

90% of Americans Delay Routine Health Screenings

Screening avoidance was highest among Latinos and white people.

April 25, 2025 By Laura Schmidt

A majority of Americans (90%) put off getting a health checkup or [recommended screening](#) that could aid in identifying serious illness early, according to the [Wellness Matters Survey](#) conducted by Aflac, a supplemental health insurance provider.

The third annual survey found that Americans across all generations tend to put their health care on hold, according to an [Aflac news release](#). In fact, for two years in a row, roughly three in five Americans admitted to avoiding important screenings, an increase from 51% in 2023.

Screening avoidance was highest among white people and U.S. Latinos. About 94% of Americans surveyed said they [face barriers](#) to getting recommended screenings during the advised time frames.

The survey identified some reasons why Americans avoid going to the doctor, such as embarrassment, fear of bad news, logistical barriers, inconvenience and distrust or dislike of doctors.

According to the news release:

- About 32% of Gen Z experiences negative feelings of personal embarrassment and distrust or dislike for doctors.
- Embarrassment and fear of bad news prevents nearly one in four young women, particularly members of Gen Z, from getting timely screenings.
- Nearly half (48%) of Americans face logistical barriers, such as conflicts with work hours and

challenges taking time off work for appointments.

- Almost 40% of Americans have canceled or failed to schedule a doctor's appointment because the wait time was too long.

Health screenings most often avoided include Pap smear (33%), prostate exam (32%), colonoscopy (32%), mammogram (31%), blood test (31%), full body skin cancer exam (27%) and screening for sexually transmitted infections, or STIs (22%).

What's more, millennials tend to avoid mammograms, STI screenings, full body skin cancer exams, blood tests and prostate exams more than other generations. Baby boomers are the least likely to avoid screenings overall.

Additionally, about 41% of Americans said they primarily use urgent care or the emergency room for their medical needs. In fact, men (46%), African Americans (47%), Asian Americans (45%) and U.S. Latinos (44%) are the most likely to seek medical attention from an urgent care or emergency room.

Although urgent care and [emergency rooms](#) offer significant value in the United States, having a [primary care](#) physician correlates with a greater likelihood of getting regular checkups, according to the release.

The survey also found that families who prioritize health tend to do so together. For example, 86% of Latino men said they were most likely to be swayed by a loved one urging them to put their personal health first.

"Having a 'we are in this together' approach to our health may lead to better outcomes for Americans, their families and loved ones," said Tom Morey, Aflac senior vice president and chief actuary, in the release. "One way to advocate is to schedule preventive care appointments together, at the same time. Our survey shows that Americans who book health appointments at a specific time of year are twice as likely to follow through with recommended checkups and screenings."