

# e-Health and the Elderly: How Seniors Use the Internet for Health Information

Key Findings From a National Survey of Older Americans



Kaiser Family Foundation

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INTERNET\_  
PRESCRIPTION DRUGS\_  
PROVIDERS\_SENIORS\_HEALTH CARE\_  
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HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS\_SENIORS  
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HEALTH CARE\_PRESCRIPTION  
DRUGS\_HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS\_

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# INTRODUCTION

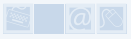
Over the past ten years, the Internet has emerged as an integral part of the lives of many Americans, transforming the way in which they get information and communicate with others. Ever since the birth of the Internet, consumers and health advocates alike have focused on its potential as a speedy and convenient resource for health information, and as a tool for managing care. Indeed, studies have shown that looking for health information has been one of the most popular online activities among adults, and even among adolescents, who are just as likely to have researched a health topic as to have downloaded music or played games online.<sup>1</sup>

Making sure all Americans have access to timely, reliable information about health and health care has long been a goal of public health advocates, government officials, and the medical community. This goal is especially important for seniors, who face a greater number of health conditions and use prescription drugs and health care services at a far higher rate than younger adults.

But the online behavior of seniors has not been studied as closely as that of other age groups. For seniors, the Internet could have a particularly significant impact. Whether it's looking for information about specific illnesses or conditions, exploring treatment options, comparing prescription drug prices, searching for health providers, or following health policy debates, seniors are among the most avid consumers of health information. The Internet could also play an important role in helping seniors to live independently and stay connected to family, friends, and health professionals.

In addition, many policymakers are increasingly hopeful that seniors will use information on sites like *Medicare.gov* to compare the benefits of prescription drug discount cards, evaluate plan benefits, and explore nursing home options in their communities. Moreover, many envision reforms that would require seniors to be more actively engaged in choosing health plans, using Internet sites to assess benefits, premiums, and quality information.

Older Americans' Use of the Internet		
	50-64 year-olds	65 and older
<b>Percent who:</b>		
Have ever used a computer	76%	42%
Have ever gone online	70%	31%
Have a computer at home	73%	41%
Have Internet access at home	64%	33%
<b>Among those who have ever gone online, percent who:</b>		
Go online every day	51%	46%
Go online 1-5 times a week	36%	39%
Go online 1-2 times a month	8%	8%
Go online less than once a month	5%	7%
Go online most often from home	68%	84%
Go online most often from work	25%	8%



Of course, there are also potential downsides to reliance on the Internet for health information. Some sites may provide inaccurate or incomplete information, and consumers who fail to consult their providers may endanger their health. Many Internet users neglect to check the source of health information they find online, and some may be unduly influenced by advertising and marketing. Some users may become confused by technologies they cannot reliably navigate, and it is always possible that scam artists may try to prey on the elderly online with false information or unsafe products.

This report provides the first close look at how seniors use the Internet for health information – and how that may change in the years ahead as the baby boom generation gets older.<sup>2</sup> As the Internet revolution has spread across America, have seniors been caught up in the explosion, or are most older Americans too unfamiliar with new technology (or too restricted by fixed incomes) to go online? And what about those seniors who *are* online – what role is the Internet playing in their lives as a source of health information? How many use the Net to look for information on doctors, research prescription drugs, find providers, manage their weight, follow health policy news, or look up the latest cancer treatments? The answers to all of these questions have important implications for providers, policymakers, and public health advocates, and it is hoped that the findings discussed below will be a first step in providing those answers.

## METHODOLOGY

*e-Health and the Elderly* is a nationally representative, random digit dial telephone survey of 1,450 adults age 50 and older, including 583 respondents age 65 and older. The survey was designed and analyzed by staff at the Kaiser Family Foundation in consultation with Princeton Survey Research Associates (PSRA), with fieldwork conducted by PSRA. The interviews were conducted from March 5 – April 18, 2004.

The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is +/- 3%, and for those aged 65 and older it is +/- 4%. For results based on smaller subsets of respondents the margin of error is higher. Note that sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error in this or any other public opinion poll.

<sup>1</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation, *Generation Rx.Com*, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> For an excellent overview of seniors' use of the Internet, see Pew Internet and American Life Project, *Older Americans and the Internet*, March 25, 2004.

# KEY FINDINGS

## Going online in the future

While Internet rates among seniors are likely to increase significantly as baby boomers (who are already online in much higher numbers) join the ranks of senior citizens, those who are not already online don't seem inclined to change.

Among all seniors who have never gone online (69%), only 9% say they would like to start using the Internet or e-mail. Likewise, very few of those older Americans who do not currently have Internet access at home expect to get it in the next year or two (3% of seniors).

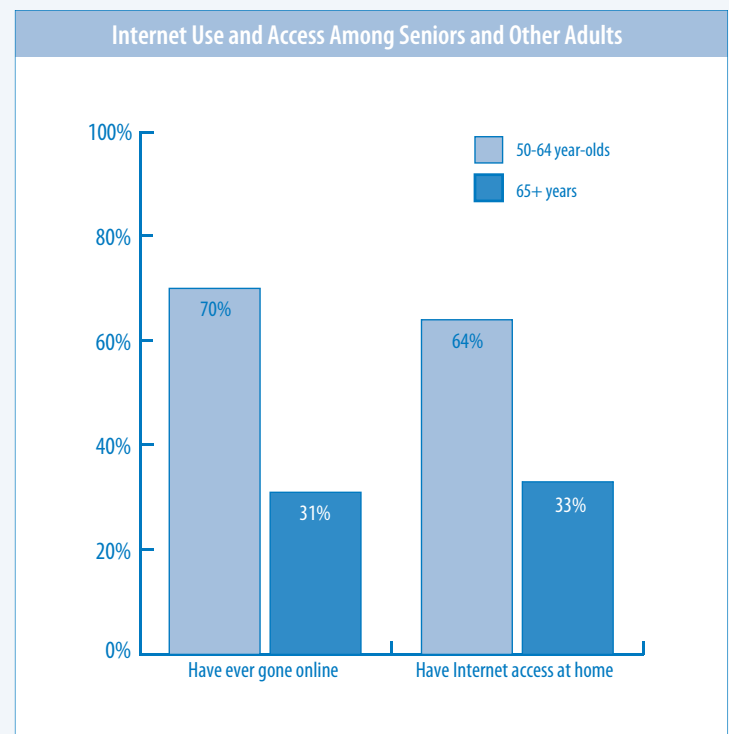
Seniors who don't go online (or only go online infrequently) say there are services that would make them more likely to do so, including a toll-free help line they could call if they ran into technical difficulties (21%), free classes to help them learn more about computers and the Internet (20%), financial assistance (16%), and a volunteer to come help them with their technical problems (15%).

## 1. Less than a third of all seniors have ever gone online; in fact, fewer than half have ever used a computer.

- Thirty-one percent of seniors 65 and older have ever gone online to use the Internet or e-mail (27% have used the Internet, 4% have used e-mail only).
- Four in ten (42%) seniors have ever used computers.
- Among seniors who have never been online, or who only go online very infrequently, the major reasons cited include never having learned how (44%), and that "it's too complicated" (33%).

