

2020 Cold & Flu Season

Forecasted Changes in Consumer Behavior

HEALTHLINE MEDIA

This year's mid-pandemic cold & flu season is uncharted territory, so we asked our medical experts and advisors to share the consumer behavior shifts they expect to see in the winter months to come.

Check out these seven predictions, as well as how Healthline Media will approach these needs, and learn how you can get ahead in empowering consumers' health.



Bulk for the Win

As consumers prepare for a harder, longer cold & flu season, bulk purchasing will be a regularly adopted practice, extending to OTC products for both preventive and reactive care, especially among parents and caretakers.

1 in 3

U.S. consumers have stockpiled supplies, such as food and medicine, because of the coronavirus outbreak.



Key Takeaway

Satiate consumers' desire to **be prepared** by aligning messaging with proactive solutions. Accommodate with product bundles, starter kits, and trial opportunities.

Healthline Media Approach

Healthline Media's product roundups include reviews and recommendations for all sorts of health needs, ultimately empowering consumers in various life stages to feel confident in their well-being-based purchase decisions.

[Flu] Food for Thought

Preventative measures taken against cold & flu will take shape as daily incorporation of immune-boosting foods and beverages.

+285%

increase in search interest for ways to boost immunity via nutritional consumption.

This topic is on track to maintain its popularity well into the winter months to come.

“Consumers have been more interested in immunity-boosting foods and I expect that consumers will incorporate more citrus and dietary supplements into their diets come cold & flu season.”

-Healthline Media’s Medical Expert: Nutritionist

Key Takeaway

Encourage daily experimentation during this transitional time as consumers look for new, accessible, and holistic ways to boost their health.

Healthline Media Approach

Greatist and Healthline’s interactive recipes grab the attention of consumers, encourage them to take action, and help them reach varying health goals, such as immune-building and beyond.

We regularly tap into our influencer network of expert nutritionists and foodie personalities for the evolving insights and ideas that our audience craves.

But First, Scroll

Social media will be the first resource consumers turn to for all stages of their cold & flu season: from news and guidance, to prevention and finding care.

2x

Usage of Instagram as a news resource has **doubled**. We expect that rate to keep on rising during an isolated cold & flu season and beyond.

21%

The expected increase in out of pocket wellness expenses, *making the preference for free social sources a no brainer!*



Key Takeaway

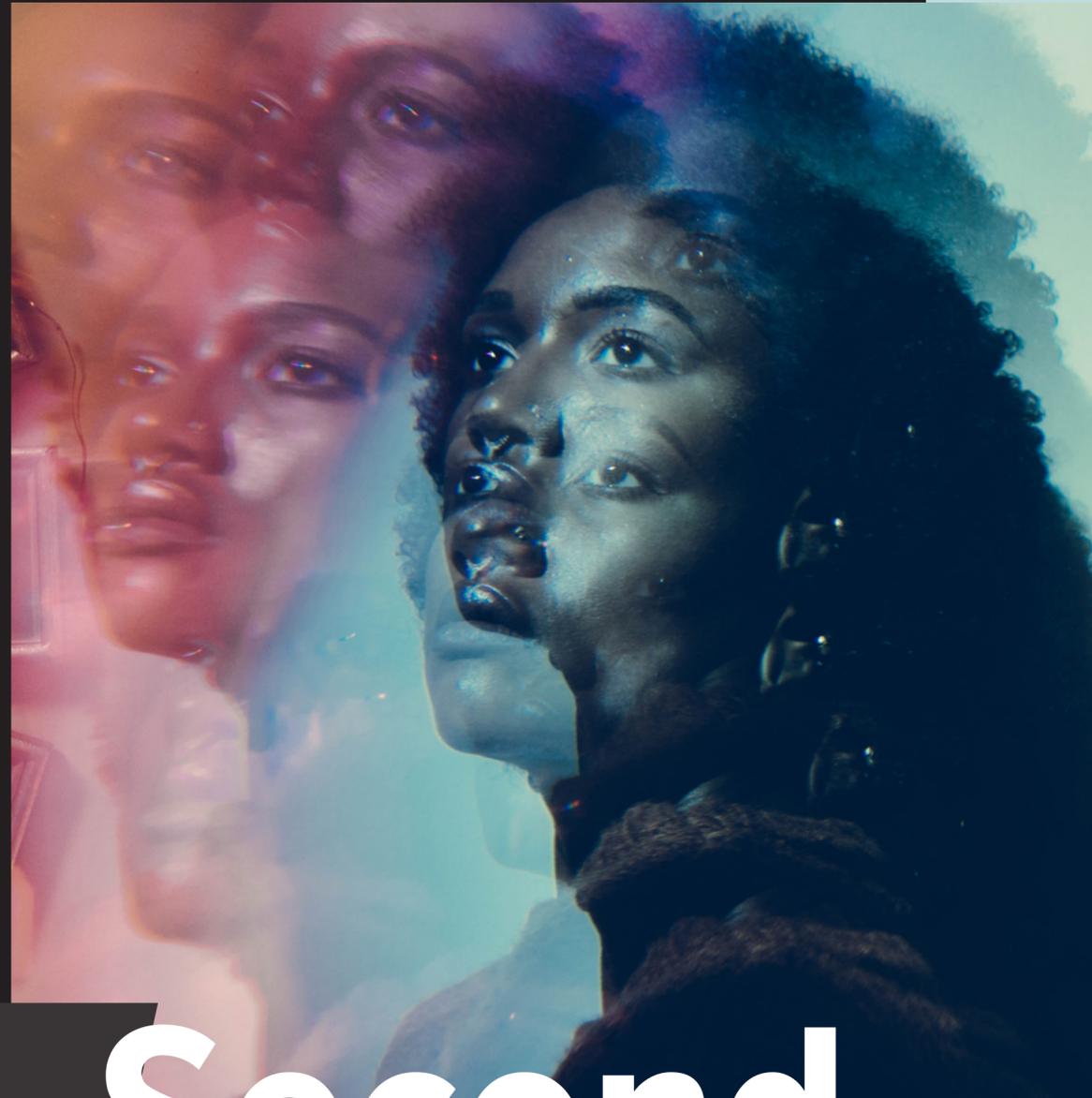
Reach consumers where they've already been for years, but now with a heightened intent to learn about health. Be sure to acknowledge differing cold-and-flu-based mindsets: those who are interested in proactively planning, and those who need that extra push.

