

New Harris Poll Finds Women Want More Education on Sexually Transmitted Infections Testing and Treatment

FRANKLIN LAKES, N.J., April 19, 2023 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company) (NYSE: BDX), a leading global medical technology company, today released findings from a survey conducted online by The Harris Poll, reporting that women feel less knowledgeable about testing and treatment options for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) compared to other vaginal diseases and infections.

The survey of more than 1,000 U.S. women over 18 years old, found that while 77% of women say they are knowledgeable about vaginal infections (including yeast infections) in general, only 60% are knowledgeable about treatment options for vaginal infections and STIs. The study also found that among women who have ever seen a health care provider for routine gynecological care, most report that their provider could do more to educate them about STIs (82%), treatment options for STIs and vaginal infections (82%), as well testing for STIs and vaginal infections (79%).

"In light of April being STI Awareness Month, this timely study shows the importance of providing patients with the knowledge they need to address and prevent sexually transmitted infections," said Dr. Jeff Andrews, a gynecologist and vice president of Medical Affairs for Integrated Diagnostic Solutions at BD. "With the Centers of Disease Control (CDC) reporting that STIs make up five of the top 10 reportable diseases in the U.S.—with increasing incidence—knowledge and education are critical for patients, as is the development of targeted point-of-care diagnostic technologies."

When and Where Women Get Tested Varies

The online survey of U.S. women found that nearly half (48%) last saw a health care provider for a routine gynecological exam one year ago or more, with only two in five (40%) having done so within the past 12 months. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends that women be seen by their gynecologist at least once a year.

Almost three in five women who visited a health care provider when they had or thought they had a vaginal infection went to an OB-GYN or gynecologist (57%) for a gynecological exam versus 42% going to a primary care doctor. However, younger women (18-34 years old) are more likely than older women (45+ years old) to have visited an urgent care facility (26% vs. 5%).

There is Lack of Awareness and Education Around Testing Options

Vaginal infections (including yeast infections) or vaginitis is the most common reason that women visit their primary care provider for a gynecologic-related issue in the U.S. Co-infection of vaginitis and STIs is common^{1,2} and most people with non-viral STIs often do not develop any symptoms, which means that diseases can go undetected while patients risk severe complications.³⁻⁶

According to the study, about seven in 10 women have ever had or thought they had a vaginal infection (71%), and of those women, only 37% said their health care provider was able to diagnose their symptoms and prescribe the appropriate treatment after one visit. In addition, only 19% said their health care provider explained what tests they were doing for diagnosis.

Disparities Exist When Women of Color Seek Treatment

Among women who have ever had or thought they had a vaginal infection, the results indicate that less than a third of Black women (29%) say their health care provider was able to diagnose their symptoms and prescribe appropriate treatment after one visit. The figure drops even lower (23%) among Hispanic women. By contrast, 42% of white women say their health care provider was able to diagnose their symptoms and prescribe appropriate treatment after one visit.

"A misdiagnosis can lead to inappropriate treatment recommendations — either undertreatment or overtreatment," added Dr. Andrews. "As a gynecologist with more than three decades of clinical experience, I know that when a patient is juggling multiple jobs, childcare and elder care demands, or if there isn't a doctor or clinic located near their home or work, having to make a return visit can be a significant burden and a barrier

to access to testing and treatment."

The poll also showed disparities in receiving a routine gynecological exam, with around one in 10 Asian women (12%)* having never had a gynecological exam, similar to Black (10%) and Hispanic (11%) women —almost three times less than white women (4%).

Among women who have ever had or thought they had a vaginal infection, Hispanic women are more likely than white women to say it took a long time to get an appointment with their health care provider (15% vs. 5%) and that it took several visits to their health care provider to find an appropriate treatment (16% vs. 4%).

Understanding Testing and Treatment Options

"Most women have a vaginal infection during their lifetime and millions of them receive inadequate treatment," said Nikos Pavlidis, vice president of Diagnostics for BD. "With the **BD Vaginal Panel** and the **BD CTGCTV2** assay, you can use the same sample to test for vaginitis and the three most prevalent non-viral STIs in symptomatic women.^{2,7} This can help end the cycle of repeat visits, misdiagnosis and ineffective treatment."

BD Vaginal Panel tests for bacterial vaginosis, vulvovaginal candidiasis, and *Trichomonas vaginalis*. BD CTGCTV2 assay tests for *Chlamydia trachomatis*, *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, and *Trichomonas vaginalis*.

This survey was commissioned by BD and conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of BD Women's Health from March 30 to April 3, 2023, among 1,005 U.S. women ages 18+. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within +/- 3.6 percentage points using a 95% confidence level. *Results for Asian women are based on a small sample size (n<50) and should interpreted with caution/as directional only.

For more information on vaginitis and women's health, visit womens-health-solutions.bd.com/vaginitis

For complete survey data file, please contact mela.sera@bd.com

About BD

BD is one of the largest global medical technology companies in the world and is advancing the world of health by improving medical discovery, diagnostics and the delivery of care. The company supports the heroes on the frontlines of health care by developing innovative technology, services and solutions that help advance both clinical therapy for patients and clinical process for health care providers. BD and its 77,000 employees have a passion and commitment to help enhance the safety and efficiency of clinicians' care delivery process, enable laboratory scientists to accurately detect disease and advance researchers' capabilities to develop the next generation of diagnostics and therapeutics. BD has a presence in virtually every country and partners with organizations around the world to address some of the most challenging global health issues. By working in close collaboration with customers, BD can help enhance outcomes, lower costs, increase efficiencies, improve safety and expand access to health care. For more information on BD, please visit bd.com or connect with us on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/company/bd1/ and Twitter [@BDandCo](https://twitter.com/BDandCo).

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SOURCE BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company)

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