>23</sup>				
Current [N=433]	8	92	0	*
Dec 2008 [N=128]	11	89	0	0
e. On a website of any kind, such as a health site or news site that allows comments and discussion				
Current	6	94	*	*
Dec 2008	6	94	*	*

<sup>23</sup> December 2008 trend item wording was "On Twitter or other status updates"

**Q26** Thinking specifically about what you have done on social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace... Have you ever used these sites to... [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]? (Next,) have you ever used a social networking site to...[INSERT ITEM]?<sup>24</sup>

Based on SNS users

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. Get health information <sup>25</sup>				
Current [N=1,202]	15	85	*	*
Dec 2008 [N=459]	11	89	0	0
b. Start or join a health-related group <sup>26</sup>				
Current	9	91	0	*
Dec 2008	6	94	0	0
c. Follow your friends' personal health experiences or health updates <sup>27</sup>				
Current	23	77	0	*
Dec 2008	20	80	*	0
d. Raise money or draw attention to a health-related issue or cause				
Current	14	86	0	*
e. Remember or memorialize others who suffered from a certain health condition				
Current	17	82	*	*

<sup>24</sup> December 2008 trend question wording was "Thinking about what you have done on social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace, have you... [INSERT ITEM; ROTATE]?"

<sup>25</sup> December 2008 trend item wording was "Gotten any health information on the sites"

<sup>26</sup> December 2008 trend item wording was "Started or joined a health-related group on a social networking site"

<sup>27</sup> December 2008 trend item wording was "Followed your friends' personal health experiences or updates on the site"

**[ROTATE Q27-Q28]**

**Q27** Have you or has anyone you know been HELPED by following medical advice or health information found on the internet? [IF YES: Would you say the information provided MAJOR help, MODERATE help or MINOR help?]

	<u>CURRENT</u>		<u>DECEMBER 2008</u>
%	6	Yes, major help	10
	15	Yes, moderate help	20
	9	Yes, minor help	11
	65	No	50
	4	Don't know	8
	*	Refused	1

**Q28** Have you or has anyone you know been HARMED by following medical advice or health information found on the internet? [IF YES: Would you say the information caused SERIOUS harm, MODERATE harm or MINOR harm?]

	<u>CURRENT</u>		<u>DECEMBER 2008</u>
%	1	Yes, serious harm	1
	1	Yes, moderate harm	1
	1	Yes, minor harm	1
	95	No	94
	2	Don't know	3
	*	Refused	*

**Q29** Thinking again about health-related activities you may or may not do online, have you... [INSERT ITEM; ROTATE]?<sup>28</sup>

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. Consulted online rankings or reviews of doctors or other providers <sup>29</sup>				
Current internet users [N=2,065]	16	84	0	*
Current online health seekers [N=1,655]	19	81	0	*
Dec 2008 online health seekers [N=1,356]	24	76	*	*
b. Consulted online rankings or reviews of hospitals or other medical facilities <sup>30</sup>				
Current internet users	15	85	0	*
Current online health seekers	18	82	0	*
Dec 2008 online health seekers	24	76	*	0
c. Consulted online reviews of particular drugs or medical treatments				
Current internet users	24	76	*	*
Current online health seekers	30	70	*	*
d. Posted a review online of a doctor				
Current internet users	4	95	0	*
Current online health seekers	6	94	0	0
Dec 2008 online health seekers	5	95	0	0
e. Posted a review online of a hospital				
Current internet users	3	97	0	*
Current online health seekers	4	96	0	0
Dec 2008 online health seekers	4	96	*	0
f. Posted your experiences with a particular drug or medical treatment online				
Current internet users	4	96	0	*
Current online health seekers	4	96	0	0

<sup>28</sup> Current question was asked of all internet users [N=2,065]. December 2008 trend question wording was “There are many different activities related to health and medical issues a person might do on the internet. I’m going to read a list of things you may or may not have ever done online related to health and medical issues. Just tell me if you happened to do each one, or not. Have you... [INSERT ITEM; ROTATE]?” Question was asked of online health seekers [N=1,356].

<sup>29</sup> December 2008 trend item wording was “Consulted rankings or reviews online of doctors or other providers”

<sup>30</sup> December 2008 trend item wording was “Consulted rankings or reviews online of hospitals or other medical facilities”

**Q30** Thinking about the LAST time you had a health issue, did you get information, care or support from... [INSERT; RANDOMIZE]? [IF YES AND INTERNET USER: Did you interact with them ONLINE through the internet or email, OFFLINE by visiting them in person or talking on the phone, or BOTH online and offline?]