Healthline Media Approach

Healthline's **In Balance** virtual event series speaks to the health-minded, social-first consumer. **In Balance** sessions, hosted by our medical experts on Facebook Live, are designed to share and humanize the most timely health information, supplemented with actionable takeaways.

Universal feelings of doubt, hesitancy, and concern stem from the potential of being exposed to the coronavirus, and since the start of COVID-19, related anxiety has been experienced most by A18-34 and men.

The mental health of these two subgroups will continue to be compromised into the cold & flu season, as additional bacterias, symptoms, and environmental factors come into play.



#4 The Second (Guessing) Wave

Key Takeaway

When addressing consumers' acute care, take this time to also acknowledge their whole-person health. Particularly toward A18-34 and males, be an advocate for self check-ins by encouraging more moments of reflection: *how are you feeling physically, mentally, and emotionally?*

Healthline Media Approach

In recognition of both World Mental Health Day and the rise in consumer anxiety, Medical News Today will be dedicating social takeovers throughout the month of October to mental health awareness and resources.

"In many ways, the symptoms of the flu and COVID-19 can be confused with each other, and there is nothing that precludes people from getting both simultaneously."

- Dr. Hanh Le, Healthline Media Medical Expert

The New Norm of Digi-Docs

More consumers will remain behind their screen when obtaining health guidance and care for many different and evolving reasons.

1 in 3

U.S. adults intend to try telemedicine, increasing month-over-month.



“As access to medical professionals becomes scarcer and visits more costly, digital health is expected to play a bigger role in healthcare.”

- Mintel

Key Takeaway

Supplement medical support and the increasing interest in digi-health with credible, digital resources and platforms.

Healthline Media Approach

Healthline’s Good Appointment Guide tool speaks directly to the health-minded, digital-first consumer by helping them prepare for their doctors’ appointments online, and in a fully personalized way.

Healthline Communities, our condition-specific app platform, hosts live sessions between doctors and the patient community so that our audience can get expert help without ever leaving their home.

