

HEALTH POLL:

# Prescription Drugs

June 2017

## SURVEY OVERVIEW

Every other month, the Truven Health Analytics®-NPR Health Poll surveys approximately 3,000 Americans to gauge attitudes and opinions on a wide range of healthcare issues. Poll results are reported by NPR on the health blog Shots ([npr.org/sections/health-shots/](http://npr.org/sections/health-shots/)) and on air.

The Truven Health Analytics-NPR Health Poll is powered by the Truven Health Analytics PULSE® Healthcare Survey, an independently funded multi-modal (land line, cell phone, internet) survey that collects information from approximately 80,000 US households annually.

The results depicted here represent responses from 3,003 survey participants interviewed from June 1 - 15, 2017. The margin of error is +/-1.8 percentage points. NPR's reports on the findings are archived here: [npr.org/templates/search/index.php?searchinput=truven](http://npr.org/templates/search/index.php?searchinput=truven).

Truven Health is part of the IBM Watson Health™ business.

# Executive Summary

Given the amount of money spent on retail prescription drugs in the US (\$324.6 billion in 2015<sup>1</sup>), the Truven Health Analytics-NPR Health Poll asked Americans about their experiences with and attitudes toward prescription drugs and drug pricing. While 97% of respondents who received a prescription for medication in the last 90 days filled it, the most cited reason by respondents who did not fill their prescription was cost (67%), and 12% of all respondents said that cost drove them to purchase prescription medication outside the US.

Additional findings include:

- 63% of all respondents said they received a prescription for medication in the last 90 days, a rate that increased with age.
- 33% of respondents who received a prescription for medication looked for the cost of the medication before filling the prescription, a rate that decreased with increasing age. The highest rate (64%) was for millennials.
- A quarter (25%) of respondents who filled their prescription missed a dose of the medication, a rate that increased among respondents with higher levels of education and income.
- 29% of all respondents indicated that they had stopped taking a prescribed medication at some time without telling their provider.
- The reason mentioned most often by respondents who stopped taking their prescribed medication was Side Effects (29%), followed by Didn't Need (17%), Felt Better (16%), Not Working (15%), and Cost (10%).

<sup>1</sup> "National Health Expenditures 2015 Highlights," Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Accessed at <https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/NationalHealthExpendData/downloads/highlights.pdf>

# Survey Data

**Bolded figures** are statistically significant.

Care should be taken with interpretations for questions 5 and 7 due to small sample sizes.

## Question 1

Did you receive a prescription for medication in the last 90 days?

	Yes	No
<b>Age</b>		
<35	51.6%	48.4%
35 - 64	63.9%	36.1%
65+	<b>80.3%</b>	<b>19.7%</b>
<b>Total</b>	63.3%	36.7%
<b>Education</b>		
HS or Less	65.5%	34.5%
Some College/Assoc	61.6%	38.4%
College+	63.2%	36.8%
<b>Total</b>	63.3%	36.7%
<b>Generation</b>		
Silent Generation	<b>79.0%</b>	<b>21.0%</b>
Baby Boomers	73.2%	26.8%
Generation X	61.1%	38.9%
Millennials	51.6%	48.4%
<b>Total</b>	63.3%	36.7%
<b>Income</b>		
<\$25K	71.4%	28.6%
\$25K - \$49.9K	52.4%	47.6%
\$50K - \$99.9K	60.5%	39.5%
\$100K+	69.8%	30.2%
<b>Total</b>	63.3%	36.7%

## Question 2

Did you look for the cost of this medication before filling the prescription?

	Yes	No
<b>Age</b>		
<35	<b>64.2%</b>	<b>35.8%</b>
35 - 64	<b>22.7%</b>	<b>77.3%</b>
65+	<b>19.3%</b>	<b>80.7%</b>
<b>Total</b>	32.9%	67.1%
<b>Education</b>		
HS or Less	27.0%	73.0%
Some College/Assoc	23.7%	76.3%
College+	42.6%	57.4%
<b>Total</b>	32.9%	67.1%
<b>Generation</b>		
Silent Generation	25.0%	75.0%
Baby Boomers	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>82.8%</b>
Generation X	25.5%	74.5%
Millennials	<b>64.2%</b>	<b>35.8%</b>
<b>Total</b>	32.9%	67.1%
<b>Income</b>		
<\$25K	30.4%	69.6%
\$25K - \$49.9K	28.6%	71.4%
\$50K - \$99.9K	36.3%	63.7%
\$100K+	42.6%	57.4%
<b>Total</b>	32.9%	67.1%

### Question 3

Were you able to find out the cost?

