

The Screening Action Gap

Why U.S. Women
Miss Critical Health
Screenings

HOLOGIC[®]
The Science of Sure

MEASURED BY GALLUP[®]

Regular health screenings play a vital role in improving the health and well-being of women. Yet millions of women in the U.S. go without essential screenings for cancers, heart disease, sexually transmitted infections and other key health conditions.

This “Screening Action Gap” emerged as the main finding from a national survey that Gallup, a leading independent research firm, conducted for women’s health innovator Hologic, Inc. to hear directly from women in the U.S. about their health experiences.¹ The poll builds on the annual Hologic Global Women’s Health Index, which statistically represents the voices of 97% of women and girls aged 15 and older.

A Troubling Gap

The survey revealed that while women across the U.S. overwhelmingly recognized the importance of health screenings, many skipped or delayed them. We call this the “Screening Action Gap.”

The gap between understanding the importance of screenings and taking action was most evident in screenings for three types of cancer – breast, cervical and colorectal – that together kill more than 70,000 women in the U.S. each year.² The main reasons cited for skipping or delaying a recommended screening included anxiety about medical tests, concerns about pain, financial cost, lack of time or simply not knowing the screening was necessary.

Young women were especially likely to say anxiety and concerns about pain have prevented them from getting health screenings. And compared with women of other races, Black women were much more likely to say screenings are very important to them – and much less likely to say they have skipped or delayed a screening.

The survey also identified that lack of information, inadequate communication with healthcare professionals and concerns about emotional health contributed to missed screenings.



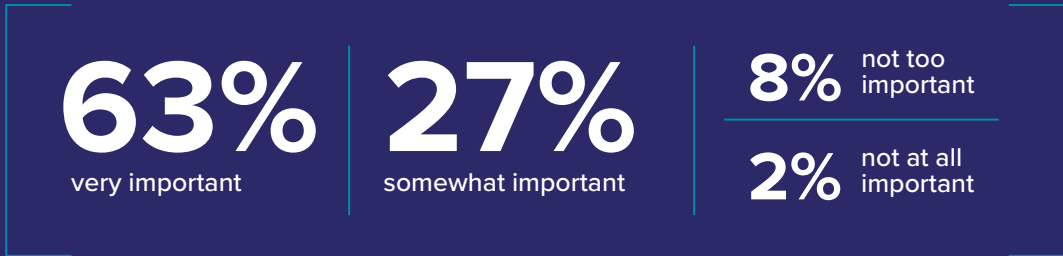
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1. The Hologic-Gallup survey was conducted April 8-16, 2024 via a nationally representative web survey of 4,001 adult women in the U.S.
2. Source: American Cancer Society (<https://cancerstatisticscenter.cancer.org>)

The Screening Action Gap

Of the 4,001 women across the U.S. whom Gallup surveyed, 90% said health screenings are important to them. But 43% said they had skipped or delayed a screening recommended by a healthcare professional at some point.

Nine in 10 women (90%) said it's very or somewhat important to them that they regularly get screened to prevent diseases or other health problems.



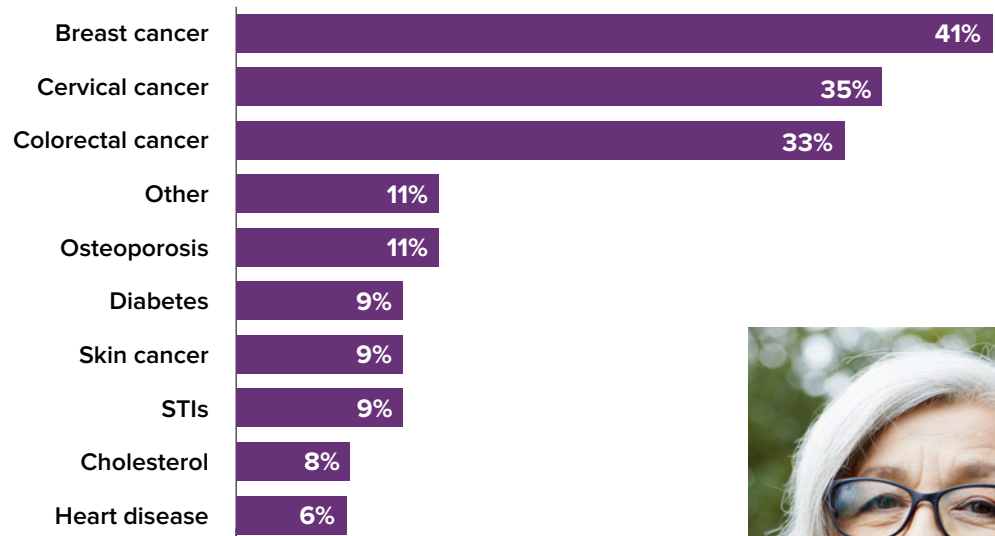
That means an estimated

72 million+
women

in the U.S. have skipped or delayed a recommended health screening.