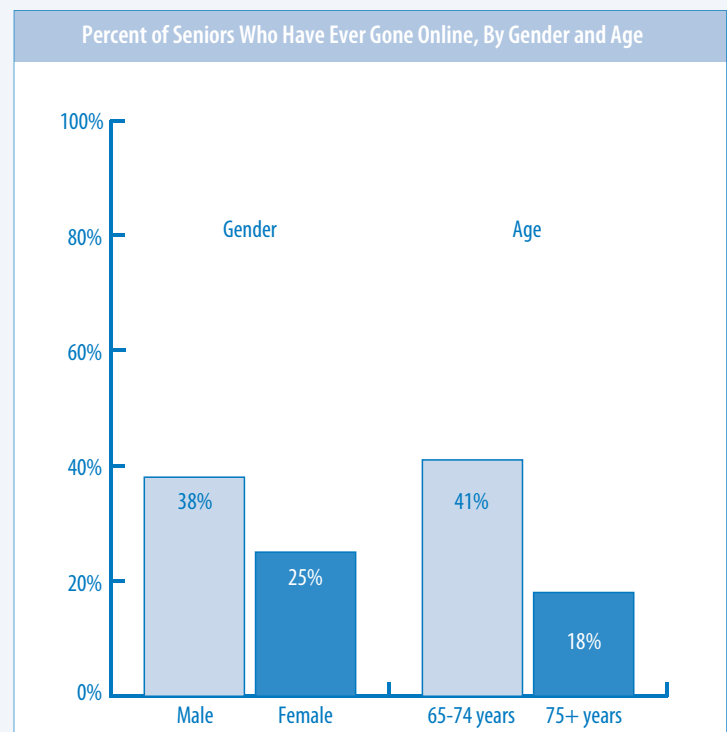
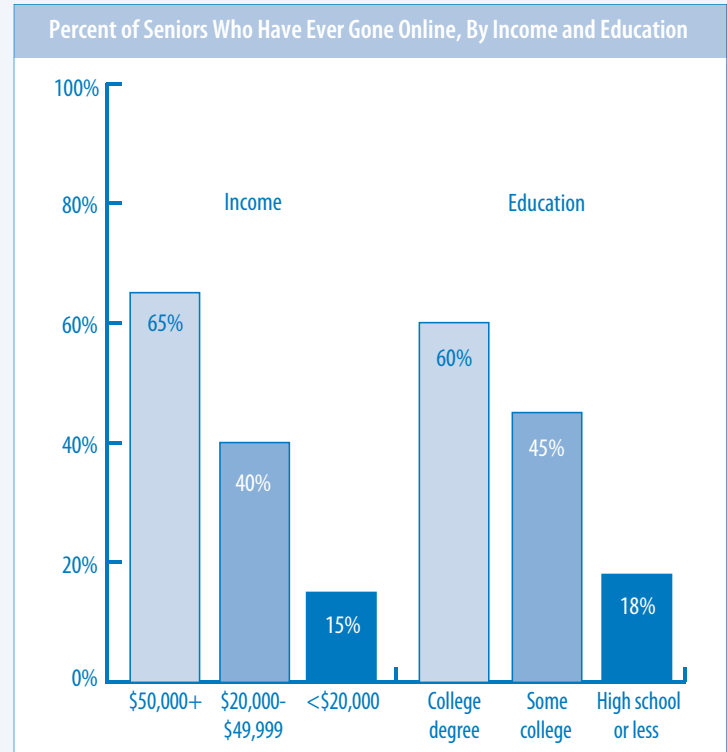
## 2. Over the next decade, as baby boomers and other adults get older, the proportion of seniors using the Internet is likely to increase dramatically.

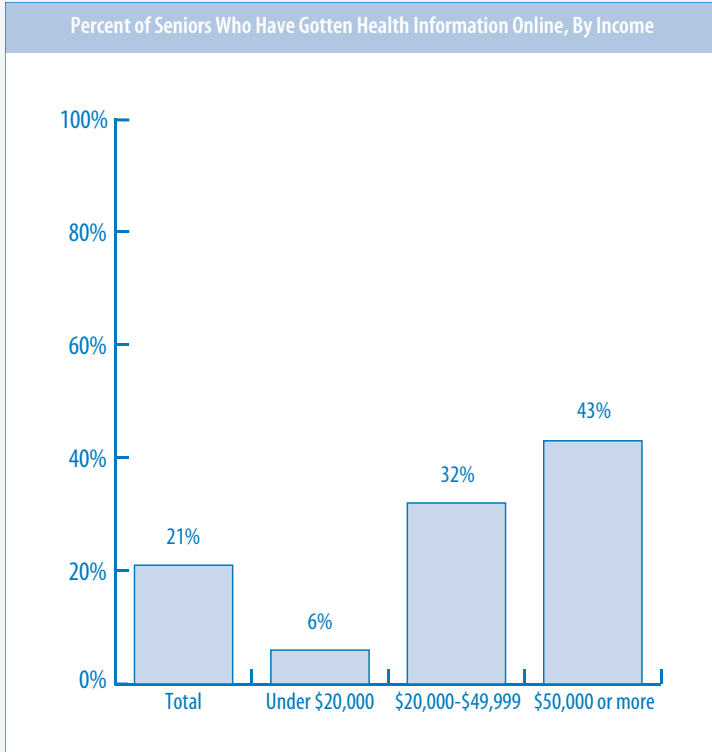
- Seventy percent of 50-64 year-olds have gone online to use the Internet or send e-mail (67% to use the Internet, 3% for e-mail only).
- Two-thirds (64%) have Internet access at home.



### 3. There is a substantial digital divide among seniors based on income, education, age, and gender.

- Seniors whose annual household income is under \$20,000 a year are much less likely to have gone online (15%) than those with incomes between \$20-49,000 (40%) or those with incomes of \$50,000 a year or more (65%).
- Most seniors fall into this lower income category: 64% of all seniors on Medicare have an annual income under \$20,000 a year, while just 8% have an income of \$50,000 a year or more.
- Likewise, seniors with only a high school degree or less are much less likely to have gone online than those with some college or a college degree (18% v. 45% v. 60%).
- Older seniors (75 and older) are much less likely than 65-74 year-olds to have gone online (18% v. 41%).
- Among seniors, men are more likely than women to have gone online (38% v. 25%).





**4. The Internet is already a source of health information for one in five senior citizens. However, seniors still rely much more on traditional media such as TV and newspapers for health information.**

- One in five (21%) seniors (65 or over) have gone online to look up health information. Just 3% say they go online for health information at least once a week or more, 4% say once or twice a month, and 14% say less often than that. Only 8% of seniors say they get “a lot” of health information online.
- TV and books are the media seniors are most likely to turn to for health information (21% get “a lot” of health information from each of these sources), followed by newspapers (17%), magazines (14%), the Internet (8%), and radio (5%).
- For 50-64 year-olds, the Internet has actually surpassed TV and books as a source of “a lot” of health information (24% v. 21% each for TV and books), followed by magazines (15%), newspapers (12%), and radio (4%).
- Given the economic divide in Internet use among seniors, it is not surprising that there is a significant divide in seniors’ use of the Internet for health information. Only 6% of seniors with incomes under \$20,000 a year have gotten health information online, compared to 32% of those with incomes between \$20-49,000 and 43% of those with incomes of \$50,000 a year or more.

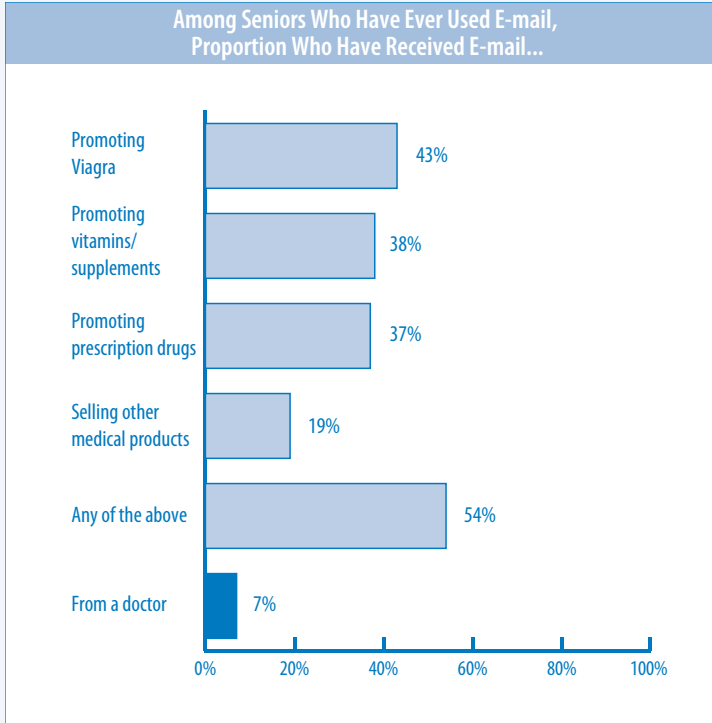


## 5. Many seniors don't trust the Internet as a source of health information; but for 50-64 year-olds, the Internet is even more trusted than other more traditional media.

- Nearly half (46%) of all seniors say they wouldn't trust the Internet "at all" to provide accurate information about important health issues. Fewer than one in ten seniors (8%) say they would trust the Internet "a lot," and 18% say they would trust it "some."
- At the same time, however, seniors also show a hesitation to trust *any* media to provide accurate information about important health issues: 15% say they would trust books "a lot," 11% would trust TV a lot, 9% magazines, 8% the Internet, 7% newspapers and 5% would trust radio a lot.
- By comparison, adults ages 50-64 are much more likely than seniors to trust the Internet: 58% trust it "a lot" or "some" to provide accurate information about important health issues, compared to 26% of seniors; 19% trust it "a lot" (compared to 8% for seniors).
- In fact, 50-64 year-olds are more likely to trust the Internet "a lot" (19%) than any other medium except books (28% say they trust books "a lot," 10% magazines, 9% television, 7% newspapers, and 4% radio).

### Keeping in touch

One of the intangible potential benefits of the Internet is helping socially isolated seniors keep in touch with family and friends. In order to get a sense of the role e-mail and the Net are playing in seniors' lives, the survey asked those who have ever gone online how central these experiences are to them, and how much they have helped them stay in touch. Among those seniors who go online, about a third say they consider e-mail (34%) and the Internet (33%) "an important part of their life that they wouldn't want to do without." About half (56%) of seniors who use e-mail say it makes it "a lot" easier for them to stay in touch with family and friends.