	Yes	No
<b>Age</b>		
<35	95.0%	5.0%
35 - 64	94.7%	5.3%
65+	91.3%	8.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>94.3%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>
<b>Education</b>		
HS or Less	95.8%	4.2%
Some College/Assoc	92.2%	7.8%
College+	94.6%	5.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>94.3%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>
<b>Generation</b>		
Silent Generation	93.9%	6.1%
Baby Boomers	92.5%	7.5%
Generation X	94.4%	5.6%
Millennials	95.0%	5.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>94.3%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>
<b>Income</b>		
<\$25K	92.7%	7.3%
\$25K - \$49.9K	94.4%	5.6%
\$50K - \$99.9K	95.2%	4.8%
\$100K+	94.9%	5.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>94.3%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>

#### Question 4

Was the prescription filled?

	Yes	No
<b>Age</b>		
<35	93.1%	6.9%
35 - 64	97.9%	2.1%
65+	99.1%	0.9%
<b>Total</b>	97.0%	3.0%
<b>Education</b>		
HS or Less	98.9%	1.1%
Some College/Assoc	98.4%	1.6%
College+	94.7%	5.3%
<b>Total</b>	97.0%	3.0%
<b>Generation</b>		
Silent Generation	<b>99.7%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
Baby Boomers	98.6%	1.4%
Generation X	97.4%	2.6%
Millennials	93.1%	6.9%
<b>Total</b>	97.0%	3.0%
<b>Income</b>		
<\$25K	92.7%	7.3%
\$25K - \$49.9K	98.3%	1.7%
\$50K - \$99.9K	97.7%	2.3%
\$100K+	97.7%	2.3%
<b>Total</b>	97.0%	3.0%

## Question 5

What was the main reason your prescription was not filled or picked up?

	Cost	Felt Better	Didn't Need	Forgot	Side Effects	Other
<b>Age</b>						
<35	68.5%	10.0%	18.9%	0.0%	1.2%	1.4%
35 - 64	63.4%	15.0%	0.0%	6.9%	0.0%	14.7%
65+	64.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	35.4%
<b>Total</b>	66.5%	10.9%	11.2%	2.3%	0.7%	8.4%
<b>Education</b>						
HS or Less	<b>100.0%</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some College/Assoc	58.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	41.2%
College+	63.8%	14.7%	15.0%	3.1%	1.0%	2.6%
<b>Total</b>	66.5%	10.9%	11.2%	2.3%	0.7%	8.4%
<b>Generation</b>						
Silent Generation	74.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.3%
Baby Boomers	68.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	31.4%
Generation X	59.8%	21.1%	0.0%	9.6%	0.0%	9.5%
Millennials	68.5%	10.0%	18.9%	0.0%	1.2%	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	66.5%	10.9%	11.2%	2.3%	0.7%	8.4%
<b>Income</b>						
<\$25K	94.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.8%
\$25K - \$49.9K	69.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	30.9%
\$50K - \$99.9K	24.9%	22.8%	46.6%	3.2%	0.0%	2.4%
\$100K+	26.1%	42.1%	5.2%	11.4%	5.2%	9.9%
<b>Total</b>	66.5%	10.9%	11.2%	2.3%	0.7%	8.4%

## Question 6

While taking the medication, did you miss a dose of the prescribed medication?

	Yes	No
<b>Age</b>		
<35	<b>45.4%</b>	<b>54.6%</b>
35 - 64	21.1%	78.9%
65+	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>88.7%</b>
<b>Total</b>	24.6%	75.4%
<b>Education</b>		
HS or Less	19.5%	80.5%
Some College/Assoc	25.5%	74.5%
College+	27.2%	72.8%
<b>Total</b>	24.6%	75.4%
<b>Generation</b>		
Silent Generation	<b>10.2%</b>	<b>89.8%</b>
Baby Boomers	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>88.3%</b>
Generation X	28.3%	71.7%
Millennials	<b>45.4%</b>	<b>54.6%</b>
<b>Total</b>	24.6%	75.4%
<b>Income</b>		
<\$25K	15.4%	84.6%
\$25K - \$49.9K	19.0%	81.0%
\$50K - \$99.9K	29.2%	70.8%
\$100K+	35.8%	64.2%
<b>Total</b>	24.6%	75.4%



## Question 7

What was the main reason you missed the dose of the prescribed medication?