	YES, ONLINE	YES, OFFLINE	YES, BOTH	NO, NOT A SOURCE	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. A doctor or other health care professional	1	65	4	29	*	*
b. Friends and family	1	41	12	44	1	*
c. Others who have the same health condition	1	15	4	77	2	*

**DOC** Do you have a personal or family doctor, or other health care professional such as a nurse that you usually rely on if you need medical care?

	CURRENT	
%	74	Yes
	25	No
	*	Yes, more than one (VOL.)
	*	Don't know
	*	Refused

**HHS1** [IF HAVE MORE THAN ONE REGULAR DOCTOR, READ: Thinking about the doctor or health care professional you get MOST of your medical care from...] Has this person ever provided you with personalized health information about a condition or health issue you were facing, or have they not done this?

Based on those who have a regular doctor [N=2,272]

	CURRENT	
%	69	Yes, they did this
	29	No, they did not
	1	Don't know
	*	Refused

**Q31** [IF HAVE MORE THAN ONE REGULAR DOCTOR, READ: Still thinking about the doctor or health care professional you get MOST of your medical care from...] How helpful is your doctor in... [INSERT; RANDOMIZE] – very helpful, somewhat helpful, or not helpful at all?

Based on those who have a regular doctor [N=2,272]

	VERY	SOME- WHAT	NOT AT ALL	(VOL.) DOES NOT APPLY	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. Giving you an accurate medical diagnosis	78	18	2	1	1	*
b. Providing emotional support	57	26	9	5	1	1
c. Providing the medical or health information you need	76	19	2	1	*	1
d. Finding effective treatment strategies for you	72	20	3	3	1	1
e. Coordinating your overall health care	71	24	3	1	1	*

**Q32** Overall, who do you think is more helpful when you need... [INSERT FIRST ITEM] – health professionals like doctors and nurses, OR other sources, such as fellow patients, friends and family? And who is more helpful when you need... [INSERT NEXT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]? READ AS NECESSARY: Professional sources like doctors and nurses, OR other sources, such as fellow patients, friends and family?

	PRO- FESSIONALS	OTHER SOURCES	(VOL.) BOTH EQUALLY	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. An accurate medical diagnosis	91	5	2	2	*
b. Emotional support in dealing with a health issue	30	59	5	4	2
c. Practical advice for coping with day-to-day health situations	43	46	6	3	1
d. Information about alternative treatments	63	24	5	6	1
e. Information about prescription drugs	85	9	3	3	1
f. A quick remedy for an everyday health issue	41	51	4	3	1
g. A recommendation for a doctor or specialist	62	27	6	4	1
h. A recommendation for a hospital or other medical facility	62	27	6	4	1



**MODEMA** At home, do you connect to the internet through a dial-up telephone line, or do you have some other type of connection, such as a DSL-enabled phone line, a cable TV modem, a wireless connection, a fiber optic connection such as FIOS or a T-1?

Based on those who use the internet from home

	DIAL-UP	TOTAL HIGH SPEED	----- DSL	----- CABLE MODEM	----- WIRELESS	----- FIBER OPTIC	----- T-1	OTHER	DK	REF.
Current [N=1,947]	7	86	29	31	20	6	1	2	4	1

**Q33** Thinking about your high-speed internet service at home, do you subscribe to a basic broadband service, or do you pay extra for a premium service that promises faster speed?

Based on internet users who have high-speed internet at home

	CURRENT	
%	49	Subscribe to basic service
	37	Subscribe to premium service at higher price
	13	Don't know
	2	Refused

[n=1,657]

A few last questions for statistical purposes only...

**VET1** Have you ever served on active duty in the United States Armed Forces, either in the regular military or in a National Guard or military reserve unit? Active duty does not include training for the Reserves or National Guard, but DOES include activation, for example, for the Persian Gulf War.

	CURRENT	
%	13	Yes
	87	No
	*	Don't know
	*	Refused

**VET2** In the past 12 months, have you received some or all of your health care from a V-A hospital or clinic?

Based on veterans [N=354]

	CURRENT	
%	14	Yes, all of my healthcare
	9	Yes, some of my healthcare
	77	No, no VA healthcare received
	0	Don't know
	1	Refused

**INS1** Now I would like to ask you about any health insurance you CURRENTLY have that helps pay for the cost of health care. I'm going to read a list of a few types of health insurance, and I'd like you to tell me which of these you have, if any. (First,) are you now PERSONALLY covered by [INSERT IN ORDER]?

