



# Hysterectomy Awareness

## Hysterectomy.org

### Are Americans #HysterectomySmart?

#### Fact Sheet

#### #Hysterectomy411

We polled\* more than 2,000 Americans to learn their awareness of hysterectomy and their attitudes toward communicating about their health conditions. Sample questions included “what happens during the procedure known as a hysterectomy?” and “have you or someone you know had the procedure known as a hysterectomy?” We also wanted to learn how comfortable Americans are with discussing their health conditions with friends, doctors and via the Internet, such as social media accounts.

#### How familiar are Americans with the procedure known as hysterectomy?

- Almost half (44 %) of Americans are incorrect or do not know what procedure a hysterectomy is.
  - 29 % guessed incorrectly and 16 % saying they were not at all sure. The incorrect response that one in four (25 %) Americans selected was the **removal of the ovaries**. Fewer selected the **removal of the appendix, breasts, or gall bladder** (1 % each) and less than 1 % selected the **removal of the kidneys or tonsils**. 1 % said a hysterectomy was **something else**.
  - Adults ages 18-34 (29 %) are significantly more likely than those ages 35-44 (17 %) to say they are not at all sure what a hysterectomy is.
  - Women are more likely than men to answer correctly – 64% vs. 47%, respectively.
  - Men are more likely than women to have said they were not at all sure – 22% vs 10%, respectively.
- More than half of U.S. adults know someone who has had a hysterectomy, with women being more likely than men to know someone who has had the procedure.

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#### *“I am comfortable discussing my health conditions with my friends in person.”*

The majority (73%) say they **agree** with this statement, with more than one in four (28%) strongly agreeing and 45% somewhat agreeing. Just over one in five (22%) **disagree** with this statement, with 15% somewhat disagreeing and 7% strongly disagreeing. 5% of Americans say this statement is **not applicable** to them.

- Younger Americans (ages 18-34) are more likely to agree with this than those ages 45+ (78% vs. 71%).
- Women feel more strongly about it than men.
  - Women are more likely than men to say they are comfortable discussing their health conditions with their friends in person (77% vs. 69%, respectively).

- But there are some health matters that women are less inclined to discuss with their friends. More than two in five (42 %) American women are embarrassed talking about their gynecological health with their friends.
- Symptoms that may lead to a hysterectomy are hard to talk about. More than two in five U.S. women (41 %) say there are some conditions they are unlikely to discuss with their doctors, including pelvic pain during intercourse (22 %) and painful menstruation or heavy menstrual bleeding (both 9 %).
- 29 % of women say that they feel more uncomfortable talking about their uterus than their breasts.
- No matter whom they discussing their health conditions with, a vast majority of Americans (92 %) believe it's important to get a second opinion from another doctor before having a surgical procedure.

***“I am comfortable discussing my health conditions via my social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Twitter).”***

**A majority of Americans (69 %) disagree with this statement and are not comfortable discussing their health conditions via their social media accounts.**

- Nearly one in five (19%) say they agree with this statement, with 8% strongly agreeing and 11% somewhat agreeing.
- 12% of Americans say this statement is **not applicable** to them.
- Adults ages 18-44 (30%) are significantly more likely than those ages 45-64 (12%) to agree with this statement. Both groups are more likely to agree with this than those ages 65+ (4%).

***“I only discuss my health conditions with my doctor(s).”***

**More than half of Americans say they only discuss their health conditions with their doctor(s).**

- More than half of Americans say they only discuss their health conditions with their doctors; however, 19 % of Americans say they are comfortable discussing their health conditions via their social media accounts, with younger adults being more likely to feel this way than those ages 45+.
- Younger Americans (under 44) are likely to discuss their health on social media.
- When discussing health conditions online, 21 % of adults prefer to do so anonymously or under a different name.
- When asked what topics they'd be among the least likely to discuss with their doctor, more than one in five women say they'd struggle to talk about pain during intercourse.

***How comfortable are women talking about their bodies?***

***“I feel more uncomfortable talking about my uterus than my breasts.”***

- Close to three in ten women (29%) agree that they are more uncomfortable talking about their uterus than their breasts, and younger women are more likely to agree with this statement than women over age 35.

- A majority (71%) disagree with this statement

***“I feel embarrassed talking about my gynecological health with my friends.”***

- More than two in five women (42%) say they agree with this statement, with 14% strongly agreeing and 28% somewhat agreeing. Almost three in five (58%) disagree with this statement, with one in three (33%) somewhat disagreeing and one in four (25%) strongly disagreeing.

***How do they feel about procedures including hysterectomy and mastectomy?***

- Three in ten women say that if they had to choose, they would rather avoid having a hysterectomy than a mastectomy.
- Among women who have not had a hysterectomy, 18 % say they would feel less attractive to their partner after a hysterectomy. Interestingly enough, only 14 % of women who have had a hysterectomy say they feel less attractive to their partner after their hysterectomy.
- Among women who have not had a hysterectomy, 26 % say they would feel like less of a woman after a hysterectomy. Yet, only 15 % of women who have had a hysterectomy say they feel less like a woman after their hysterectomy. Nearly half of women say they would feel less like a woman after a mastectomy.

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\*Source - Harris Poll: This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Poll on behalf of Hysterectomy.org from February 11-13, 2015 among 2,026 adults ages 18 and older. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables, please contact Laura Bond Williams, 512.497.8035.