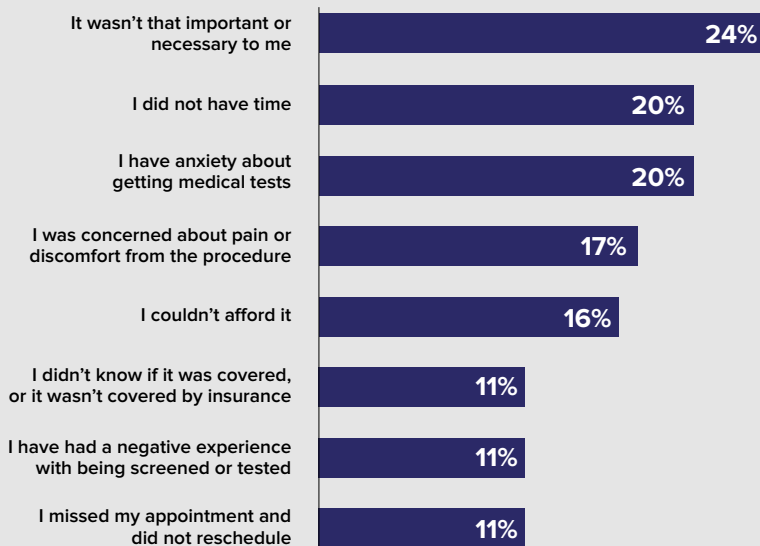
These skipped and delayed screenings were often for serious, life-threatening conditions.

Survey respondents were most likely to say they have skipped or delayed a screening for breast, cervical or colorectal cancer.



Why did women skip or delay screenings?

Women who had skipped or delayed a recommended health screening were most likely to say they did so due to anxiety about medical tests, concerns about pain, financial cost, lack of time or not believing a screening was necessary specifically for them.

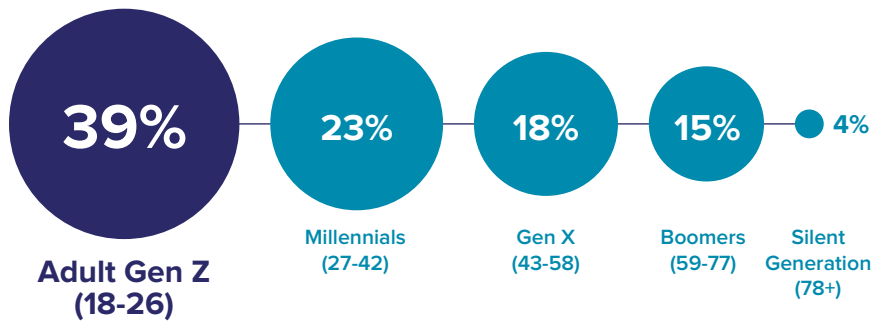


Adult Gen Z Women

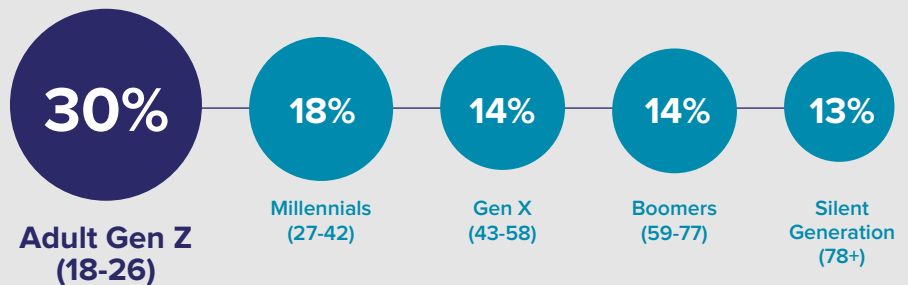
Young women were especially likely to say anxiety and concerns about pain have prevented them from getting timely health screenings.

Among women who have skipped or delayed a recommended screening, adult Gen Z women (age 18-26) were much more likely than women of older generations to say it was due to anxiety about getting medical tests or because they were concerned about pain or discomfort from the procedure.

