



# Health Consumer Study

The Role of Digital in Patients' Healthcare Actions & Decisions

Google/OTX

U.S., December 2009

# Background

Demonstrate how consumers use the Internet and search in their quest for health information and how the information they find online ultimately impacts patient outcomes.

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## Research Objectives:

- Understand how consumers use the Internet to find health information
- Outline how consumers use search for their health needs
- Determine the impact of online searches
- Evaluate the overall impact of their searches on patient outcomes

# Study Methodology

**Vendor:** OTX: Online Testing Exchange

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**Survey field dates:** December 18, 2009 – December 27, 2009

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**Number of Interviews:** 5,001 completes from an online survey, which includes consumers searching for themselves or someone they care for.

## **In order to qualify for the survey, a respondent had to:**

- Reside in the United States
- Be 18+ years old
- Have used an online source to gather information on a health-related questions or concern in the past 12 months
- Have queried on one of the 39 health conditions specified.



# First Stop: Digital Housecall

# Trust in Online Health Resources is Skyrocketing



Over the last couple of years, **trust** in online health resources has **increased by**

**44%**

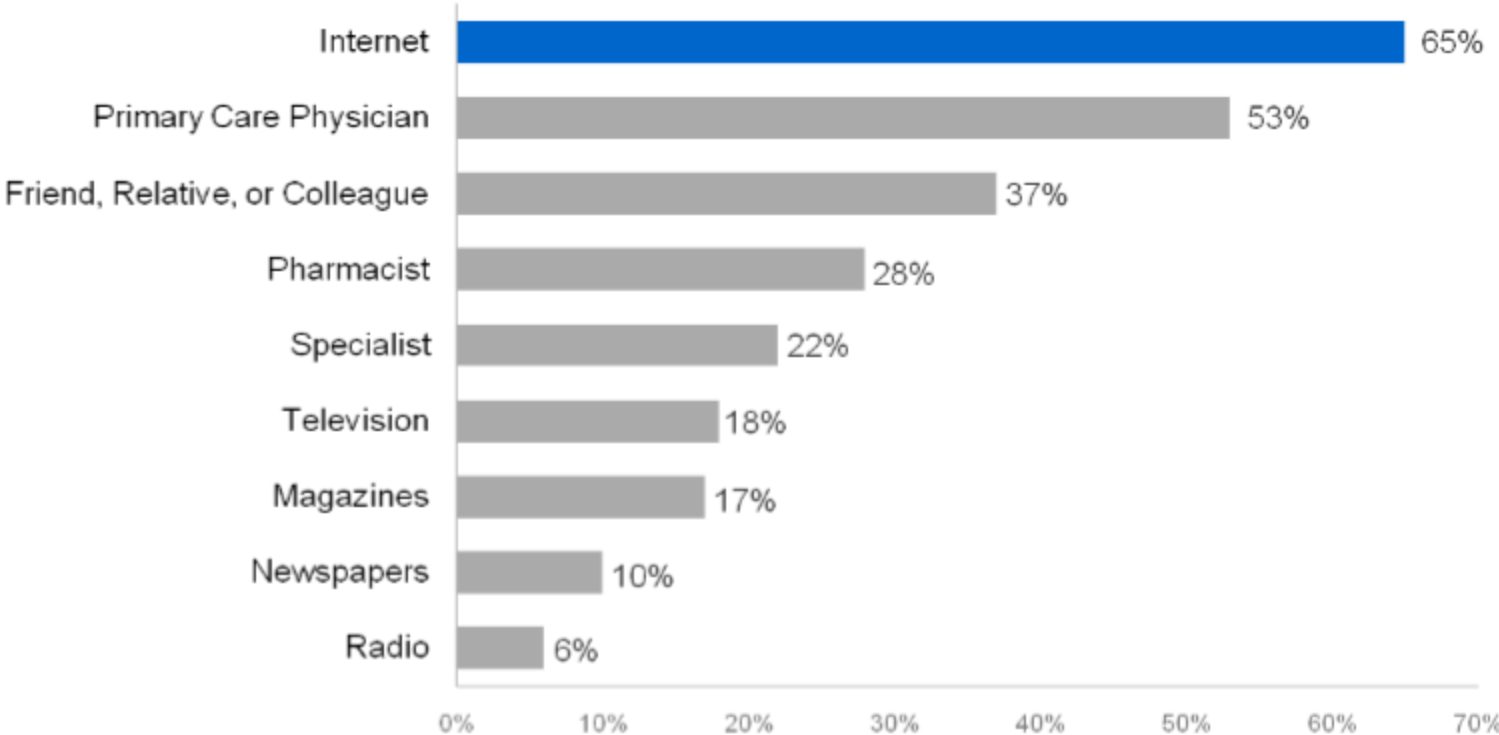
Question: Overall, do you feel your trust for online resources related to health information has increased, decreased or remained the same compared to a few years ago? Please select one.

