

PARENTHOOD REPORT | PART 1

# Top Challenges Parents Face in Seeking Health Information

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Insights from more than 6,500 new  
and expecting parents in the U.S.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Becoming a parent is overwhelming and complex. Whether it is preparing for parenthood, getting pregnant, pregnancy, or baby's first year, parents go through a transformative journey that impacts their hormonal, emotional, physical, and mental well-being.

Moms and dads today are unlike previous generations. They're digital natives with mobile devices in hand, expecting fast access to vast amounts of information. They embrace a holistic, all-inclusive approach to life that shapes who they are as parents.



## OVERVIEW

The **2019 Healthline Parenthood Report Series** brings forward data and insights about the shifting landscape for expecting and new parents, and how understanding their mindset and behaviors identifies why marketers need to consider parenting in a new light.

The release of this report series coincides with the launch of *Healthline Parenthood*, a resource for a new generation of parents who understand the impact of this transition on their own well-being. The goal: help parents take care of themselves so they can take care of their families.

This is the first report in the series focused on the **challenges new and expecting parents face when seeking health information** about themselves and their baby.

## METHODOLOGY

Findings are based on a Healthline survey and original reporting.

Using field services provided by SurveyWriter, Southpaw Insights fielded a 20-minute online survey among a sample of 6,667 expectant and new American parents (18 to 50 years old).

Out of the total sample, 3,064 were expectant parents, and 3,885 were parents of babies 12 months or younger.

Survey executed: September 13-30, 2019.

# DEMOGRAPHICS

## AGE

Gen Z (18-22)	<b>16%</b>
Young Millennial (23-30)	<b>43%</b>
Older Millennial (31-39)	<b>34%</b>
Gen X (40-50)	<b>6%</b>

## GENDER IDENTITY

Female	<b>84%</b>
Male	<b>15%</b>

## MARITAL STATUS

Married/partnered	<b>80%</b>
Single	<b>20%</b>

## ETHNICITY

White	<b>72%</b>
Black	<b>18%</b>
Hispanic	<b>20%</b>
Other	<b>16%</b>

## EDUCATION

Less than college	<b>29%</b>
Some college or more	<b>71%</b>

## EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Employed	<b>63%</b>
Not employed	<b>37%</b>

## GEOGRAPHIC REGION

Northeast	<b>17%</b>
Southeast	<b>30%</b>
Midwest	<b>22%</b>
Southwest	<b>13%</b>
West	<b>17%</b>

## INCOME

Less than \$50,000	<b>47%</b>
\$50,000 or more	<b>53%</b>

## BEYOND THE BABY

Over half of our survey respondents of new or expecting parents believe that existing resources focus very squarely on the baby, and that is no longer enough. Parents aren't satisfied with the options they have, and they don't feel those options speak to them. And guess what, the baby is not the one up Googling in the middle of the night! It's mom or dad. Younger respondents are even more likely to feel this way.

**52%**

of new or expecting parents say resources **focus only on the baby, not on the parents**



Base: N=6,667

A4: Many parents and parents-to-be face challenges when seeking health information about themselves and their baby. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

## A WHOLE PERSON APPROACH

Parents are people. They're friends, partners, employees, and people who may be living with a chronic condition. While becoming a parent is a transformative journey, a majority of new and expecting parents (53%) want resources that speak to the whole person, not just to their role as a mom or dad. Moms are significantly more likely to wish for this.



want resources that speak to the **whole person, not just as a mom or dad**

↑ Indicates a statistically significant difference at a 90% confidence level between respondent groups

Base: N=6,667; Moms N=3,185; Dads N=648

6 A4: Many parents and parents-to-be face challenges when seeking health information about themselves and their baby. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

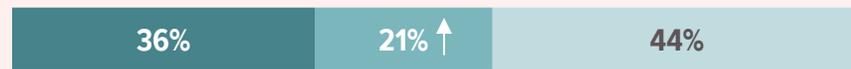


## NEGATIVE FEELINGS

So parents – who need guidance understandably – don't feel like they're being spoken to as people in the information available, and now on top of that, they also feel bad about seeking it. Over one-third (37%) of parents have felt judged or shamed when seeking parenting support or advice. And almost one-half (47%) sometimes feel self-conscious when doing this.