[IF RESPONDENT NOT SURE WHICH INSURANCE IS INCLUDED: Please think about insurance plans that cover the costs of doctor and hospital bills IN GENERAL, and NOT those that cover ONLY dental or eye care or the costs of caring for specific diseases.]

[IF RESPONDENTS TRY TO TELL TYPE THEY HAVE INSTEAD OF GOING THROUGH THE LIST: I'm sorry but I have to ask about each type of insurance for the survey. Just tell me 'no' if you don't have this type.]

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. Private health insurance offered through an employer or union? [IF "NO": This could be insurance through a current job, a former job, your job or someone else's job.]	52	46	1	1
b. A private health insurance plan that you bought yourself	18	81	*	1
c. Medicaid, [IF STATE CALIFORNIA: Medi-Cal], or some other type of state medical assistance for low-income people	15	84	1	*
d. Medicare, the government program that pays health care bills for people over age 65 and for some disabled people	21	78	1	*
<i>Item E based on those who are not insured through private health insurance, Medicaid, or Medicare [N=513]</i>				
e. Health insurance through ANY other source, including military or veteran's coverage	10	87	1	2

**INS2** Medicare is health insurance coverage most people receive when they turn 65 and are eligible for Social Security. This includes different kinds of health plans offered THROUGH the Medicare program — like the plans called H-M-Os. Are you now covered by Medicare or by ANY Medicare plan?

Based on those age 65 and older who are not covered by Medicare [N=91]

	CURRENT	
%	42	Yes, covered
	48	No, not covered
	8	Don't know
	1	Refused

**INS3** Does this mean you personally have NO health insurance now that would cover your doctor or hospital bills?

Based on those who are not covered by any health insurance or are undesignated [N=446]

	CURRENT	
%	89	I do NOT have health insurance
	8	I HAVE some kind of health insurance
	1	Don't know
	2	Refused

**DIS001** Thinking again about your own health... Do you have serious difficulty hearing?

	CURRENT	
%	9	Yes
	90	No
	*	Don't know
	*	Refused

**DIS002** Are you blind or do you have serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses?

	CURRENT	
%	7	Yes
	93	No
	*	Don't know
	*	Refused

**DIS003** Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, do you have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?

	CURRENT	
%	11	Yes
	89	No
	*	Don't know
	*	Refused

**DIS004** Do you have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs?

	CURRENT	
%	15	Yes
	84	No
	*	Don't know
	*	Refused

**DIS005** Do you have difficulty dressing or bathing?

	CURRENT	
%	3	Yes
	97	No
	*	Don't know
	*	Refused

**DIS006** Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, do you have difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping?

	CURRENT	
%	8	Yes
	92	No
	*	Don't know
	*	Refused

**DIS4** Do you have any disability or illness that makes it harder or impossible for you to use the Internet, or not?

	CURRENT	
%	2	Yes
	97	No
	1	Don't know
	*	Refused

**CARE2** In the past 12 months, have you provided UNPAID care to an adult relative or friend 18 years or older to help them take care of themselves? Unpaid care may include help with personal needs or household chores. It might be managing a person’s finances, arranging for outside services, or visiting regularly to see how they are doing. This person need not live with you. [IF RESPONDENT ASKS DOES GIVING MONEY COUNT:] Aside from giving money, do you provide any other type of unpaid care to help them take care of themselves, such as help with personal needs, household chores, arranging for outside services, or other things?

	CURRENT	
%	27	Yes
	72	No
	*	Don’t know
	*	Refused

**CARE3** Do you provide this type of care to just one adult, or do you care for more than one adult?

Based on those who provide unpaid care to adults [N=790]

	CURRENT	
%	66	One adult only
	33	Provide care to multiple adults
	*	Don’t know
	*	Refused

**CARE4** Is this person a parent of yours, or not?

**CARE5** Are any of the adults you care for a parent of yours, or not?

Based on those who provide unpaid care to adults [N=790]

	CURRENT	
%	38	Yes, parent
	62	No, not a parent
	*	Don’t know
	*	Refused

**CARE6** In the past 12 months, have you provided UNPAID care to any CHILD under the age of 18 because of a medical, behavioral, or other condition or disability? This could include care for ongoing medical conditions or serious short-term conditions, emotional or behavioral problems, or developmental problems, including mental retardation.

	CURRENT	
%	5	Yes
	94	No
	*	Don’t know