	Not Working	Cost	Felt Better	Didn't Need	Forgot	Told to Stop	Side Effects	Other
<b>Age</b>								
<35	22.3%	7.6%	25.2%	1.5%	36.3%	0.9%	4.4%	1.8%
35 - 64	8.9%	6.0%	6.7%	3.2%	62.4%	5.7%	0.4%	6.7%
65+	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	1.3%	<b>78.2%</b>	0.0%	0.3%	<b>19.2%</b>
<b>Total</b>	14.1%	6.1%	14.6%	2.1%	52.1%	2.8%	2.3%	5.9%
<b>Education</b>								
HS or Less	16.4%	8.6%	12.4%	4.7%	52.4%	0.0%	1.0%	4.6%
Some College/Assoc	<b>3.5%</b>	5.3%	10.2%	0.2%	71.1%	1.1%	0.9%	7.8%
College+	20.4%	5.6%	18.5%	2.4%	39.0%	5.0%	3.8%	5.2%
<b>Total</b>	14.1%	6.1%	14.6%	2.1%	52.1%	2.8%	2.3%	5.9%
<b>Generation</b>								
Silent Generation	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	<b>77.5%</b>	0.0%	0.0%	21.8%
Baby Boomers	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	7.0%	<b>74.7%</b>	0.0%	1.1%	14.9%
Generation X	11.2%	7.8%	8.4%	0.7%	59.6%	7.5%	0.0%	4.8%
Millennials	22.3%	7.6%	25.2%	1.5%	36.3%	0.9%	4.4%	1.8%
<b>Total</b>	14.1%	6.1%	14.6%	2.1%	52.1%	2.8%	2.3%	5.9%
<b>Income</b>								
<\$25K	1.9%	3.4%	6.2%	0.0%	67.8%	3.2%	0.3%	17.2%
\$25K - \$49.9K	4.8%	10.3%	12.5%	7.3%	61.8%	0.0%	0.5%	2.7%
\$50K - \$99.9K	18.1%	4.3%	15.2%	1.2%	49.6%	0.8%	4.0%	6.8%
\$100K+	24.2%	7.9%	13.9%	1.8%	46.5%	0.8%	2.6%	2.3%
<b>Total</b>	14.1%	6.1%	14.6%	2.1%	52.1%	2.8%	2.3%	5.9%

## Question 8

Have you ever stopped taking a prescribed medication without telling your provider?

	Yes	No
<b>Age</b>		
<35	38.0%	62.0%
35 - 64	27.8%	72.2%
65+	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>82.8%</b>
<b>Total</b>	29.0%	71.0%
<b>Education</b>		
HS or Less	24.6%	75.4%
Some College/Assoc	33.2%	66.8%
College+	28.5%	71.5%
<b>Total</b>	29.0%	71.0%
<b>Generation</b>		
Silent Generation	<b>13.0%</b>	<b>87.0%</b>
Baby Boomers	21.9%	78.1%
Generation X	31.2%	68.8%
Millennials	38.0%	62.0%
<b>Total</b>	29.0%	71.0%
<b>Income</b>		
<\$25K	29.1%	70.9%
\$25K - \$49.9K	32.4%	67.6%
\$50K - \$99.9K	26.0%	74.0%
\$100K+	34.2%	65.8%
<b>Total</b>	29.0%	71.0%

## Question 9

What was the main reason you stopped taking the medication?