*% Felt judged or shamed*

### EXPECTING PARENTS



### PARENTS



■ Net Agree (somewhat/strongly)   ■ Neutral   ■ Net Disagree (somewhat/strongly)

↑ Indicates a statistically significant difference at a 90% confidence level between respondent groups

Base: N=6,667; Parents N=3,885; Expecting parents N=3,064

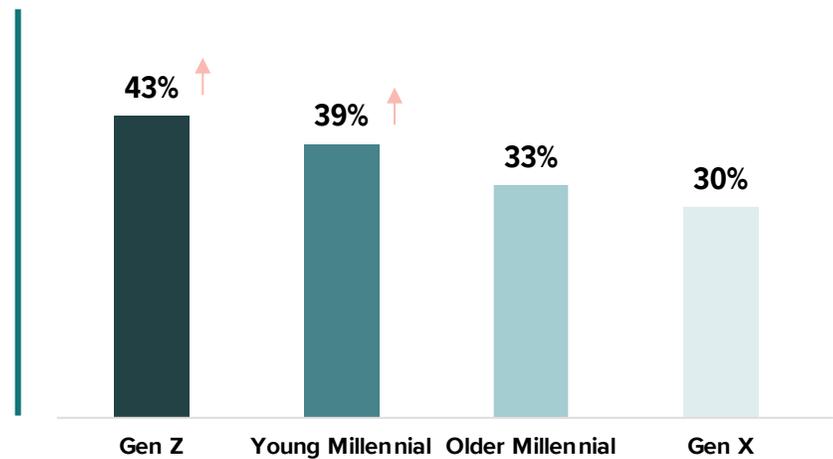
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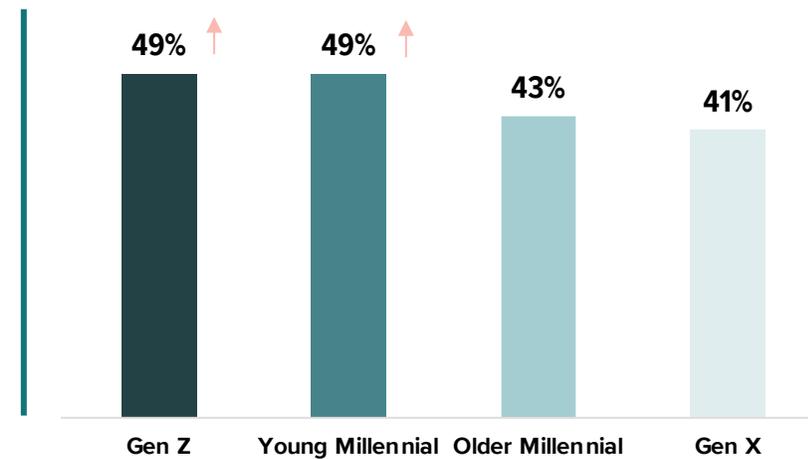
## NEGATIVE FEELINGS

Feelings of shame and judgment have an inverse relationship with age. Specifically, Gen Z and Young Millennials are significantly more likely than Older Millennials and Gen X expecting and new parents to agree with this sentiment.

*% Felt judged or shamed*



*% Felt self-conscious*



↑ Indicates a statistically significant difference at a 90% confidence level between respondent groups

Base: N=6,667; Gen Z: N=1,072; Young Millennials: N=2,633; Older Millennials N=2,264; Gen X: N=408

A4: Many parents and parents-to-be face challenges when seeking health information about themselves and their baby. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

## DIVERSITY IN MEDIA

The visibility of non-traditional families is limited in the media, and parents are noticing. More than a third of expecting and new parents (39%) don't see parents like themselves or their families in the media, and nearly half (49%) wish that information was more inclusive of all types of families. Single parents and non-biological families are the most likely to feel they they are not represented in the media.

This sentiment holds particularly true with younger generations, especially Gen Z parents, that are craving this diversity more than their older counterparts.

Base: N=6,667

A4: Many parents and parents-to-be face challenges when seeking health information about themselves and their baby. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.



## PARENTAL RESOURCES

The data shows that parents face challenges when seeking health information, which leads to the next question: *Where are they going for this information?* Parents today are turning for guidance and support to a variety of resources, and it can vary depending on whether they are looking for parental health information or care for their baby.

For new and expecting parents seeking information on their *own health*, such as personal sleep strategies, communicating with their partner, and mental health, the top resources they're turning to are family members (46%), OB/GYN (33%), pediatrician (30%), and friends (30%).