**6. Older Americans say doctors are not encouraging them to use the Internet for health information or to communicate with providers. But many say that drug companies and other health marketers are using the Internet to market to them.**

- Only 9% of 50-64 year-olds and 5% of seniors say their doctor has ever asked if they have access to the Internet or go online.
- Just 3% of 50-64 year-olds and 1% of seniors say a doctor has ever recommended a particular health or medical Web site to them.
- Seven percent of 50-64 year-olds and 2% of seniors say they have ever communicated with a doctor or other provider via e-mail.
- On the other hand, drug companies and others are using the Net to market health products to older adults. Forty-one percent of all 50-64 year-olds and 15% of all seniors have received e-mails advertising drugs, supplements, or other medical products.
- Looking just at those seniors who have ever used e-mail, 7% have communicated with a doctor or other provider via e-mail, while a total of 54% have received e-mails advertising either drugs, supplements, or other medical products.

**7. Looking for information on prescription drugs is one of the top reasons seniors use the Net for health information, but only 5% say they have bought prescription drugs online.**

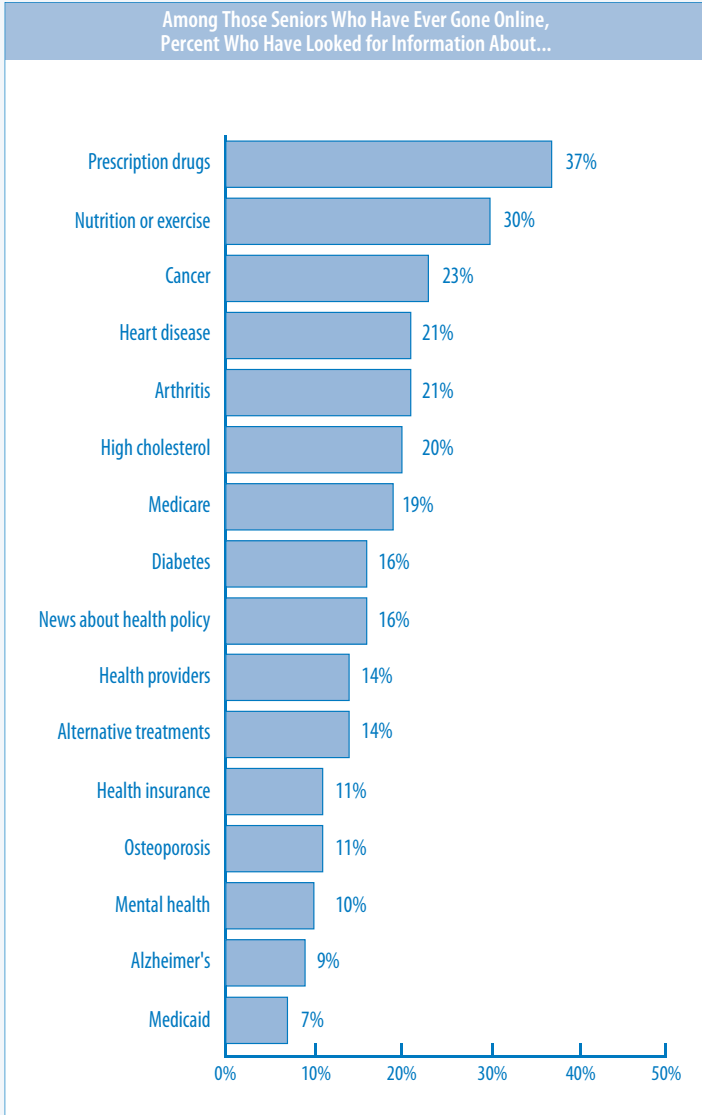
- Thirteen percent of all seniors have used the Net to look for information on prescription drugs (37% of *online* seniors). Five percent say they have used the Net to compare prices for prescription drugs (16% of those online), and 5% say they have actually purchased prescription drugs online (15% of those online).

**8. Few seniors are using the Internet to look for information on Medicare.**

- Six percent of all seniors have used the Internet to look for information on Medicare (19% of all online seniors).
- The proportion who had gone to the Medicare.gov Web site was 2% when this survey was conducted in March and April, 2004; in another survey of seniors conducted in June and July it was 4% (not a statistically significant change); in an October 2004 survey that contained a smaller sample of seniors, it was 8% (a statistically significant increase from the March/April survey).

**Dealing with technical problems**

Since the vast majority of seniors who use the Internet do so most often from their homes (84%), being able to deal with the technology and resolve technical problems that develop is critical. Only 8% of seniors who have a home computer say they “often” have technical problems, with another 19% saying they “sometimes” do. A third of seniors with computers at home say they usually fix it themselves if something goes wrong, while 60% say someone else usually helps them fix it.



**Focusing just on those seniors who are online gives us an idea of which health topics seniors with Internet access are most interested in pursuing, and is a useful indicator of how demand for online information is likely to change as more seniors go online in the years ahead. This next section looks at how online seniors have used the Net for health information, and how the group right behind them is using the Net as well.**

**9. More than two-thirds (69%) of online seniors (or 21% of *all* seniors) have looked up health information online, pursuing a wide range of issues.**

- Among those seniors who have ever gone online (31% of all seniors), 37% have used the Net to look for health information on prescription drugs (13% of *all* seniors).
- Other top health topics researched online by seniors include nutrition, exercise or weight issues (30% of online seniors have researched this topic; 9% of *all* seniors), cancer (23% of online; 7% of all), heart disease and arthritis (21% each of those online, and 6% of all), and high cholesterol (20% of online and 6% of all).
- Sixteen percent of online seniors say they have used the Net to follow news coverage of health policy issues (5% of *all* seniors).
- Fourteen percent of online seniors say they have looked for information about health providers online (4% of all).

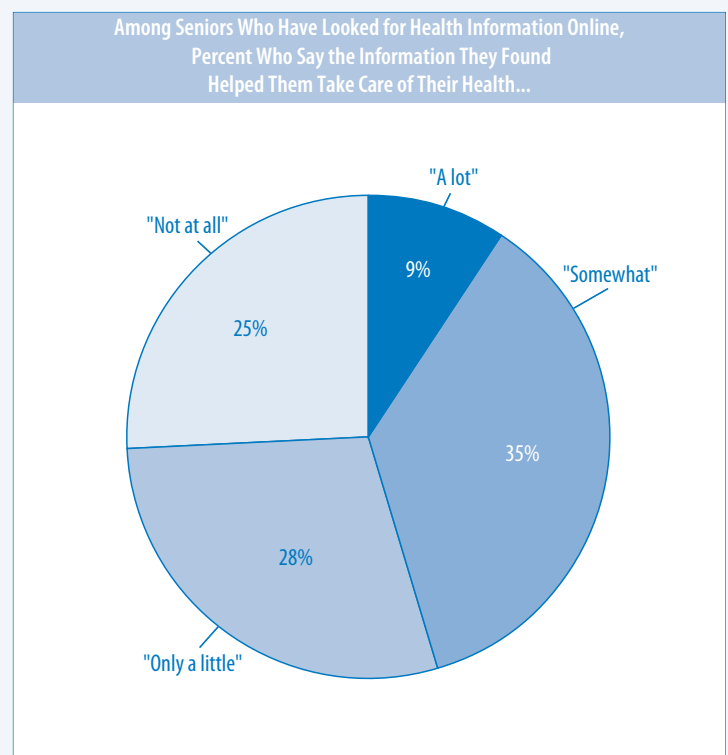
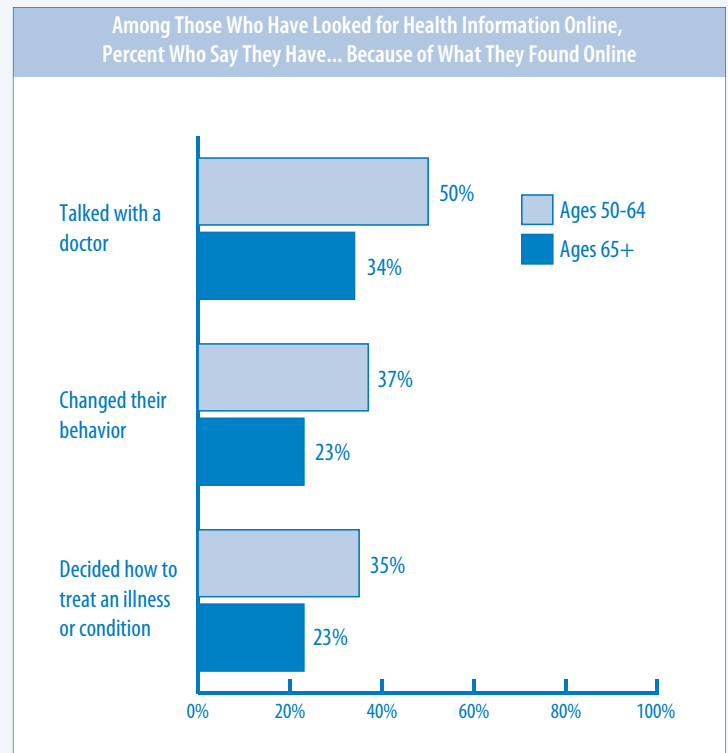
**In order to help get a sense of the experiences of those seniors who have gone online for health information (21% of all seniors), this next section takes a closer look at how satisfied they have been with the information they found, and what impact it may have had on them.**

