



Cough Medicine Consumer Insights National Survey Key Findings | February 2012

A new national survey from the Center for Medicine in the Public Interest (CMPI) offers key insights into consumer preferences about first-line treatment options during cough and flu season. The research indicates that, as of the beginning of the 2011-2012 cough and cold season (mid-December), **one-quarter of United States consumers surveyed** had experienced cough symptoms, while **half of parents** have children who had already experienced symptoms. The survey found that American families rely on over-the-counter (OTC) cough medicines as a first response to treat cough symptoms in both children and adults, underscoring the value of OTC cough medicine and its role in empowering effective and affordable consumer self-care.

OTC Cough Medicines: *Providing Relied-Upon First Response for American Families*

- Consumers depend on OTC cough medicines as a first-response to relieve cough symptoms for themselves and their children:
 - **Two-thirds (66%) of surveyed adults** and **70% of surveyed parents** rely on OTC cough medicines to treat their own and their children's symptoms.
 - Over the past year **more than half of U.S. adults (57%)** have taken cough medicines and **71% of parents** have administered these medicines to their children aged four and older.

OTC Cough Medicines: *Prevents Unnecessary Burdens*

- Underscoring the importance of 24/7 access to OTC cough medicines, the survey found that restricting access to these medicines would be unnecessarily burdensome.
 - If using OTC cough medicines required a prescription:
 - **78% of consumers** believe that it would place a burden on them and their family because they would need to visit a doctor.
 - **74% of consumers** believe that it would place a burden on them and their family because they would need to take time away from other responsibilities, such as work or school.
 - **71% of consumers** believe that it would limit their ability to provide care for their children.
 - As such, **76% of consumers** believe OTC cough medicines **should remain available over-the-counter** without restrictions.
 - For uninsured, the impact of requiring a prescription for OTC cough medicine is greater:
 - **82% of uninsured consumers** believe that it would place a burden on them and their family because they would need to visit a doctor.
 - **81% of uninsured consumers** believe that it would place a burden on them and their family because they would need to take time away from other responsibilities, such as work or school.
 - **85% of uninsured consumers** believe that it would limit their ability to provide care for their children.
 - As such, **85% of uninsured consumers** believe OTC cough medicines **should remain available over-the-counter** without restrictions.

OTC Cough Medicines: *Keeping Adults Active and Productive*

- OTC cough medicines allow consumers to stay productive at work and at school when they do not feel well:
 - **75% of consumers** agree that OTC medicines provide relief of their cough symptoms so they can get a good night's rest.

- **68% of consumers** agree that OTC medicines allow them to stay productive at work or school when they are not feeling well.
- **61 million consumers** in the past 12 months have avoided missing work, school, or other scheduled appointments due to illness because they had access to OTC cough medicines to alleviate their symptoms (extrapolated from survey findings, based on census data).

OTC Cough Medicines: *Keeping Families Active and Productive*

- Parents view these medicines as providing effective relief for themselves and their children, any time of the day:
 - **76% of parents** believe OTC cough medicines provide relief of their children’s symptoms so they can get a good night’s rest.
 - **60% of parents** believe OTC cough medicines allow their children to stay productive at school when they’re not feeling well
 - **8.5 million households** in the past 12 months have children aged four or older who have avoided missing school or daycare due to illness because their parents had access to OTC cough medicines to treat their cough symptoms (extrapolated from survey findings, based on census data).

OTC Cough Medicines: *Empowering Consumers to Manage Their Families’ Healthcare*

- OTC cough medicines are convenient and money-saving:
 - **77% of consumers** agree that OTC medicines provide convenient treatment whenever symptoms arise.
 - **68% of consumers** agree that OTC medicines save them money.
- When it comes to treating symptoms, consumers believe OTC cough medicine is safe and effective:
 - **86% of consumers** believe OTC cough medicines are safe when taken as directed.
 - **82% of parents** believe OTC cough medicines are safe for their children when taken as directed.
 - **72% of consumers** believe OTC cough medicines are effective at relieving cough symptoms.
 - **75% of parents** believe OTC cough medicines are effective at relieving their children’s cough symptoms.

OTC Cough Medicines: *Continuing Education Important Moving Forward*

- The survey found that majority of consumers believe OTC cough medicine packages provides necessary information to ensure appropriate use, and education is viewed as the most effective way to ensure appropriate OTC medicine use:
 - **87% of consumers** believe the labeling and instructions provided on OTC cough medicine packages provide the information needed to ensure the medicines are being used appropriately.
 - **85% of consumers** believe that educating parents about the appropriate use and storage of medicines, including OTC medicines, is the most effective way to ensure appropriate use.
 - While **94% of consumers** agreed that they “know what medicines are in my home and how much of each I have,” only **74% percent** agreed that “medicines in my home are in a place where my children cannot access them” – pointing to the need for ongoing education about safe monitoring, storage and disposal of OTC medications in the home.

About the Survey

- This survey examines the value of OTC cough medicines relative to potential alternatives, such as consultations with healthcare professionals for self-recognizable symptoms and/or prescription medicines.
- The researchers surveyed 1,007 adults ages 18 years and older by telephone between December 9, 2011, and December 16, 2011, in addition to consulting published data sets and economic modeling.
- This independent survey was conducted by StrategyOne in partnership with the Center for Medicine in the Public Interest through a grant from the Consumer Healthcare Products Association.