Percentage of women who skipped or delayed a recommended screening due to anxiety about getting medical tests, by generation



Percentage of women who skipped or delayed a recommended screening because they were concerned about pain or discomfort from the procedure, by generation



Black Women

Black women highly valued health screenings.

Compared with women of other races, Black women were much more likely to say regular health screenings are very important to them.

79%

Black women

63% Hispanic women

66% Asian women

58% white women



Black women were also much less likely than women of other races to say they have skipped or delayed a recommended screening.

27%

Black women

41% Hispanic women

47% Asian women

47% white women

What Contributes to the Screening Action Gap?

The Hologic-Gallup survey shed light on three key factors: lack of information, lack of communication with healthcare professionals and concerns about emotional health.

1. Lack of Information

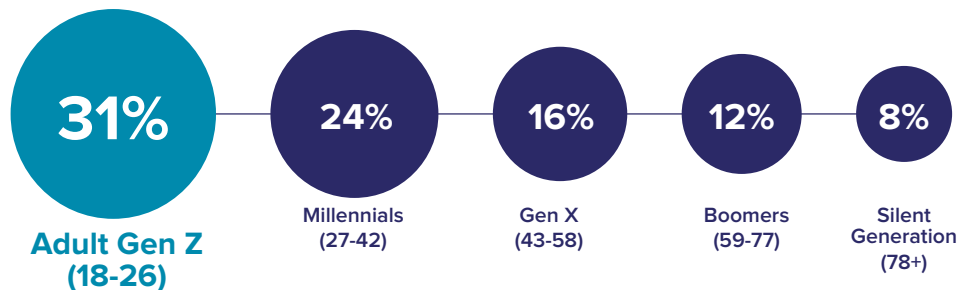
Many women simply aren't sure about what health screenings they need. In fact, only about four in 10 women – and about one-quarter of adult Gen Z and Millennial women – said they are **“very confident”** in their knowledge of what screenings they need based on their age and personal risk factors.

Women's confidence in their knowledge about the health screenings they need



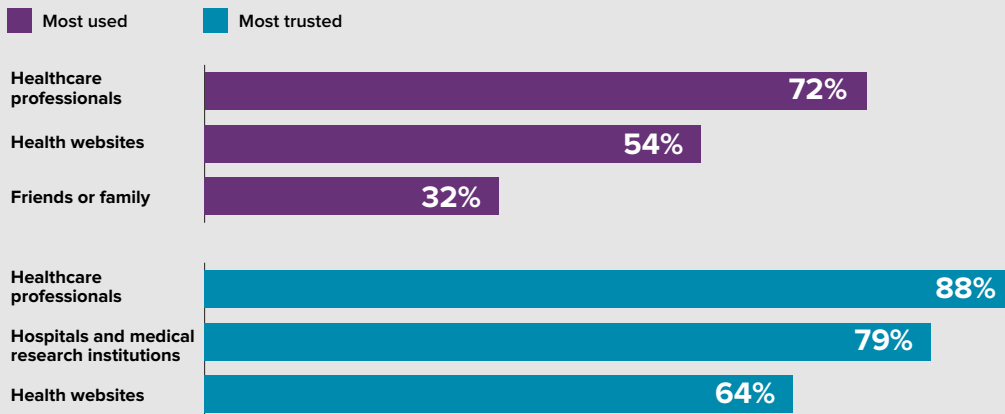
Beyond screening, many women said they struggle to find relevant, useful health information. For example, three in 10 adult Gen Z women and one in four Millennials – generations that grew up online – said it's hard for them to find the health information they need.

Percentage of women who said it's hard for them to find the health information they need, by generation

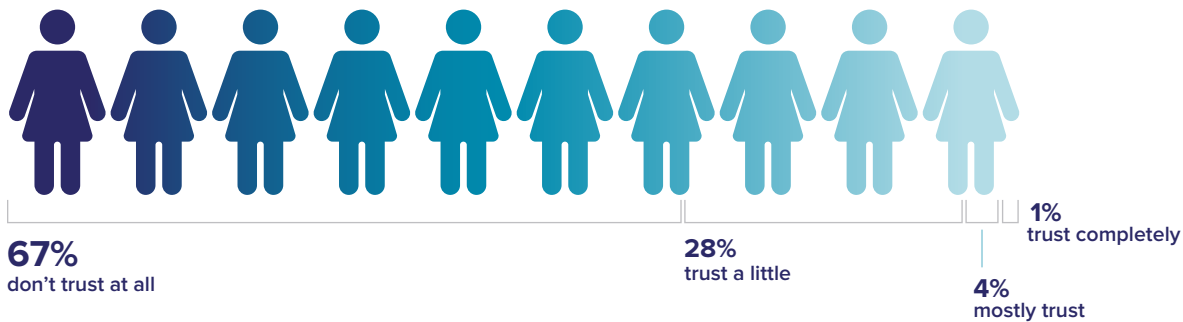


By a wide margin, women said their most used and trusted sources of health information are healthcare professionals.