**10. While online health information has been influential for some seniors, many others say they haven't found it very helpful.**

- Among those seniors who are online health-seekers, a third (34%; 7% of *all* seniors) say they have talked with a doctor or other provider about information they found online, 23% (5% of all seniors) say they changed their own behavior because of information they found online, and 23% (5% of all seniors) say they made a decision about how to treat an illness or condition.
- On the other hand, about half (53%) say the information they found online has helped them take care of their health "only a little" (28%) or "not at all" (25%), and just 9% say it helped "a lot."
- Some of the things seniors like about using the Internet for health information are: that they can get information from a lot of different sources (79% agree), that they can find information quickly (74%), and that they feel more informed when they see a doctor (62%). But some find it frustrating because it's hard to find what they're looking for (39%), and confusing because there's too much information (37%).

**11. Most seniors don't check the source of health information they find online.**

- Nineteen percent of those who have looked for health information online say they check the source "always" or "most of the time," while 58% say they "never" or "hardly ever" do this.



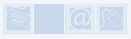
# CONCLUSION

To date, only a minority of seniors have ever gone online, and there are important digital divides by age, gender, and socio-economic status. While the Internet is a resource for some seniors, particularly those with higher income levels, strategies that rely on the Internet as the primary means of reaching older Americans would clearly miss many seniors. Television, radio, newspapers and magazines, along with grass-roots and community-based outreach efforts are all still essential components of any effort to inform older Americans.

At the same time, a significant minority of seniors are already online, and as boomers and other adults age, the number is likely to increase dramatically. For those who *are* online, health is an important topic. This is a critical time for providers and public health advocates to make sure there is accurate and reliable online information available on the topics seniors are most concerned about; that sites are easily readable (large font, color contrasts) and simple to navigate; and that we are taking advantage of the Internet's unique potential to help seniors research drug prices, choose insurance coverage, and find quality providers.

While a majority of seniors who have sought health information online say using the Net is convenient and helps them feel more informed, a majority also say the specific information they've found hasn't been that helpful; this may be part of the reason they don't turn to the Internet more often. Providing better online information will help ensure a more positive experience for those who do take the plunge.

Other steps that can be taken to help more seniors take advantage of the tools and information the Internet has to offer include providing classes in how to use the Internet, toll-free technical help lines, volunteers to assist with technical problems, and financial assistance for lower-income seniors.



While seniors lag behind other generations in using the Internet, one in five have already gone online in search of health information. The issue seniors are most likely to explore online is prescription drugs, followed by a variety of specific conditions and treatments. At this point, very few seniors have made use of the Net as a tool for comparing insurance options or choosing providers.

The Internet is already having an impact on how some seniors care for themselves. Many online users say they have made decisions or taken actions regarding their health based on the information they found on the Internet. Clearly, assuring the quality and accuracy of online health information targeted to seniors is essential. Unfortunately, most seniors who are using the Net for health information don't check who is providing the information they find. We also have no way of knowing from this study how effectively seniors are able to navigate the online world to find the resources and information they need.

Most doctors have not encouraged their older patients to use the Internet: they haven't asked patients whether they go online, haven't encouraged them to use e-mail to communicate, and haven't taken advantage of the trust seniors have in them to point them to particular Web sites. Nor is this trend limited to seniors only: very few 50-64 year-olds report communicating with their doctors online or discussing Internet resources with them.

On the other hand, drug companies and others with health-related products to sell are already reaching out to seniors online, sending e-mails promoting prescription drugs, supplements, and other medical products.

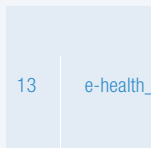
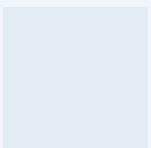
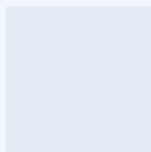
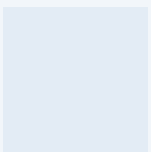
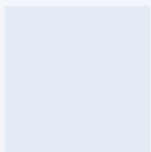


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The findings also have important implications for the Medicare program. The Medicare Modernization Act creates new opportunities for seniors to become more active consumers of health coverage options, both in the short-term with the Medicare-approved discount card program, and over the longer-term, with the new drug benefit that will be offered by competing private plans in 2006.

The Administration has invested in a variety of resources to help seniors with these choices, including a new Web site with detailed cost information about the discount cards, a toll-free 1-800 Medicare number, and additional support for health insurance counselors and other community-based organization. These findings confirm that, for the foreseeable future, the Internet is less likely to be a primary source of information for most seniors, suggesting the need to invest more heavily in other education and outreach strategies. This is especially true for reaching seniors with low or modest incomes, who are least likely to use a computer and go online. Over the longer-term, Internet-based outreach efforts may prove to be more effective as baby boomers age onto Medicare.

If we are to take advantage of the potential the Internet offers as a useful tool for seniors, then health providers, advocates and the entire public health community will need to reach out to seniors and work with them to ensure that the information and tools they need are available, the sites are useable, and that seniors are comfortable navigating their way through the online information world. ■





# SURVEY TOPLINES

## e-Health and the Elderly: How Seniors Use the Internet for Health Information

Princeton Survey Research Associates for the Kaiser Family Foundation

N = 1,450 adults age 50 and older (799 ages 50-64; 583 ages 65 and older)

Margin of error: plus or minus 3 percentage points for full sample, and plus or minus 4 percentage points for each age group

Interview dates: March 5 – April 18, 2004

### MAIN INTERVIEW:

#### 1. In general, would you say your health these days is... (READ)

	Total	50-64	65 & older
Excellent	20	24	15
Very good	24	25	22
Good,	33	31	35
Only fair	17	14	21
Poor	6	6	7
(DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused	*	*	*

#### 2. Now I'm going to read you some different health problems facing people today. For each one, please tell me whether or not this is an issue that has affected you or someone you know in the past year or so. (First,...) (INSERT ITEM, READ & RANDOMIZE)?

REPEAT CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY: Has this issue affected you or someone you know in the past year?

	Yes	No	DK/Ref.
a. Cancer			
Total:	38	62	*
50-64:	41	59	1
65 and older	34	65	*
b. Heart disease			
Total:	39	60	1
50-64:	37	62	1
65 and older	42	58	1
c. Obesity and weight issues			
Total:	43	57	*
50-64:	49	51	*
65 and older	34	66	*
d. Arthritis			
Total:	64	35	1
50-64:	61	38	1
65 and older	68	30	1

Question 2 continued

	Yes	No	DK/Ref
e. Diabetes			
Total:	45	55	*
50-64:	46	54	*
65 and older	45	55	0
f. Alzheimer's			
Total:	18	81	1
50-64:	19	81	*
65 and older	17	82	1
g. High cholesterol			
Total:	54	45	1
50-64:	52	47	1
65 and older	57	41	2
h. Osteoporosis			
Total:	24	74	2
50-64:	21	77	2
65 and older	28	69	3
(ALWAYS ASK ITEM I LAST)			
i. Depression or other mental health issues			
Total:	29	70	*
50-64:	36	64	*
65 and older	21	78	1

**3. Have any OTHER important health problems that I haven't already mentioned affected you or someone you know in the past year? (OPEN END)**

	Total	50-64	65 & older
Yes, gave response	21	22	22
No response	78	77	78
Don't know/refused	1	1	*

**Question 2 and 3 Summary Table**

	Total	50-64	65 & older
Yes, to any item in Question 2 or 3	92	89	96
No or Don't know to all items in Question 2 and 3	8	11	4

**4. Now, I'd like to ask you about some specific sources you might use to get information about health problems or issues that are important to you. Please tell me how much information about these kinds of issues you generally get from each of the following sources. First, what about... (INSERT – READ AND RANDOMIZE)?**

(READ FOR FIRST ITEM. THEN AS NECESSARY) Do you get a lot of information about important health issues from this source, some information, only a little, or none at all?