Base: Used Online Resources Listed. (Not Just Other). (n=4908).

Source: Google & OTX, Health Consumer Study, December 2009

# The Internet is a Powerful Tool for Health Research

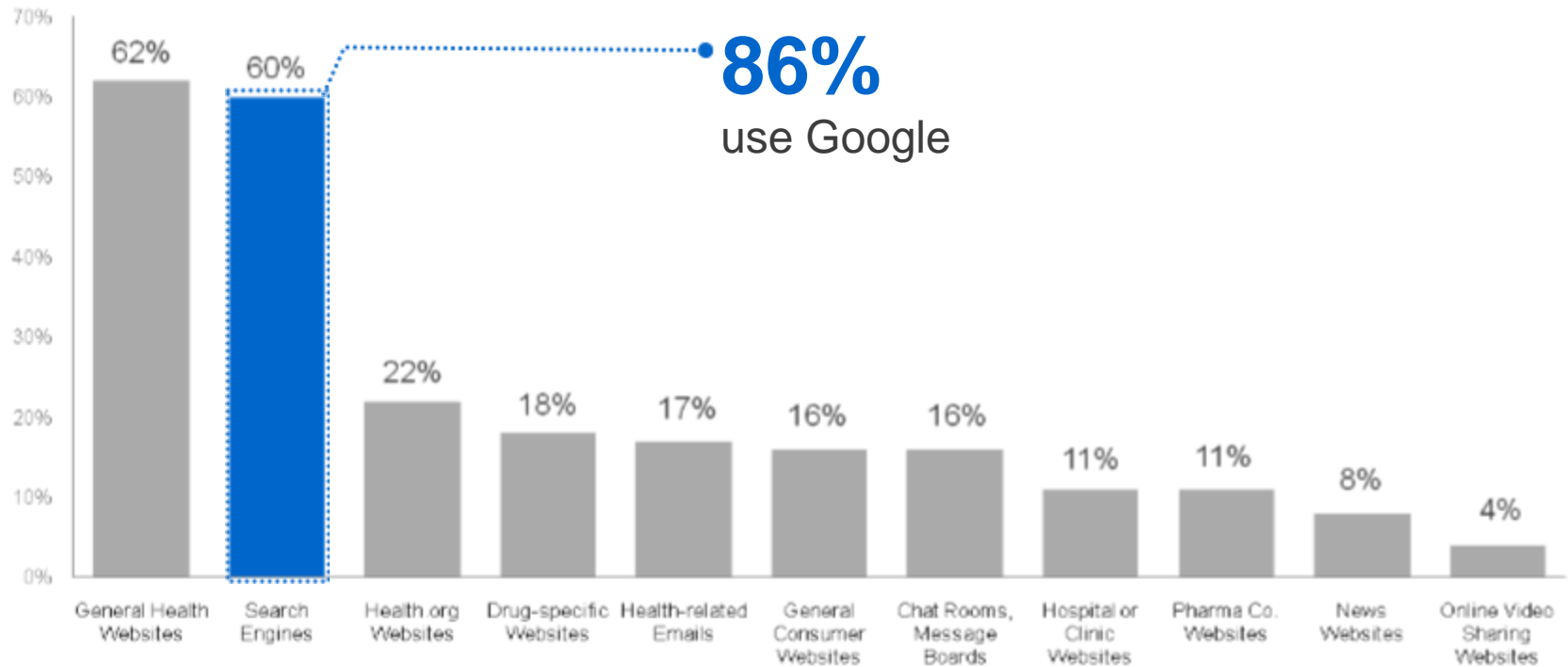
## The Internet is the Top Resource for Health Questions & Concerns



Question: In the past 12 months, which of the following resources have you used to obtain information on a health-related question or concern? Please select all that apply.  
Base: Total US Respondents 18+ who do not work in related professions/taken related surveys in past 12 months and have researched health information in the past 12 months. (n=22806).  
Source: Google & OTX, Health Consumer Study, December 2009

# Consumers Prefer a One-Stop Shop

## Online Sources Used For Health-Related Information



Question: Which online resource(s) did you use to gather information about your most recent health condition-related question or concern? Please select all that apply.