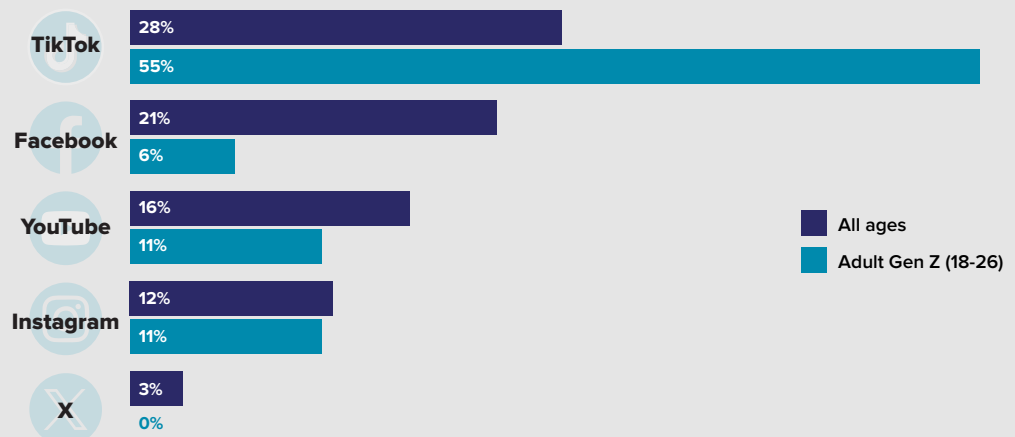
Many women also said they both use and trust health websites such as WebMD.com and CDC.gov.



Most women said they do not trust influencers or other public figures on social media to provide accurate health information.



However, when women did turn to social media, TikTok was their top choice: 28% of all women who use social media for health information and **55% of adult Gen Z women said TikTok is the social media platform they use most often to get health information.**



2. Lack of Communication with Healthcare Professionals

Women who have talked with a healthcare professional about screening for a disease or condition were significantly more likely to report having been screened. But often, these crucial conversations aren't taking place. For example, among women ages 35 and over – the recommended age group for skin cancer screening – **only about half said they have spoken to a healthcare professional about getting screened for skin cancer, and even fewer have been screened.**

only

49% of women have talked to a healthcare professional about screening for skin cancer

and only

45% of women have been screened

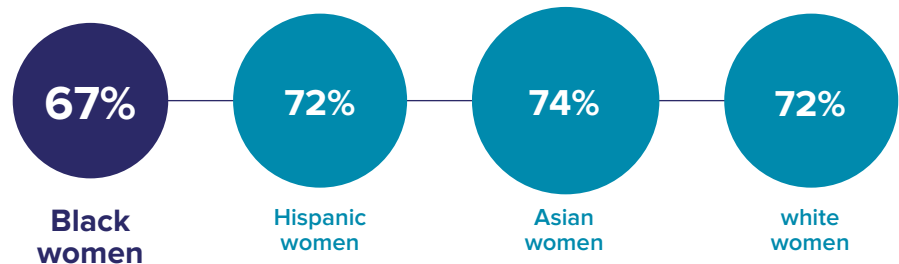


Although Black women recognize the importance of health screenings, they were often less likely than white women to have talked with a healthcare professional about key screenings.

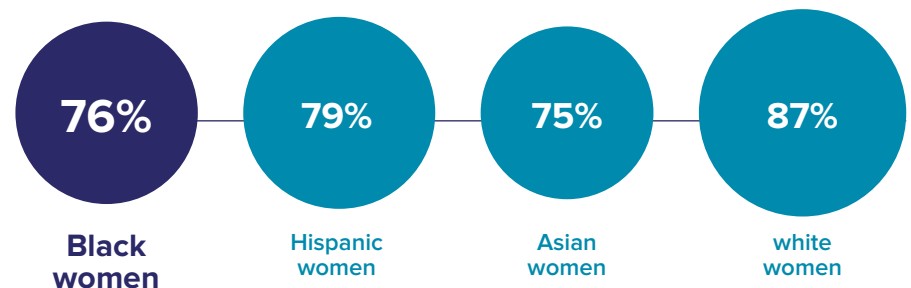
The gap in Black women's discussions with their providers about screenings could be attributed to various reasons having to do with the lack of relationship or the patient's perceptions of the provider's or health institution's untrustworthiness.³

For example, among women ages 25 and older – the recommended screening age for cervical cancer – Black women were less likely than white women to have spoken with a healthcare professional about cervical cancer screening. Black women also were less likely to have been screened.