	A lot	Some	A little	None	DK/Ref
a. Doctors or other health care professionals					
Total:	48	29	14	8	1
50-64:	49	29	13	9	*
65 & older:	49	28	14	8	2
b. Pharmacists					
Total:	17	26	25	30	1
50-64:	17	27	26	29	1
65 & older:	16	25	25	33	2
c. Newspapers					
Total:	15	35	22	26	1
50-64:	12	37	22	29	*
65 & older:	17	34	24	23	3
d. Magazines					
Total:	15	35	23	27	1
50-64:	15	36	24	24	1
65 & older:	14	32	22	30	1
e. Books					
Total:	21	32	19	26	1
50-64:	21	35	19	25	1
65 & older:	21	29	19	30	2
f. The Internet					
Total:	17	15	10	57	1
50-64:	24	20	13	42	1
65 & older:	8	8	7	76	*
g. Television					
Total:	21	36	27	16	1
50-64:	21	39	27	13	*
65 & older:	21	32	27	19	1
h. Radio					
Total:	5	19	24	51	1
50-64:	4	21	25	48	*
65 & older:	5	14	22	56	2
i. Friends or family					
Total:	19	35	25	20	1
50-64:	19	39	23	18	1
65 & older:	17	29	28	23	2

**5. Please tell me how much you would TRUST each of the following sources to provide accurate information about health problems or issues that are important to you. What about... (INSERT. READ AND RANDOMIZE)?**

(READ FOR FIRST ITEM. THEN AS NECESSARY) Would you trust this source a lot, somewhat, not too much, or not at all to provide accurate information about important health issues?

	A lot	Somewhat	Not too much	Not at all	DK/Ref
a. Doctors or other health care professionals					
Total:	70	23	4	1	1
50-64:	71	24	3	1	1
65 & older:	70	22	5	1	2
b. Pharmacists					
Total:	53	32	6	7	2
50-64:	56	32	5	6	1
65 & older:	50	31	8	9	3
c. Newspapers					
Total:	7	50	20	21	3
50-64:	7	53	19	19	1
65 & older:	7	45	21	23	4
d. Magazines					
Total:	10	50	18	19	3
50-64:	10	55	17	17	2
65 & older:	9	43	20	23	5
e. Books					
Total:	23	49	10	10	4
50-64:	28	52	9	9	2
65 & older:	15	46	13	19	6
f. The Internet					
Total:	14	30	9	35	11
50-64:	19	39	10	26	6
65 & older:	8	18	9	46	19
g. Television					
Total:	10	50	20	19	2
50-64:	9	54	20	17	1
65 & older:	11	44	21	22	3
h. Radio					
Total:	5	36	21	34	4
50-64:	4	43	21	29	2
65 & older:	5	25	21	42	7
i. Friends or family					
Total:	25	49	15	9	2
50-64:	22	54	15	8	1
65 & older:	28	42	16	12	2

**6. Have you EVER used a computer, or not?**

	Total	50-64	65 & older
Yes	62	76	42
No	38	24	58
Don't know/Refused	*	0	*

**7. Have you EVER gone online to use... (INSERT. READ AND ROTATE)**

	Yes	No	DK/Ref
a. The Internet or World Wide Web			
Total:	50	50	*
50-64:	67	33	0
65 & older:	27	73	*
b. E-mail			
Total:	50	50	*
50-64:	65	35	0
65 & older:	29	71	*

**Question 7 Summary Table**

	Total	50-64	65 & older
Yes, go online for e-mail or Internet	53	70	31
Not online	47	30	69

**8. How long ago did you FIRST start going online either to use the Internet or e-mail? (READ IF NECESSARY)**

Based on those who go online

	Total	50-64	65 & older
Within the past 12 months	6	5	9
1 to 2 years ago	9	8	11
2 to 3 years ago	12	11	16
3 to 4 years ago	9	7	15
4 to 5 years ago	16	17	12
More than 5 years ago	48	51	37
Don't know/Refused	1	2	1
	n=823	n=592	n=190

**9. Where do you go online MOST OFTEN... (READ IF NECESSARY)**

Based on those who go online

	Total	50-64	65 & older
At home	72	68	84
At work	21	25	8
Friend or family member's house	3	3	4
Library	2	3	1
Somewhere else – SPECIFY	1	1	1
Don't know/Refused	2	1	2
	n=823	n=592	n=190

**10. In general, how often do you go online – every day, 3 to 5 days a week, 1 to 2 days a week, once or twice a MONTH, or less often than that? (CONTINUE READING CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY)**

Based on those who go online

	Total	50-64	65 & older
Every day	49	51	46
3 to 5 days a week	22	22	24
1 to 2 days a week	14	14	15
Once or twice a month	8	8	8
Less often	6	5	7
Don't know/Refused	1	1	0
	n=823	n=592	n=190

**11. During an AVERAGE WEEK, about how many HOURS do you spend online using the Internet or e-mail... (READ IF NECESSARY)**

Based on those who go online

	Total	50-64	65 & older
Less than an hour a week	21	19	26
1 to 2 hours	20	21	16
3 to 5 hours	22	20	26
6 to 9 hours	12	13	12
10 to 15 hours	12	12	13
More than 15 hours a week	11	13	6
Don't know/Refused	2	3	*
	n=823	n=592	n=190

**12. Do you have a computer AT HOME, or not?**

	Total	50-64	65 & older
Yes	59	73	41
No	40	27	59
Don't know/Refused	*	*	0

**13. Do you have access to the Internet on your HOME computer, or not?**

	Total	50-64	65 & older
Yes	51	64	33
No/No computer at home	48	35	66
Don't know/Refused	1	*	1

**14. Do you have HIGH-SPEED Internet access on your home computer, such as a cable or DSL hook-up, or is your Internet access through a DIAL-UP telephone modem?**

Based on those with Internet access at home

	Total	50-64	65 & older
Yes, have high speed access	39	44	28
No, only through dial-up modem	56	54	60
Don't know/Refused	5	2	12
	n=785	n=545	n=204

**15. In the next year or two, how likely are you to... (INSERT READ ITEMS IN ORDER). Would you say this is very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?**

	Very	Somewhat likely	Not too likely	Not at all likely	DK/Ref	Already have a computer/Internet access at home
a. Get a computer at home						
Total:	3	5	5	26	1	59
50-64:	4	4	3	15	1	73
65 & older:	2	5	7	42	3	41
b. Get Internet access at home						
Total:	4	6	5	32	3	51
50-64:	6	6	4	19	1	64
65 & older:	3	6	5	49	4	33

**16. Would you like to start using the Internet or e-mail, or is this something you're not interested in?**

Based on those who aren't online

	Total	50-64	65 & older
Yes, would like to start using	12	17	9
No, not interested	86	81	89
Don't know/Refused	2	2	2
	n=627	n=207	N=393

**17. A lot of people don't use the Internet (IF Q.10=5 ADD: very often). Now, as I read some reasons why they don't, please tell me if each is a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason why YOU don't use the Internet (IF Q.10=5 ADD: more often). (First/Next,...) (INSERT, ROTATE).**

**(READ IF NECESSARY)** Is this a major reason, minor reason, or not a reason why you don't use the Internet (more often)?

Based on those who aren't online or go online less than once a month

	Major	Minor	Not a reason	DK/Ref	
a. It's too expensive					
Total:	26	14	53	6	n=675
50-64:	29	17	50	4	n=239
65 & older:	25	12	55	8	n=407
b. It's too slow					
Total:	10	11	62	18	n=675
50-64:	10	16	59	15	n=239
65 & older:	9	8	64	19	n=407
c. You never learned how					
Total:	39	16	40	5	n=675
50-64:	35	18	44	3	n=239
65 & older:	44	15	36	6	n=407
d. It's too complicated					
Total:	31	18	42	9	n=675
50-64:	31	23	42	4	n=239
65 & older:	33	15	41	12	n=407

Question 17 continued

	Major	Minor	Not a reason	DK/Ref	
e.	You have a disability which makes it difficult to use a computer				
Total:	9	8	80	2	n=675
50-64:	9	11	78	2	n=239
65 & older:	9	6	82	2	n=407
f.	You have friends or family members who go online for you				
Total:	21	16	57	6	n=675
50-64:	23	20	54	2	n=239
65 & older:	20	13	59	8	n=407
g.	There's nothing on the Internet that interests you				
Total:	26	16	48	10	n=675
50-64:	24	17	50	8	n=239
65 & older:	27	16	46	12	n=407
h.	You're concerned that someone will try to cheat, steal or take advantage of you online				
Total:	31	12	52	5	n=675
50-64:	39	16	41	3	n=239
65 & older:	25	11	58	6	n=407
Item (i) is based on those who go online less than once a month					
i.	Something goes wrong with the computer too often				
Total:	14	30	49	7	n=48
50-64:	13	39	45	3	n=32
65 & older:	18	8	59	15	n=14

**18. Please tell me if any of the following services would make you (more likely to go online/go online more often). (First,) what about... (INSERT. READ AND RANDOMIZE)?**

(READ AS NECESSARY) Would this make you (more likely to go online/go online more often), or not?