	Not Working	Cost	Felt Better	Didn't Need	Forgot	Side Effects	Other
<b>Age</b>							
<35	16.2%	8.3%	23.9%	17.6%	1.5%	24.7%	7.7%
35 - 64	13.3%	12.0%	11.0%	16.9%	4.0%	32.0%	10.7%
65+	12.7%	10.8%	<b>4.5%</b>	16.6%	1.2%	33.6%	20.7%
<b>Total</b>	14.5%	10.3%	15.8%	17.2%	2.6%	29.1%	10.6%
<b>Education</b>							
HS or Less	13.8%	13.3%	8.1%	9.4%	4.2%	42.2%	9.0%
Some College/Assoc	11.8%	7.1%	10.7%	14.7%	3.1%	34.8%	17.8%
College+	17.1%	11.4%	23.8%	23.1%	1.4%	17.7%	5.4%
<b>Total</b>	14.5%	10.3%	15.8%	17.2%	2.6%	29.1%	10.6%
<b>Generation</b>							
Silent Generation	17.8%	4.2%	<b>1.7%</b>	24.5%	1.6%	24.9%	25.4%
Baby Boomers	11.2%	10.6%	<b>5.5%</b>	14.1%	0.7%	47.3%	10.4%
Generation X	14.0%	13.5%	13.7%	17.9%	5.7%	22.2%	12.9%
Millennials	16.2%	8.3%	23.9%	17.6%	1.5%	24.7%	7.7%
<b>Total</b>	14.5%	10.3%	15.8%	17.2%	2.6%	29.1%	10.6%
<b>Income</b>							
<\$25K	9.8%	12.1%	6.3%	<b>6.1%</b>	6.4%	51.9%	7.5%
\$25K - \$49.9K	8.3%	5.5%	6.8%	27.3%	1.9%	28.9%	21.4%
\$50K - \$99.9K	20.5%	11.9%	20.7%	15.1%	2.3%	24.5%	5.0%
\$100K+	22.7%	14.4%	24.1%	16.9%	1.3%	14.4%	6.2%
<b>Total</b>	14.5%	10.3%	15.8%	17.2%	2.6%	29.1%	10.6%

## Question 10

Have you ever purchased a prescription drug from outside the US due to cost?

	Yes	No
<b>Age</b>		
<35	20.3%	79.7%
35 - 64	7.2%	92.8%
65+	7.5%	92.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.5%</b>	<b>88.5%</b>
<b>Education</b>		
HS or Less	8.3%	91.7%
Some College/Assoc	9.6%	90.4%
College+	14.7%	85.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.5%</b>	<b>88.5%</b>
<b>Generation</b>		
Silent Generation	7.0%	93.0%
Baby Boomers	<b>5.0%</b>	95.0%
Generation X	9.8%	90.2%
Millennials	20.3%	79.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.5%</b>	<b>88.5%</b>
<b>Income</b>		
<\$25K	7.4%	92.6%
\$25K - \$49.9K	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>94.8%</b>
\$50K - \$99.9K	13.4%	86.6%
\$100K+	<b>24.0%</b>	<b>76.0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.5%</b>	<b>88.5%</b>

## Question 11

Have you ever used drug company coupons or rebates to help cover copays?

	Yes	No
<b>Age</b>		
<35	34.4%	65.6%
35 - 64	21.1%	78.9%
65+	<b>13.1%</b>	<b>86.9%</b>
<b>Total</b>	23.8%	76.2%

<b>Education</b>		
HS or Less	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>85.7%</b>
Some College/Assoc	23.8%	76.2%
College+	29.3%	70.7%
<b>Total</b>	23.8%	76.2%

<b>Generation</b>		
Silent Generation	<b>9.4%</b>	<b>90.6%</b>
Baby Boomers	19.8%	80.2%
Generation X	20.4%	79.6%
Millennials	34.4%	65.6%
<b>Total</b>	23.8%	76.2%

<b>Income</b>		
<\$25K	16.1%	83.9%
\$25K - \$49.9K	20.4%	79.6%
\$50K - \$99.9K	27.0%	73.0%
\$100K+	35.9%	64.1%
<b>Total</b>	23.8%	76.2%

## About Truven Health Analytics, part of the IBM Watson Health business

Truven Health Analytics®, part of the IBM Watson Health™ business, provides market-leading performance improvement solutions built on data integrity, advanced analytics, and domain expertise. For more than 40 years, our insights and solutions have been providing hospitals and clinicians, employers and health plans, state and federal government agencies, life sciences companies and policymakers the facts they need to make confident decisions that directly affect the health and well-being of people and organizations in the US and around the world. The company was acquired by IBM in 2016 to help form a new business, Watson Health. Watson Health aspires to improve lives and give hope by delivering innovation to address the world's most pressing health challenges through data and cognitive insights.

Truven Health Analytics owns some of the most trusted brands in healthcare, such as MarketScan®, 100 Top Hospitals®, Advantage Suite®, Micromedex®, Simpler®, and ActionOI®. Truven Health has its principal offices in Ann Arbor, MI; Chicago, IL; and Denver, CO.

For more information, please visit [truvenhealth.com](http://truvenhealth.com).