Percentage of women who have spoken with a healthcare professional about cervical cancer screening, by race



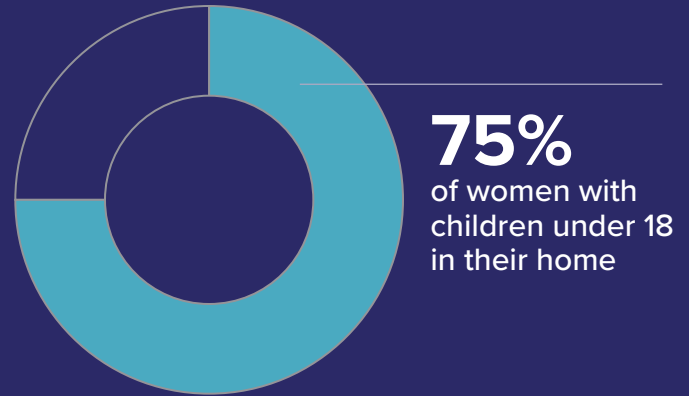
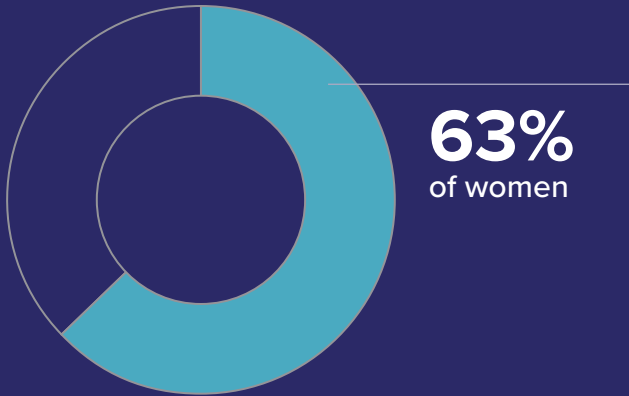
Percentage of women who have been screened for cervical cancer, by race



3. Source: [pewresearch.org/science/2022/04/07/black-americans-views-about-health-disparities-experiences-with-health-care/](https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2022/04/07/black-americans-views-about-health-disparities-experiences-with-health-care/)

3. Emotional Health

Strikingly, more than six in 10 women – and three-quarters of women with children in their home – **said it is hard to make their health a top priority.**



Why is it so difficult for women to prioritize their health?

Among women who said it's hard to make their health a top priority, the top two barriers were feeling overwhelmed and their emotional health.

72%

It feels too overwhelming.

60%

My mental or emotional health gets in the way.



In other words, for many women, concerns about emotional health stand in the way of making their overall health a priority – **a dynamic that can lead to serious consequences like missing essential health screenings.**

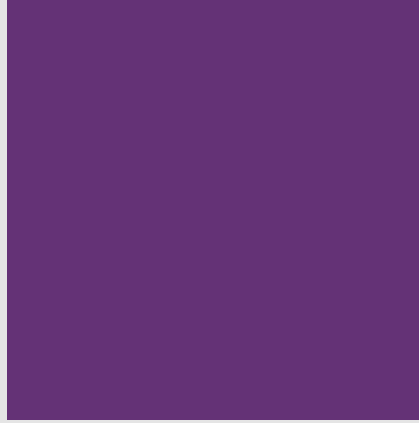
Where Do We Go from Here?

The Screening Action Gap revealed by this survey has serious health consequences for women.

Our survey explored three key factors that contribute to the gap – lack of information, lack of communication with healthcare professionals and concerns about emotional health.

But many other factors also drive this disconnect, including lack of access to high-quality healthcare, costs of screening and other care, mistrust of the medical system and other unmet social needs. There is no one-size-fits-all solution; collaboration is needed from stakeholders across sectors to ensure all women get the screenings and care they need and deserve.

For more information about the Hologic-Gallup survey, please visit WomensHealthIndex.com/Hologic-US-Health-Survey.





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For more information about this research, please visit

WomensHealthIndex.com/Hologic-US-Health-Survey **or contact** womenshealthindex@hologic.com

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