Based on those who aren't online or go online less than once a month

	Yes, more likely	No more likely	DK/Ref	
a.	A toll-free help line you could call if you ran into technical difficulties			
Total:	26	72	2	n=675
50-64:	36	63	1	n=239
65 & older:	21	77	3	n=407
b.	A volunteer who could come to your house to provide technical assistance when you needed it			
Total:	19	79	3	n=675
50-64:	25	73	2	n=239
65 & older:	15	82	3	n=407



Question 18 continued

	Yes, more likely	No more likely	DK/Ref	
c.	Financial assistance to help pay for computer equipment, software, or an Internet connection			
Total:	20	78	2	n=675
50-64:	27	72	2	n=239
65 & older:	16	82	3	n=407
d.	Free classes to help you learn more about computers and the Internet			
Total:	24	73	2	n=675
50-64:	33	65	2	n=239
65 & older:	20	78	2	n=407

**19. As I read you a list of things people sometimes do on the Internet, please tell me if you have ever done any of the following online. Have you ever... (READ ITEMS AND RANDOMIZE) or not?**

	Yes	No	Not online	DK/Ref	
a.	Used an instant messaging service				
Total:	17	35	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	24	46	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	8	22	69	1	n=583
Total online:	33	66		1	n=823
Total online 50-64:	34	66		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	27	71		2	n=190
b.	Read the news online				
Total:	39	14	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	53	17	30	0	n=799
65 & older:	20	10	69	*	n=583
Total online:	74	26		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	76	24		0	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	67	33		1	n=190
c.	Bought a product online, such as books, clothes, or plane tickets				
Total:	39	17	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	50	19	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	17	13	69	0	n=583
Total online:	67	32		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	72	28		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	57	43		0	n=190
d.	Checked the weather online				
Total:	41	12	47	0	n=1450
50-64:	57	13	30	0	n=799
65 & older:	21	10	69	0	n=583
Total online:	78	22		0	n=823
Total online 50-64:	81	19		0	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	68	32		0	n=190

Question 19 continued

	Yes	No	Not online	DK/Ref	
e.	Looked for news about politics or elections				
Total:	24	29	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	32	38	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	13	18	69	*	n=583
Total online:	45	55		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	46	54		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	41	58		1	n=190
f.	Gone to a Web site of a political candidate				
Total:	11	42	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	15	54	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	5	25	69	0	n=583
Total online:	21	79		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	22	78		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	17	83		0	n=190
g.	Received an e-mail from a political candidate's campaign asking for money				
Total:	8	44	47	1	n=1450
50-64:	10	58	30	1	n=799
65 & older:	5	25	69	*	n=583
Total online:	15	84		1	n=823
Total online 50-64:	15	84		1	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	17	82		*	n=190

**20. Some people use the Internet to look for information on many different topics, and others don't. Please tell me if you've ever looked for information about each of the following HEALTH CARE topics online. (First,) what about... (INSERT; READ AND RANDOMIZE)?**

(READ AS NECESSARY) Have you ever gone online to look for information about this?

	Yes	No	Not online	DK/Ref	
a.	Prescription drugs				
Total:	19	34	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	24	45	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	11	19	69	-	n=583
Total online:	35	65		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	35	65		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	37	63		0	n=190
b.	Alternative or experimental treatments				
Total:	13	40	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	19	51	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	4	26	69	*	n=583
Total online:	24	76		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	27	73		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	14	85		1	n=190

Question 20 continued

	Yes	No	Not online	DK/Ref	
c. Health or medical products such as eyeglasses, hearing aids, or walkers					
Total:	5	48	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	7	62	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	2	28	69	–	n=583
Total online:	10	90		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	11	89		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	8	92		0	n=190
d. Medicare, the program that provides health insurance to people age 65 and older					
Total:	8	45	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	9	61	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	6	24	69	*	n=583
Total online:	15	85		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	13	87		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	19	80		1	n=190
e. Medicaid (Medi-Cal, Mass Health, Carolina Access or Health Check, Health Choices, Tenn Care, Star Plus), the program that provides health insurance and long term care to certain low income people					
Total:	4	49	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	6	63	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	2	28	69	–	n=583
Total online:	8	92		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	9	91		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	7	93		0	n=190
f. Health insurance policies, such as Medi-gap or long term care insurance					
Total:	7	46	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	10	59	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	3	27	69	–	n=583
Total online:	13	87		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	14	85		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	11	89		0	n=190

**21. Now, please tell me if you have ever used the Internet to look for information about any of the following specific health problems or medical conditions. (First/Next,) what about... (INSERT; READ AND RANDOMIZE)?**

READ AS NECESSARY: Have you ever used the Internet to look for information about this?

	Yes	No	Not online	DK/Ref	
a. Cancer					
Total:	15	38	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	21	49	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	7	23	69	–	n=583
Total online:	28	71		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	30	70		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	23	77		0	n=190

Question 21 continued

	Yes	No	Not online	DK/Ref	
b. Heart disease					
Total:	12	41	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	16	54	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	6	24	69	–	n=583
Total online:	22	78		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	22	77		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	21	79		0	n=190
c. Arthritis					
Total:	13	40	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	17	52	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	6	24	69	*	n=583
Total online:	24	76		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	25	77		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	21	79		*	n=190
d. Diabetes					
Total:	11	42	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	16	53	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	5	25	69	*	n=583
Total online:	21	78		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	23	77		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	16	83		1	n=190
e. Alzheimers					
Total:	6	47	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	8	61	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	3	28	69	–	n=583
Total online:	12	88		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	12	87		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	9	91		0	n=190
f. Osteoporosis					
Total:	8	45	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	11	58	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	3	27	69	–	n=583
Total online:	15	85		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	16	84		1	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	11	89		0	n=190
g. High cholesterol					
Total:	12	41	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	16	53	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	6	24	69	–	n=583
Total online:	22	78		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	23	77		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	20	80		0	n=190

Question 21 continued

	Yes	No	Not online	DK/Ref	
<b>h. Nutrition, exercise or weight issues</b>					
Total:	22	31	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	32	37	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	9	21	69	–	n=583
Total online:	42	58		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	47	53		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	30	70		0	n=190
<b>i. Mental health issues like depression or anxiety</b>					
Total:	10	43	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	15	54	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	3	28	69	–	n=583
Total online:	18	82		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	21	78		1	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	10	90		0	n=190
READ ITEM J LAST					
<b>j. Any other illness or medical condition that I haven't already mentioned</b>					
Total:	15	38	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	20	49	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	7	23	69	*	n=583
Total online:	27	72		1	n=823
Total online 50-64:	29	71		1	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	23	76		1	n=190

**22. Have you ever used the Internet... (INSERT; READ ITEMS IN ORDER)?**

	Yes	No	Not online	DK/Ref	
<b>a. To get information about a doctor, hospital, nursing home, home health agency or other health care provider</b>					
Total:	14	39	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	22	48	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	4	26	69	–	n=583
Total online:	26	73		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	31	69		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	14	86		0	n=190
<b>b. To look for news about health policy issues, such as changes in Medicare, or coverage of prescription drug costs</b>					
Total:	7	46	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	9	61	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	5	26	69	–	n=583
Total online:	14	86		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	13	87		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	16	84		0	n=190

**23. Have you ever used the Internet... (INSERT; READ ITEMS IN ORDER)?**

	Yes	No	Not online	DK/Ref	
a.	To compare prices for prescription drugs				
Total:	7	46	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	9	61	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	5	26	69	–	n=583
Total online:	13	86		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	13	87		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	16	84		0	n=190
b.	To purchase prescription drugs				
Total:	6	47	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	8	62	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	5	26	69	–	n=583
Total online:	12	88		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	11	88		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	15	85		0	n=190
c.	To purchase vitamins or other nutritional supplements				
Total:	7	46	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	10	60	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	3	28	69	–	n=583
Total online:	13	87		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	14	86		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	9	91		0	n=190
d.	To purchase any other medical products such as hearing aids or walkers				
Total:	1	52	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	2	67	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	*	30	69	–	n=583
Total online:	3	97		*	n=823
Total online 50-64:	3	97		*	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	2	98		0	n=190

**24. Now, please tell me if you have ever heard of any of the following Web sites. (First/Next)... (INSERT. READ AND RANDOMIZE) is this a Web site you have heard of?**