Base: Total Health Consumers. (n=5001).

Box indicated significant difference at 95% confidence interval

Source: Google & OTX, Health Consumer Study, December 2009

# Patients Go Online Before Talking to a Doctor

75%

Research symptoms online  
**first** and then go discuss  
with their doctor

70%

Research online after  
being prescribed a med  
but before starting it

Question: Since you started using the Internet as a source of information for your health condition-related question or concerns, how often do you do the following?

Please select one for each. Top 2 box.

Base: n=5001

Source: Google & OTX, Health Consumer Study, December 2009



# Consumers Look to Research & Engage

## Reasons for Doing Health-Related Activities Online

### 87% Gathering Info

Read an article/newsletter/report	57%
Researched treatment options	48%
Researched medications	40%
Read or posted to blog/message board	17%
Researched facilities	8%

### 43% Acting on Info

Signed up for a health-related newsletter	21%
Clicked on an ad	12%
Recommended a website to someone	10%
Viewed or posted a health video	8%
Clicked on a link to contact an expert	7%
Shared info via chat room or blog	7%
Forwarded a link or video to someone	6%
Joined an online support group	5%

Question: Which of the following activities did you do online as you were gathering information on your most recent health condition-related question or concern? Please select all that apply.

Base: Total Health Consumers. (n=5001).

Source: Google & OTX, Health Consumer Study, December 2009



## Search: the First, Second, Third, & Fourth Opinions



# Patients Search Early ...

**64%** Used search **1<sup>st</sup>** to start their condition research



Questions: Please order the online resources you used to gather information on your most recent health condition-related question or concern from 1 to [INSERT NUMBER OF PUNCHES SELECTED AT Q5], where "1" means "resource you used first" and "[INSERT NUMBER OF PUNCHES SELECTED AT Q5]" means "resource you used last." If you used an online resource multiple times, think about the first time you used the online resource. Which search engine(s) did you use to search for information on your health condition-related question or concern? Please select all that apply. Base: Total Health Consumers. Used Search Engines. (n=2983). Search Engines Users. (n=2983)  
Source: Google & OTX, Health Consumer Study, December 2009

## ... And Often



**37%** Search weekly or more often

**53%** Conduct **3+** searches to answer a health question



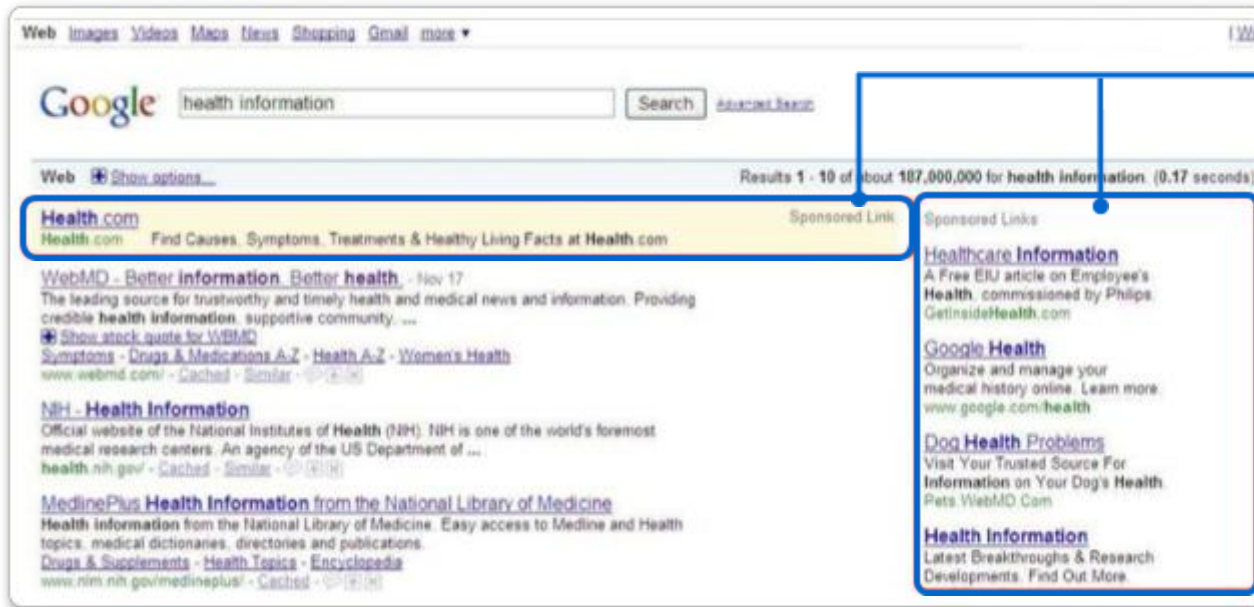
Questions: How often did you typically use search engines to search for information on your health condition-related question or concern? Please select one. Thinking about the last time you used a search engine for a health condition-related concern, how many searches did it take to answer your question?