## TOP 10 RESOURCES FOR PARENTAL INFORMATION

Family member	<b>46%</b>
OB/GYN	<b>33%</b>
Pediatrician	<b>30%</b>
Friend	<b>30%</b>
Internet searches	<b>25%</b>
Online parenting websites or apps	<b>22%</b>
Online health information websites	<b>16%</b>
Social media	<b>16%</b>
Online communities	<b>15%</b>
YouTube videos	<b>14%</b>

*Less than 10%: In-person parent or mommy/daddy group, brand sponsored parenting websites, bloggers/influencers, insurance company, podcasts, voice-assisted devices.*

## PARENTAL RESOURCES

While family members remain the top resource for parental health information across generations, there are significant differences when it comes to use of digital and social resources for this type of content, especially for Gen Z.

	Gen Z	Young Millennial	Older Millennial	Gen X
Family member	43%	48%	45%	43%
OB/GYN	33%	35%	31%	27%
Pediatrician	25% ↓	30%	33%	33%
Friend	24% ↓	28% ↓	35%	34%
YouTube videos	22% ↑	14% ↑	10%	10%
Social media	20% ↑	16%	13%	14%
Internet searches	18% ↓	26%	28%	28%
Online parenting websites or apps	16%	24%	24%	19%
Online health information websites	14%	15%	16%	22% ↑
Online communities and/or support groups	13%	16%	17%	12%

### GEN Z

#### MORE LIKELY

to use social media and YouTube videos

#### LESS LIKELY

to use resources that focus on human touchpoints like friends and pediatricians and online resources like internet searches and online parenting sites

↑ Indicates a statistically significant difference at a 90% confidence level between respondent groups

Base: N=6,667; Gen Z: N=1,072; Young Millennials: N=2,633; Older Millennials N=2,264; Gen X: N=408  
A5: What information sources do you turn to for parental health information and support?

## BABY CARE RESOURCES

For seeking information on topics specifically *related to their baby*, such as encouraging a healthy development, nutrition, breastfeeding, and diapering, new and expecting parents are turning to the same resources as parental health information. However, and not surprisingly, there is a reliance on the pediatrician (46%) for guidance in this area.

Additionally, moms are significantly more likely than dads to turn to their pediatrician (54% vs. 45%) and their OB/GYN (21% vs. 15%) for baby care information and support.

## TOP 10 RESOURCES FOR BABY CARE INFORMATION

Pediatrician	46%
Family member	44%
OB/GYN	26%
Friend	26%
Internet searches	23%
Online parenting websites or apps	23%
Online health information websites	15%
Online communities	15%
YouTube videos	12%
Social media	11%

*Less than 10%: In-person parent or mommy/daddy group, brand sponsored parenting websites, bloggers/influencers, insurance company, podcasts, voice-assisted devices.*

## BABY CARE RESOURCES

When it comes to seeking baby care information, younger Gen Z new and expecting parents rely on family members the most (44%), compared to their older counterparts who turn to pediatricians as the top resource.

	Gen Z	Young Millennial	Older Millennial	Gen X
Family member	44%	45%	44%	45%
Pediatrician	35% ↓	48%	50%	46%
OB/GYN	30%	28%	22%	20%
Friend	22%	24%	30%	29%
Online parenting websites or apps	19%	24%	24%	22%
YouTube videos	18% ↑	12% ↑	8%	8%
Internet searches	17% ↓	24%	25%	25%
Social media	15% ↑	11%	10%	10%
Online health information websites	13%	15%	15%	22%
Online communities and/or support groups	13%	15%	17%	13%

↑ Indicates a statistically significant difference at a 90% confidence level between respondent groups

## TRUSTED RESOURCES

New and expecting parents place varying levels of trust in the resources they go to for parental health and baby care information. Resources that focus on human touchpoints including pediatricians, family members, OB/GYN, and friends top the list compared to online resources.

Relative to the resources people turn to most for seeking information (*see page 10 and 12*), they have less trust in internet searches (*no longer in the top 5*) as well as social media (*no longer in the top 10, only at 5%*).