	Yes	No	Not online	DK/Ref
a.	Medicare.gov			
Total:	16	36	47	*
50-64:	22	47	30	*
65 & older:	9	21	69	1
b.	WebMD			
Total:	24	28	47	*
50-64:	36	33	30	*
65 & older:	9	21	69	1

**25. Have you ever visited the (INSERT ITEM FROM Q.24) site on the Internet, or not?**

	Yes	No	Not online	DK/Ref	
a. Medicare.gov					
Total:	4	48	47	1	n=1450
50-64:	5	64	30	1	n=799
65 & older:	2	27	69	1	n=583
Total online:	7	91		1	n=823
Total online 50-64:	7	92		1	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	8	90		3	n=190
b. WebMD					
Total:	13	39	47	1	n=1450
50-64:	20	48	30	1	n=799
65 & older:	4	26	69	1	n=583
Total online:	25	74		2	n=823
Total online 50-64:	29	70		1	n=592
Total online 65 & older:	13	85		3	n=190

**26. How useful did you find the Medicare.gov web site? Would you say it was very useful, somewhat useful, not too useful, or not at all useful?**

Based on those who visited Medicare.gov Web site

Very useful	33
Somewhat useful	55
Not too useful	6
Not at all useful	3
Don't know/Refused	3
	n=64

Note: Subgroups too small to report

**Questions 20 through 26 Summary Table: Percent who have gone online for health information**

	Online health seeker	Not online health seeker
Among Total Sample:	40	60
50-64:	53	47
65 & older:	21	79
Among Those Who Have Ever Gone Online:	75	25
50-64:	77	23
65 & older:	69	31

**27. You mentioned having used the Internet to look for information about health-related issues. How often do you use the Internet to look for any kind of health or medical information? (READ)**

	Every day	A few times a week	About once a week	Once or twice a month	Less often	Don't look for health info online	Don't go online	DK/Ref	
Total:	1	1	3	10	25	13	47	*	n=1450
50-64:	1	2	3	14	33	16	30	*	n=799
65 & older:	*	1	2	4	14	9	69	*	n=583
Total online health seekers:	2	3	6	26	62			1	n=628
Total online health seekers 50-64:	2	3	6	26	62			1	n=464
Total online health seekers 65 & older:	1	3	8	21	65			2	n=129

**28. How much has the information you have found on the Internet helped you take care of your health? Has it helped... (READ)**

Based on those who go online for health information

	A lot	Somewhat	Only a little	Not at all	DK/Ref	
Total:	16	40	23	20	1	n=628
50-64:	18	42	22	18	*	n=464
65 & older:	9	35	28	25	2	n=129

**29. Thinking about all the times you've gone on the Internet to look for health or medical information, have you ever... (INSERT. READ AND RANDOMIZE)**

Based on those who go online for health information

	Yes	No	DK/Ref
a. Had a conversation with a friend or family member about health information you found online			
Total:	60	40	*
50-64:	64	36	0
65 & older:	44	55	1
b. Changed your own behavior because of health information you saw online			
Total:	33	66	1
50-64:	37	62	1
65 & older:	23	75	2
c. Made a decision about how to treat an illness or condition because of information you found online			
Total:	32	67	1
50-64:	35	65	*
65 & older:	23	74	3
d. Visited a doctor or other health care provider because of information you found online			
Total:	14	86	*
50-64:	15	85	0
65 & older:	10	89	1



Question 29 continued

	Yes	No	DK/Ref
e. Talked with a doctor or other health care provider about information you found online			
Total:	46	53	*
50-64:	50	50	*
65 & older:	34	65	1
f. Changed your health insurance plan because of information you found online			
Total:	2	98	0
50-64:	3	97	0
65 & older:	1	99	0

**30. As I read you some statements that describe people’s feelings about looking for health information on the Internet, please tell me if you agree or disagree with each statement. Here’s the (first/next) one... (INSERT. READ AND RANDOMIZE)**

READ FOR FIRST ITEM. THEN AS NECESSARY: Do you agree or disagree (with this statement)?

Based on those who go online for health information

	Agree	Disagree	DK/Ref	
a. It’s frustrating because it’s hard to find what I’m looking for				
Total:	34	64	2	n=628
50-64:	33	66	1	n=464
65 & older:	39	59	3	n=129
b. It’s good because I can get information quickly				
Total:	86	12	2	n=628
50-64:	90	8	1	n=464
65 & older:	74	22	5	n=129
c. It helps me feel more informed when I go to the doctor				
Total:	74	24	2	n=628
50-64:	78	20	2	n=464
65 & older:	62	35	3	n=129
d. It’s confusing because there’s too much information				
Total:	36	61	3	n=628
50-64:	36	62	2	n=464
65 & older:	37	57	6	n=129
e. It’s good because I can get information from a lot of different sources				
Total:	88	10	2	n=628
50-64:	91	8	1	n=464
65 & older:	79	16	5	n=129

**31. How often do you look to see who provides the health and medical information you find on the Internet? Do you do this always, most of the time, only sometimes, hardly ever, or do you never do this?**

Based on those who go online for health information

	Always	Most of the time	Only sometimes	Hardly ever	Never do this	DK/Ref	
Total:	21	12	25	26	15	1	n=628
50-64:	23	13	27	24	12	1	n=464
65 & older:	11	8	21	36	22	1	n=129

**32. Has your doctor ever asked if you have access to the Internet or go online?**

	Yes	No	DK/Ref
Total:	8	91	1
50-64:	9	90	1
65 & older:	5	94	1

**33. Has a doctor ever recommended a particular health or medical Web site to you?**

	Yes	No	DK/Ref
Total:	2	97	*
50-64:	3	97	*
65 & older:	1	99	0

**34. Have you ever communicated with a doctor or other health care provider through e-mail?**

	Yes	No	Don't use e-mail	DK/Ref
Total:	5	45	50	*
50-64:	7	58	35	*
65 & older:	2	26	71	*

**35. Please tell me if you have ever received any e-mails advertising each of the following. What about e-mails advertising... (INSERT. READ IN ORDER)**

	Yes	No	Don't use e-mail	DK/Ref
a. Prescription drugs				
Total:	21	28	50	n=1450
50-64:	27	36	35	n=799
65 & older:	11	17	71	n=583
Total e-mail users:	41	56	3	n=777
Total e-mail users 50-64:	42	56	2	n=558
Total e-mail users 65 & older:	37	59	4	n=179

Question 35 continued

	Yes	No	Don't use e-mail	DK/Ref	
b. Over-the-counter drugs					
Total:	15	33	50		n=1450
50-64:	21	42	35		n=799
65 & older:	8	19	71		n=583
Total e-mail users:	31	66		3	n=777
Total e-mail users 50-64:	32	65		2	n=558
Total e-mail users 65 & older:	27	68		5	N=179
c. Vitamins or herbal supplements					
Total:	23	26	50		n=1450
50-64:	32	32	35		n=799
65 & older:	11	17	71		n=583
Total e-mail users:	46	52		2	n=777
Total e-mail users 50-64:	49	50		2	n=558
Total e-mail users 65 & older:	38	59		4	N=179
d. Sexual health medications like Viagra					
Total:	25	24	50		n=1450
50-64:	34	30	35		n=799
65 & older:	12	16	71		n=583
Total e-mail users:	50	49		1	n=777
Total e-mail users 50-64:	53	46		1	n=558
Total e-mail users 65 & older:	43	56		1	N=179
e. Other health or medical products, such as hearing aids or walkers					
Total:	8	40	50		n=1450
50-64:	10	53	35		n=799
65 & older:	5	22	71		n=583
Total e-mail users:	17	80		3	n=777
Total e-mail users 50-64:	16	82		2	n=558
Total e-mail users 65 & older:	19	77		4	N=179

Question 35 Summary Table

	Yes, received any e-mails	Received no e-mails/ don't use e-mail	
Total:	31	69	n=1450
50-64:	41	59	n=799
65 & older:	15	85	n=583
Total e-mail users:	61	39	n=777
Total e-mail users 50-64:	64	36	n=558
Total e-mail users 65 & older:	54	46	n=179

**36. Have you ever participated in a chat room, online support group, or e-mail list for people concerned about a particular health or medical issue?**

Based on those who go online

	Yes	No	DK/Ref	
Total:	4	96	0	n=823
50-64:	4	96	0	n=592
65 & older:	4	96	0	n=190

**37. How useful did you find the chat room, online support group or e-mail list you participated in most recently? Was it... (READ)**

Based on those who participated in online support group or chat room (n=34)

Very useful	35
Somewhat useful	33
Not too useful	11
Not at all useful	21
Don't know/Refused	0

Note: Subgroups too small to report

**38. Now, please tell me which of the following statements comes closest to your view of going online to use e-mail... (READ)**

Based on those who use e-mail

	Total	50-64	65 & older
E-mail is an important part of your life that you wouldn't want to do without	37	39	34
E-mail is enjoyable, but not very important to you	37	35	41
E-mail is something you could easily do without	25	26	24
Don't know/Refused	*	*	1
	n=777	n=558	n=179

**39. Please tell me how much easier, if at all, e-mail makes each of the following for you. (First,) what about... (INSERT. READ AND RANDOMIZE)**

(READ AS NECESSARY) Does e-mail make this a lot easier, somewhat easier, only a little easier, or not at all easier for you?