Please enter a number into the space provided.

Base: Search Engine Users (n=2983)

Source: Google & OTX, Health Consumer Study, December 2009

# Sponsored Search Helps Connects Consumers to Health Info



**81%** have clicked on sponsored links when looking for health information

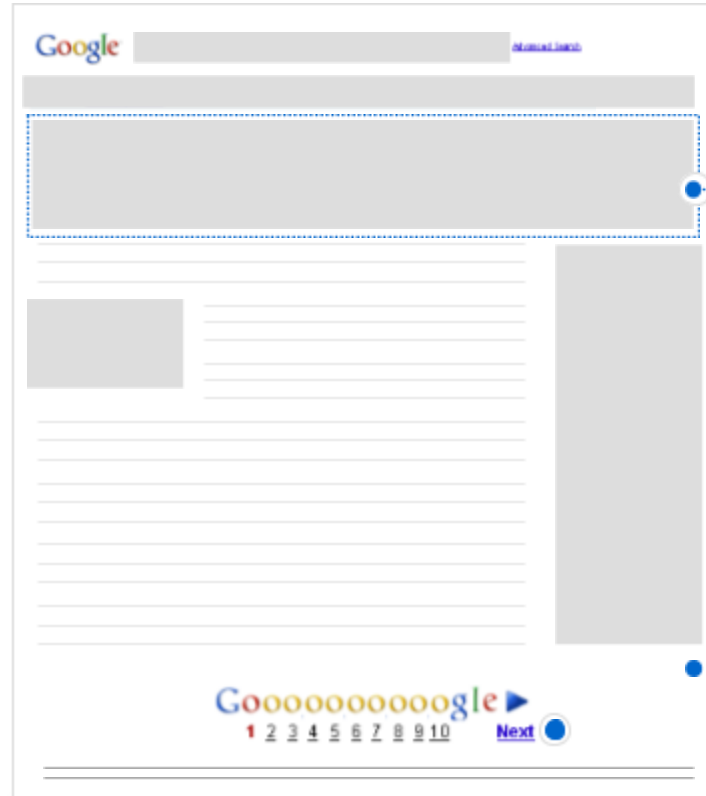
Question: How often, if ever, do you click on sponsored links like the ones boxed in red when you are looking for health-related information? Please select one.

Base: Total Health Consumers (n=5001)

Source: Google & OTX, Health Consumer Study, December 2009

# But Patients Read Selectively

## 55% Never Make It Past the First Page



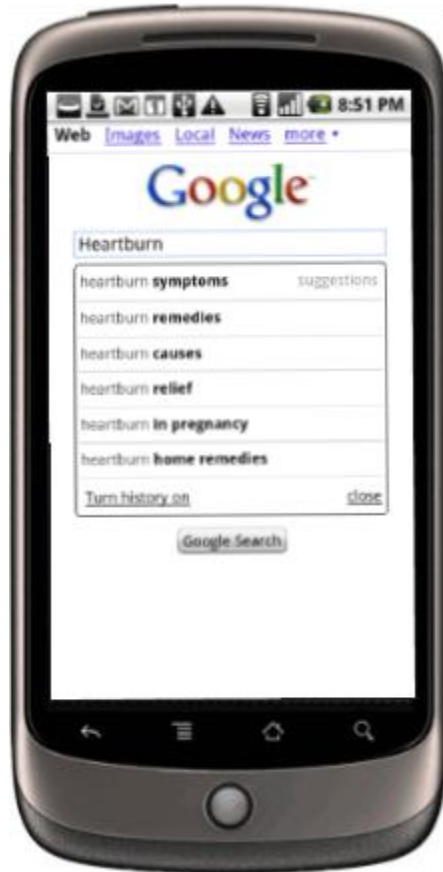
**29%**  
Read only the  
results on the top  
of the first page

Question: Regardless of how you answered the previous questions, when reviewing search results, how often do you do the following? Please select one for each. Top 2 box.