Web-Based Wellness

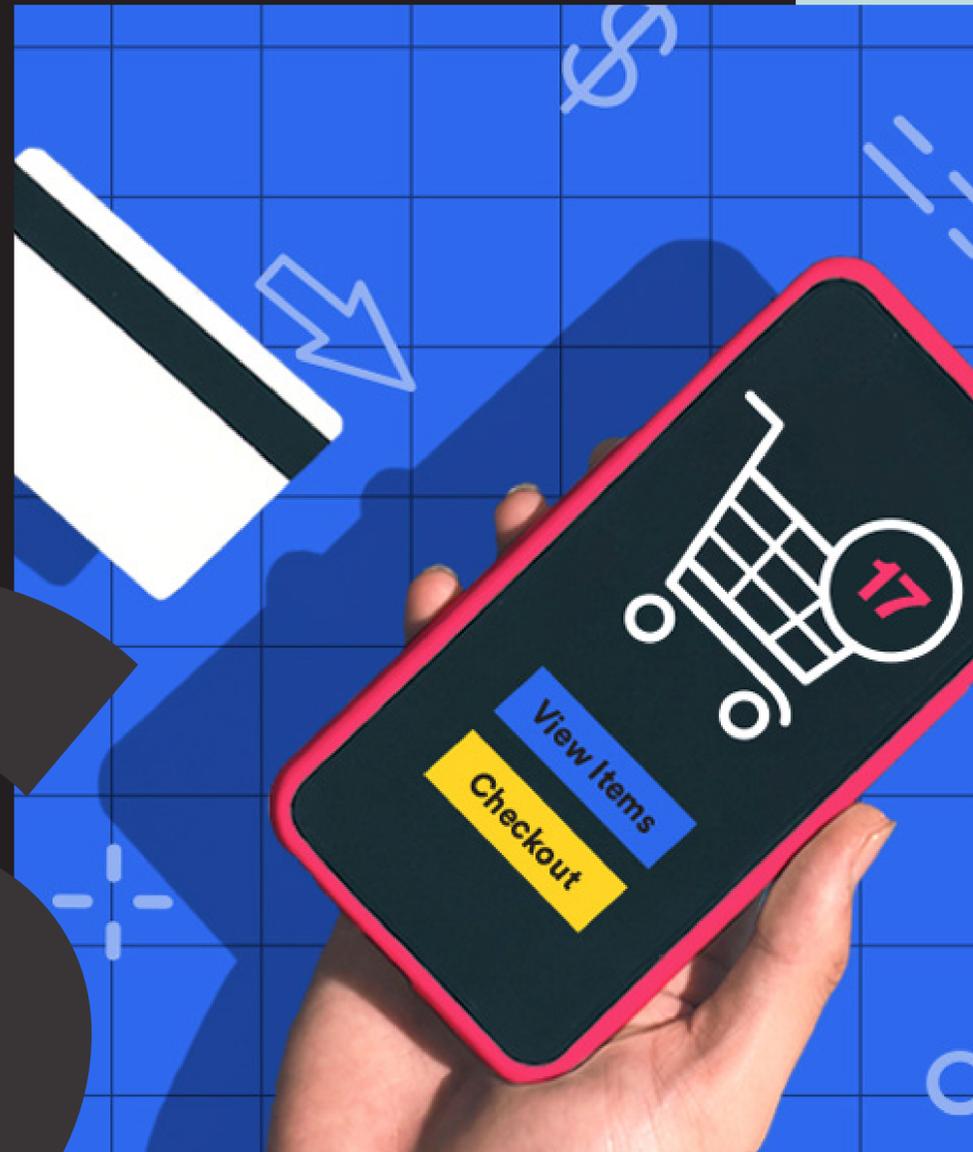
Consumers will trade up pit stops at the pharmacy for quick scrolls online when it comes to purchasing OTC cold & flu prevention and relief.

1 in 2

U.S. consumers have spent less money in physical stores since the start of COVID-19.

1 in 4

U.S. consumers have spent more money online, and that rate continues to rise.



Key Takeaway

Shift your online messaging to lead with clear, consumer-benefitting brand differentiators. When competing for consumers' attention in this crowded space, messaging that is concise resonates deeper with consumers than messaging that is overpromising and fluffy.

Healthline Media Approach

Shoppable content opportunities cater to the health-minded consumers' growing preference to learn and purchase all in one place.

The Need for Sleep

Consumers will put just as much emphasis on the *need for sleep*, as they do the *need to wash their hands*.

Sleep interest, including topics like ‘natural sleep remedies’ and ‘effects of sleep deprivation,’ is up by

214%

with an ever rising ceiling into the colder, dryer weather.



Key Takeaway

Acknowledge consumers’ heightened awareness of how their daytime choices affect their nighttime sleep health with messaging that addresses holistic, around-the-clock wellness.

Healthline Media Approach

Our co-branded content centers address **whole-person wellness** to help consumers lead healthier lives all around.



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GREATIST

MEDICALNEWS TODAY

 **Parenthood**

About Healthline Media

As the largest health information property in the U.S., we inspire 90 million people each month to take control of their health and well-being. We're committed to providing every individual with clear, credible, evidence-based health and wellness information that's distinguished by its compassion for the human experience.

For more consumer insights and trends, visit [HealthlineMedia.com](https://www.healthline.com).

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