Based on those who use e-mail

	A lot easier	Somewhat easier	A little easier	Not at all easier	DK/Ref	
a. Staying in touch with family and friends						
Total:	53	21	12	13	1	n=777
50-64:	52	22	11	14	1	n=558
65 & older:	56	17	13	13	1	n=179
b. Helping to maintain your health and care for yourself						
Total:	4	18	17	59	2	n=777
50-64:	5	21	16	57	1	n=558
65 & older:	3	11	17	65	3	n=179

**40. Now, please tell me which of the following statements comes closest to your view of going online to use the INTERNET. (READ)**

Based on those who go online

	Total	50-64	65 & older
The Internet is an important part of your life that you wouldn't want to do without	38	39	33
The Internet is enjoyable, but not very important to you	42	43	41
The Internet is something you could easily do without	19	17	26
Don't know/Refused	1	1	1
	n=823	n=592	n=190

**41. Do you feel left out because you don't use the Internet or e-mail?**

Based on those who don't go online

	Total	50-64	65 & older
Yes	9	11	8
No	90	88	91
Don't know/Refused	1	1	1
	n=627	n=207	n=393

**42. How often do you have any technical problems with your computer or your Internet access at home? Does this happen to you often, sometimes, not too often, or never?**

Based on those who have ever used a computer and have one at home

	Total	50-64	65 & older
Often	10	11	8
Sometimes	23	24	19
Not too often	50	50	52
Never	17	14	20
Don't know/Refused	1	*	*
	n=796	n=557	n=199

**43. If you have a problem with your home computer, are you usually able to fix it yourself or does someone else help you fix the problem?**

Based on those who have ever used a computer and have one at home

	Total	50-64	65 & older
Self	40	42	33
Someone else	56	54	60
Don't know/Refused	5	4	7
	n=796	n=557	n=199

**44. Do you feel you have ever been cheated or taken advantage of by anyone trying to sell you something over the Internet?**

Based on those who go online

	Total	50-64	65 & older
Yes	10	10	6
No/Never bought anything off the Internet	90	90	92
Don't know/Refused	1	*	2
	n=823	n=592	n=190

**45. Thinking about what would make it easier for you to use the Internet or get more out of it, please tell me how helpful each of the following services would be to you. (First) what about... (INSERT. READ AND RANDOMIZE)?**

(READ AS NECESSARY) Would this be very helpful, somewhat helpful, not too helpful, or not at all helpful to you?

Based on those who go online at least once or twice a month

	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not too helpful	Not at all helpful	DK/Ref	
a. A toll-free help line you could call if you ran into technical difficulties						
Total:	47	30	5	17	1	n=770
50-64:	49	30	5	16	*	n=555
65 & older:	42	28	9	20	2	n=176
b. A volunteer who could come to your house to provide technical assistance when you needed it						
Total:	28	21	9	40	2	n=770
50-64:	28	22	10	38	1	n=555
65 & older:	25	18	8	44	4	n=176
c. Financial assistance to help pay for computer equipment, software, or an Internet connection						
Total:	22	17	10	49	2	n=770
50-64:	25	18	9	45	2	n=555
65 & older:	14	13	12	58	3	n=176
d. Free classes to help you learn more about computers and the Internet						
Total:	31	28	10	30	1	n=770
50-64:	31	28	9	30	1	n=555
65 & older:	29	30	12	28	*	n=176

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Finally, I have just a few questions we will use to describe the people who took part in our survey...

### D1. RECORD RESPONDENT'S SEX:

Male	44
Female	56

### D2. Are you the primary caregiver for anyone in your household with a serious or chronic health condition, or not?

Yes	15
No	83
Don't know/Refused	1

### D3. Does any disability, handicap, or chronic disease keep you from participating fully in work, school, housework, or other activities, or not?

Yes	22
No	77
Don't know/Refused	1

### D4. Are you now married, LIVING AS married, divorced, separated, widowed, or have you never been married?

Married	52
Living as married	2
Widowed	22
Divorced	15
Separated	2
Never married/Single	5
Refused	1

### D5a. IF MARRIED OR LIVING AS MARRIED: Do you live with just your spouse/significant other, with other family members, with friends or roommates, or in an assisted living facility?

### D5b. ALL OTHERS: Do you live alone, with other family members, with friends or roommates, or in an assisted living facility?

Live alone	30
Just spouse or significant other	43
Spouse and someone else	11
Just someone else	15
Don't know/Refused	2

**D6. Are you NOW self-employed, working full-time for an employer, working part-time for an employer, are you retired, or are you not employed for pay?**

Self-employed	11
Full-time for an employer	25
Part-time for an employer	7
Retired	46
Not employed	6
Homemaker	1
Student	*
Disabled	3
Don't know/Refused	2

**D7. What is your age? (RECORD EXACT AGE AS TWO-DIGIT CODE.)**

50-54	23
55-59	19
60-64	14
65-69	11
70-74	10
75 or older	19
Don't know/Refused	4

**D8. Are you, yourself, now covered by any form of health insurance or health plan or do you not have health insurance at this time? (CONTINUE TO READ ONLY IF RESPONDENT SAYS NO) A health plan would include any private insurance plan through your employer or a plan that you purchased yourself, as well as a government program like Medicare or (Medicaid)?**

USE VARIANT WORDING IN FOLLOWING STATES  
CALIFORNIA: Medi-Cal  
MASSACHUSETTS: Mass Health  
NORTH CAROLINA: Carolina Access or Health Check  
PENNSYLVANIA: Health Choices  
TENNESSEE: Tenn Care  
TEXAS: Star Plus

Yes	90
No	8
Don't know/Refused	1

**D9. Which of the following is your MAIN source of health insurance coverage? Is it...**

Based on those who are insured (n=1330)

A plan through your or your spouse's employer or union	47
A plan you purchased yourself	11
Medicare, the program that provides health insurance primarily to people age 65 and older	33
Medicaid (Medi-Cal, Mass Health, Carolina Access or Health Check, Health Choices, Tenn Care, Star Plus), the program that provides health insurance and long term care to certain low-income families	3
Some other government program	4
Don't know/Refused	2



**D10. Do you have a Medicare supplement or Medi-gap policy that pays for costs not covered by Medicare?**

Based on those age 65 and older (n=583)

Yes, have supplemental policy	67
No, do not have supplemental policy	31
Don't know/Refused	2

**D11. Some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you currently registered to vote at your present address?**

Yes, registered to vote	83
No, not registered to vote	16
Don't have to register	0
Don't know/Refused	1

**D12. In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?**

Republican	26
Democrat	36
Independent	24
No preference/Not interested in politics	6
Other part	*
Don't know	2
Refused	6

**D13. What is the LAST grade or class that you COMPLETED in school? (DO NOT READ)**

None, or grade 1-8	5
High school incomplete (grades 9-11)	12
High school graduate (grade 12 or GED certificate)	33
Technical, trade, or vocational school AFTER high school	4
Some college, no 4-year degree (Associates degree)	19
College graduate (B.S., B.A. or other 4-year degree)	13
Post-graduate training or professional schooling after college (e.g., toward a Master's degree or Ph.D., law or medical school)	11
Don't know	*
Refused	1

**D14. Are you, yourself, of Hispanic or Latino background, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or some other Spanish background?**

Yes	6
No	92
Don't know	*
Refused	2

**D15. What is your race? Are you white, black, Asian or some other race? (IF RESPONDENT SAYS HISPANIC ASK: Do you consider yourself a white Hispanic or a black Hispanic?)**

White	83
Black or African American	9
Asian	2
Other or mixed race	3
Don't know	1
Refused	3

**Questions D14 and D15 Summary Table**

White	79
Total non-White	18
Black or African American	9
Hispanic	6
Asian	2
Other or mixed race	3
Don't know	*
Refused	2

**D16. Last year – that is, in 2003 – what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes? Just stop me when I get to the right category. (READ)**

Less than \$10,000	8
\$10,000 to under \$20,000	12
\$20,000 to under \$30,000	12
\$30,000 to under \$50,000	16
\$50,000 to under \$75,000	12
\$75,000 to under \$100,000	6
\$100,000 to under \$200,000	7
\$200,000 or more	2
Don't know	7
Refused	20

That completes the interview. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation. Have a nice day/evening.





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