Base: Total Health Consumers (n=5001)

Source: Google & OTX, Health Consumer Study, December 2009

# Consumers Want to Search for Info Wherever They Go



**20%**  
of health consumers  
**search for health-related  
information** on their  
mobile device

Questions: Do you currently have a mobile device that gives you access to the Internet? How often do you use your mobile device to search for online health-related information?

Base: Total Health Consumers. (n=5001)

Source: Google & OTX, Health Consumer Study, December 2009

# Search Engines Drive Consumers to Take Action



**55%** Changed behaviors / lifestyle

**52%** Made a self-diagnosis

**49%** Started an over-the-counter treatment

**48%** Researched treatment options online

**47%** Research medications online | Asked a friend or family member about a condition

**46%** Told a doctor about a symptom I / someone else had



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Video:  
Show & Tell



# Consumers Watch Health Videos More Than Food & Celebrity

News  
42%



Health  
32%



Food  
27%



Celebrity  
26%



Question: Thinking about online videos in general, which, if any, of the following types of videos do you typically watch on the Internet? Please select all that apply.

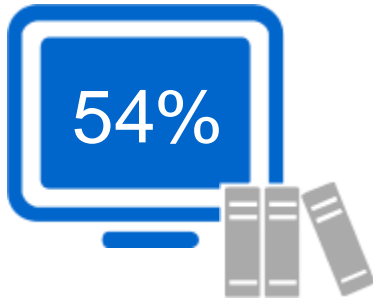
Base: Total Health Consumers. (n=5001).

Source: Google & OTX, Health Consumer Study, December 2009

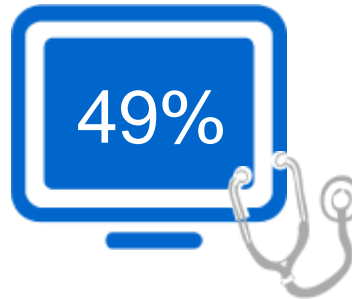
# Patients Want Credible Info in Health Videos

## Types of Health Related Video Content Consumers Want

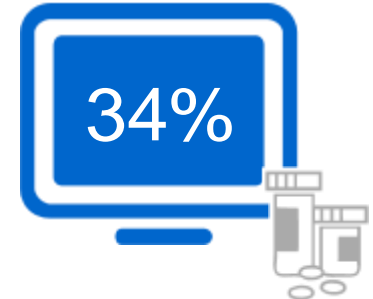
Educational  
Condition-Specific Videos



Videos Featuring Experts  
(e.g. doctors)



Videos About Specific  
Medications



Questions: Whether or not you have ever seen any, how interested are you in viewing videos on the Internet featuring health-related content? Please select one. Using the scale below, please tell us how interested you are in viewing each of the following types of health-related video content on the Internet? Please select one for each.

Base: Non-Video Rejecters (n=4383)