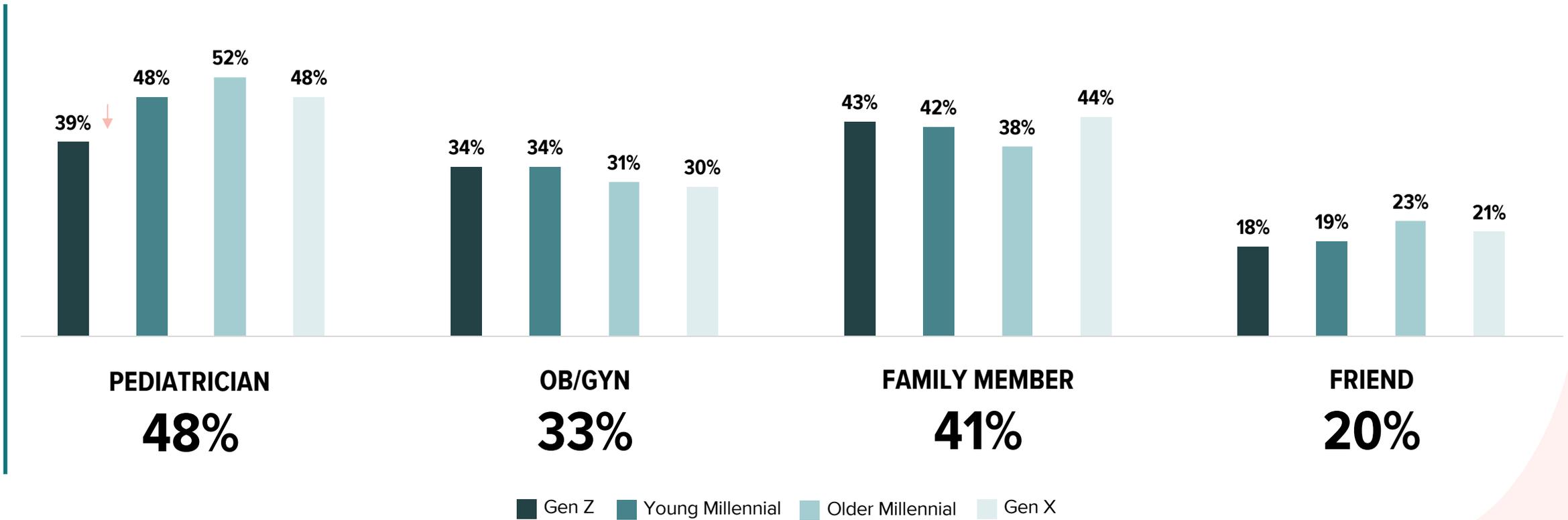
## TOP 10 TRUSTED RESOURCES

Pediatrician	<b>48%</b>
Family member	<b>41%</b>
OB/GYN	<b>33%</b>
Friend	<b>20%</b>
Online parenting websites or apps	<b>15%</b>
Online health information websites	<b>13%</b>
Internet searches	<b>10%</b>
Online communities	<b>9%</b>
YouTube videos	<b>7%</b>
In-person parent/mommy/daddy group	<b>7%</b>

*Less than 7%: Social media, brand sponsored parenting websites, bloggers/influencers, insurance company, podcasts, voice-assisted devices.*

# TRUSTED RESOURCES

## GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES ON TRUST ON HUMAN TOUCHPOINT RESOURCES



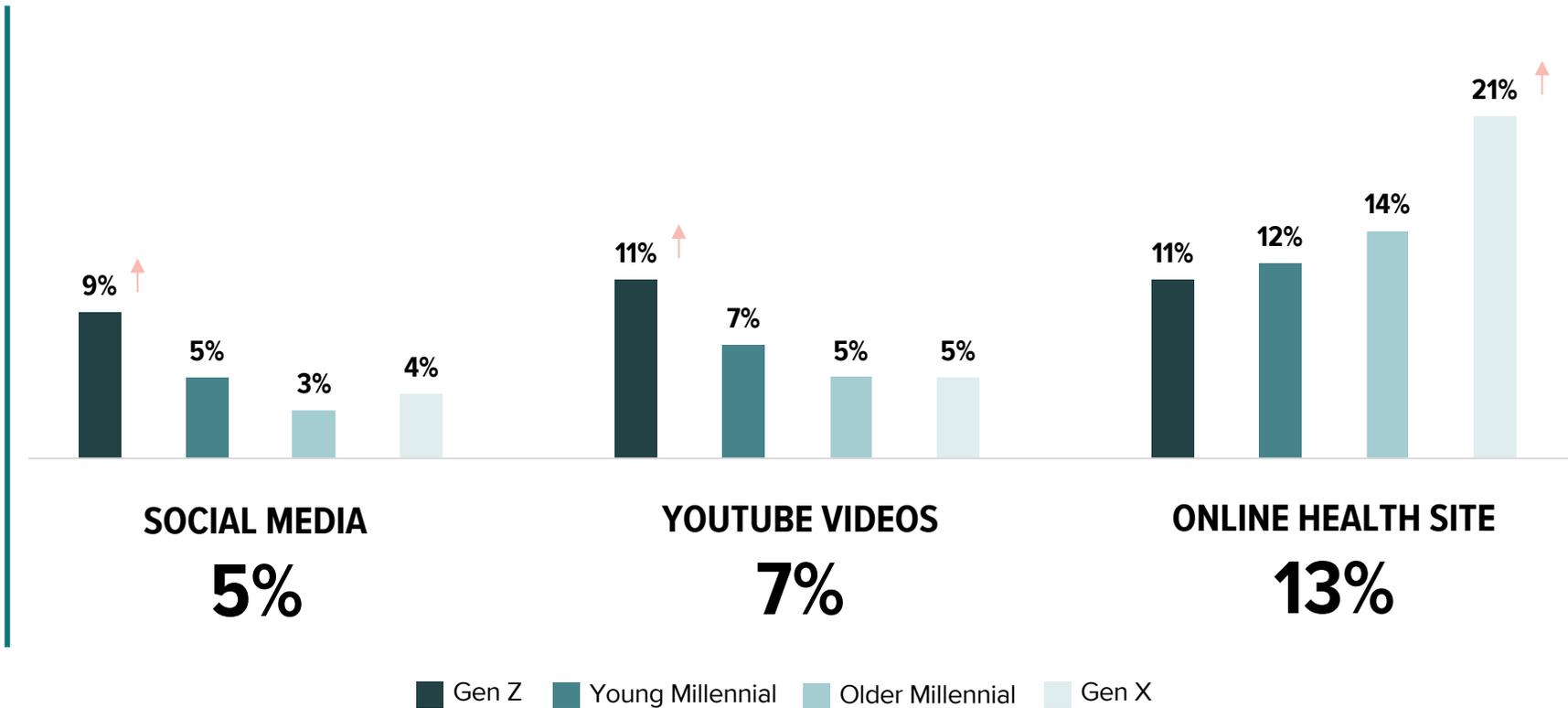
↑ Indicates a statistically significant difference at a 90% confidence level between respondent groups

Base: N=4,896; Gen Z: N=751; Young Millennials: N=1,973; Older Millennials N=1,683; Gen X: N=278

A7: Among these resources, which three do you trust the most?

# TRUSTED RESOURCES

## GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES ON TRUST OF ONLINE RESOURCES



**Younger generations** have more trust in social media and YouTube. **Older generations** have more trust in online health sites.

All generations have **similar levels of trust** in other online resources: *Internet searches, podcasts, voice-assisted devices, online parenting websites or apps, brand sponsored parenting sites, and online communities.*

↑ Indicates a statistically significant difference at a 90% confidence level between respondent groups

Base: N=4,896; Gen Z: N=751; Young Millennials: N=1,973; Older Millennials N=1,683; Gen X: N=278

A7: Among these resources, which three do you trust the most?

## ACTION POINTS

There is huge opportunity for brands to get involved in new parenthood conversation.

### ACKNOWLEDGE CHALLENGES

Digital messaging and marketing efforts need to provide support for the realities of parenting. Meet people where they are.

### ADDRESS THE WHOLE PERSON

Focus on the full picture of a parent's life to find new entry points to engage consumers on their journey.

### GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

Consider mining consumer survey data, search trends, and social listening to understand why marketers need to consider parenting in a new light (think Gen Z and Young Millennials).





# healthline Parenthood

Interested in learning more about this study or other insights to help you with the evolving parenthood and media landscape?

Contact us at [corpmarketing@healthline.com](mailto:corpmarketing@healthline.com) or click to read more about [Healthline Parenthood](#) today.

## ABOUT HEALTHLINE PARENTHOOD

We help moms and dads navigate all areas of their new reality. While other brands focus on the baby, Healthline Parenthood delivers information and guidance for the parent.

Our **advertising solutions** foster a positive experience for brands to engage expecting and new parents who are eager to learn how to best take care of their families — and themselves. Join the conversation, and capture the attention of new parents:

- Reaching 6.6MM+ new and expecting parents monthly
- 50%+ growth since launch
- 1.4 million active newsletter subscribers

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## 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.

### OUR BRANDS

[Healthline.com](https://www.healthline.com) | [MedicalNewsToday.com](https://www.medicalnewstoday.com) | [Greatist.com](https://www.greatist.com)

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