Source: Google & OTX, Health Consumer Study, December 2009

# Health Videos Inspire Consumers to Take Action



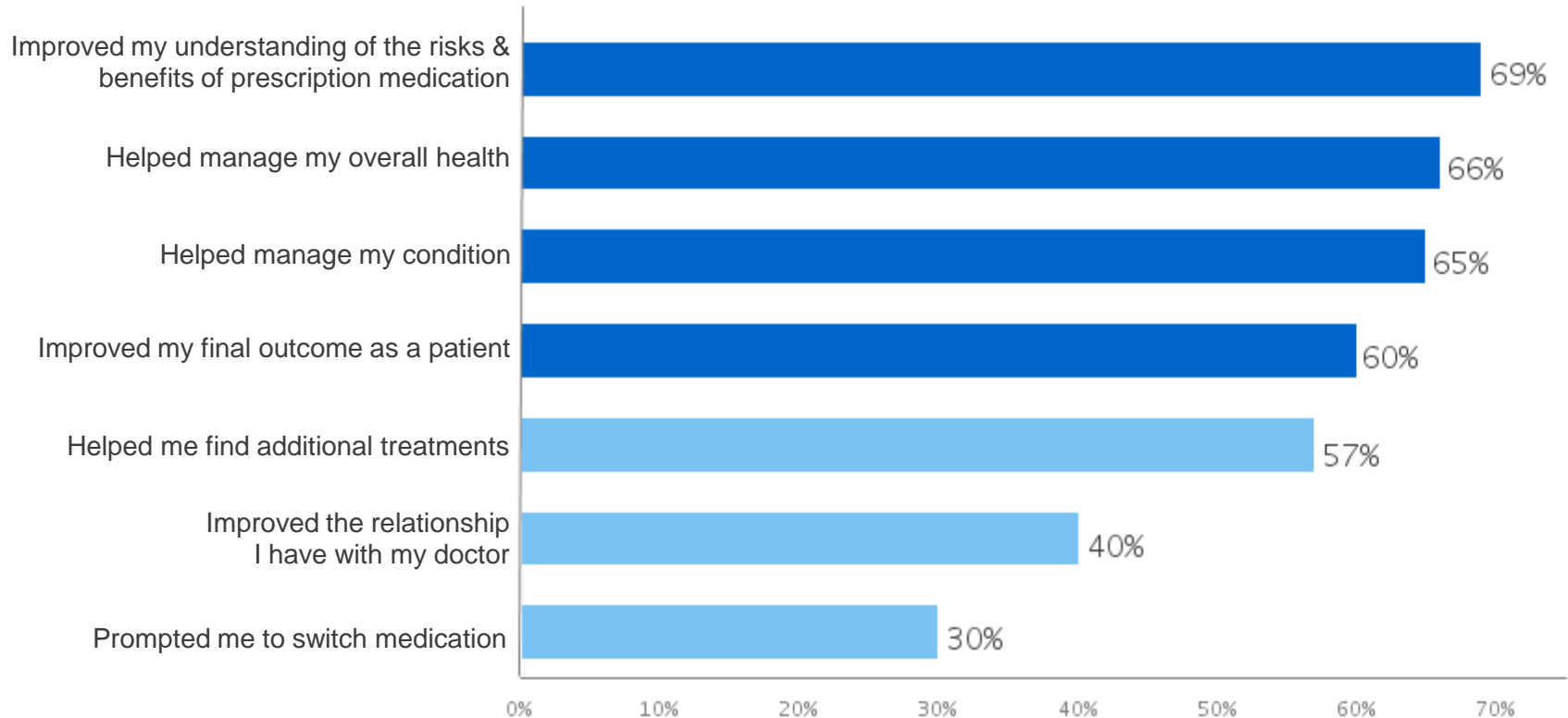


# The Internet is Good for Patient Health



# Online Info Improves Health Management

## Agreement With Helpfulness of Information Found Online



Question: Using the scale below where 1 means 'Disagree Strongly' and 5 means 'Agree Strongly,' please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. Please select one for each. Top 2 Box.  
Floating Base: Total Applicable Health Consumers - Excluding "Not Applicable" (Range: n=4553 to 3073). Source: Google & OTX, Health Consumer Study, December 2009

# Online Info Empowers Patients

## Impact of Internet on Patient Confidence

**67%**

**Empowered and  
Informed** of All  
Your Options

**61%**

**In Control** of  
Your Treatment

**59%**

**Confident and  
Independent** in  
Deciding Your  
Treatment Options

Question: Using the scale below where 1 means 'Disagree Strongly' and 5 means 'Agree Strongly,' please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Please select one for each. Top 2 box

Base: Total Health Consumers. (n=5001).

Source: Google & OTX, Health Consumer Study, December 2009

# Online Research Drives Action

**78%** of Consumers Do an **Offline Activity** as a Result of Online Research



Question: And what offline activities did you or someone else do as a result of the health condition information you gathered online? Please select all that apply.

Base: Total Health Consumers (n=5001)

Source: Google & OTX, Health Consumer Study, December 2009



# ... And Interaction With the Doctor

**49%** of Consumers **Talk to a Doctor** as a Result of Online Research



Question: And what offline activities did you or someone else do as a result of the health condition information you gathered online? Please select all that apply.

Base: Total Health Consumers (n=5001)

Source: Google & OTX, Health Consumer Study, December 2009

# Summary of The Patient's Journey to Action

<b>1</b>	First Stop: Digital Housecall
<b>2</b>	Search: the First, Second, Third, & Fourth Opinions
<b>3</b>	Video: Show & Tell
<b>4</b>	The Internet is Good for Patient Health

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