



*Key Findings of a National Survey*

*On Cough Medicine Use*

Prepared January 26, 2007

This summary report presents the key findings of a national survey of American adults regarding the use of over-the-counter cough remedies to alleviate cough symptoms resulting from the flu, a cold or other respiratory ailment. The survey was conducted January 11-21, 2007, with over 3,000 adult Americans, 18 years of age and older.

Specifically, the research objectives were to:

- Estimate what proportion of the US adult population personally experienced or had a child in their home experience a cough due to a respiratory ailment (flu or cold) during the past three months.
- Explore what steps were taken by those experiencing a cough to treat symptoms or obtain relief.
- Examine the perceived effectiveness of over-the-counter cough remedies among those who personally used one or administered one to a child in their household.

### ***Research Methodology***

The data presented in this summary report are based on completed interviews with a random and representative nationwide sample of 3,052 adults.

- Interviewing was conducted from a central telephone facility utilizing a random-digit-dial (RDD) sampling methodology to ensure that both listed and unlisted telephone numbers were included.
- The total sample survey results were weighted by four variables (age, sex, region and race) for reliable and accurate representation of the total U.S. population.
- Respondents were screened at two levels:
  - To identify those who had personally experienced a cough (n=1,233) or had a child in their household who had experienced a cough (n=648); and
  - To identify those who had personally used an over-the-counter cough medicine to treat their cough (n=808) or administered an OTC cough product to a child in their household (n=472).

The margin of error for results based on the national sample of 3,000 is  $\pm 1.8$  percentage points. For the key subgroups, the margins of error range from  $\pm 4.5$  percentage points for reports on child usage of OTC cough products to  $\pm 2.8$  percentage points for reports of adult experience of a cough.

## ***Four-in-10 American adults experienced a cough due to a respiratory ailment in the past 90 days.***



### ***Incidence of Cough In Past 90 Days***

The reported incidence of Americans experiencing a cough due to a recent respiratory ailment is significant. In fact, fully 41% of adults nationwide experienced a cough in the past three months, including 53% of those between the ages of 25 and 34.

- The experience of cough is evident across all regions of the country – from 37% in Northeastern states to 43% in Western states.
- Women are more likely than men to have experienced a cough in the past three months – 44% versus 38%.
- Not surprisingly, the greater the household size, the higher the incidence of cough – from 46% of those in homes with three or more people versus 34% of those living alone.

Among households with children under the age of 18, the reported incidence of a child in the home experiencing a cough in the past three months is even higher at 56%.

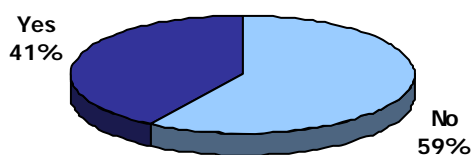
- Fully 68% of parents and caregivers in Midwestern households with minor children report that a child in their homes experienced a cough in the past three months that is attributable to a cold, flu or other respiratory ailment.
- Six-in-10 mothers and female caregivers (61%) also report that children in their homes had a cough associated with a recent cold, flu or respiratory problem.
- And those with younger children (under age 12) are more likely to report that a child was sick with a cough than those with young adolescents (12-17) – 61% versus 47%.

# INCIDENCE OF EXPERIENCING COUGH IN PAST THREE MONTHS



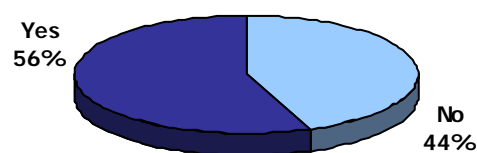
## GENERAL POPULATION

*Q: During the past 3 months, have you experienced a cough due to a cold, flu, respiratory problem or from some other cause?*



## IN HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN

*Q: During the past 3 months, did any child under the age of 18 living in your home have a cough due to a cold, flu, respiratory problem or from some other cause?*



### Percent "Yes" Experienced Cough in Past 3 Months

		<i>General Population</i> 3,000	<i>In Households With Children</i> 1,154
	TOTAL	41%	56%
Sex:	Male	38%	51%
	Female	44	61
Respondent Age:	18-24	41%	53%
	25-34	53	60
	35-44	43	58
	45-54	44	55
	55-64	37	48
	65+	28	29
Household Size:	One	34%	*
	Two	38	49
	Three or more	46	57
Children in Household:	None	37%	--
	Under age 18	47	56%
	Under age 12	51	61
	Age 12-17	43	47
Region:	Northeast	37%	52%
	South	42	53
	Midwest	41	68
	West	43	52

*To alleviate cough symptoms,  
Americans most often use OTC cough remedies.*



The overwhelming majority of Americans who experienced a cough resulting from a respiratory ailment took active steps to treat their symptoms or discomfort (81%). Parents and caregivers were even more likely to get some form of treatment for the children in their household who were suffering with a cough (95%).

Indeed, only 18% of Americans say they did not seek treatment for their cough – with men (22%) and younger adults (29% of those under age 25) the most apt to say they “did nothing and waited” for their coughs to go away. Among parents and caregivers, only 5% say they did not take steps to treat the cough being experienced by a child in their homes.

The survey findings strongly indicate that OTC cough remedies are the form of treatment most Americans use when either they or a child in their household is experiencing a cough stemming from a respiratory ailment.

- Regardless of the age of children, fully 73% of parents and caregivers say they administered an over-the-counter cough medicine to the child in their home who was experiencing a cough.
- Among adults personally experiencing a cough from a respiratory ailment, 66% treated it with an OTC remedy. Men and women with a cough were equally likely to use an OTC cough remedy, 66% and 65%, respectively.

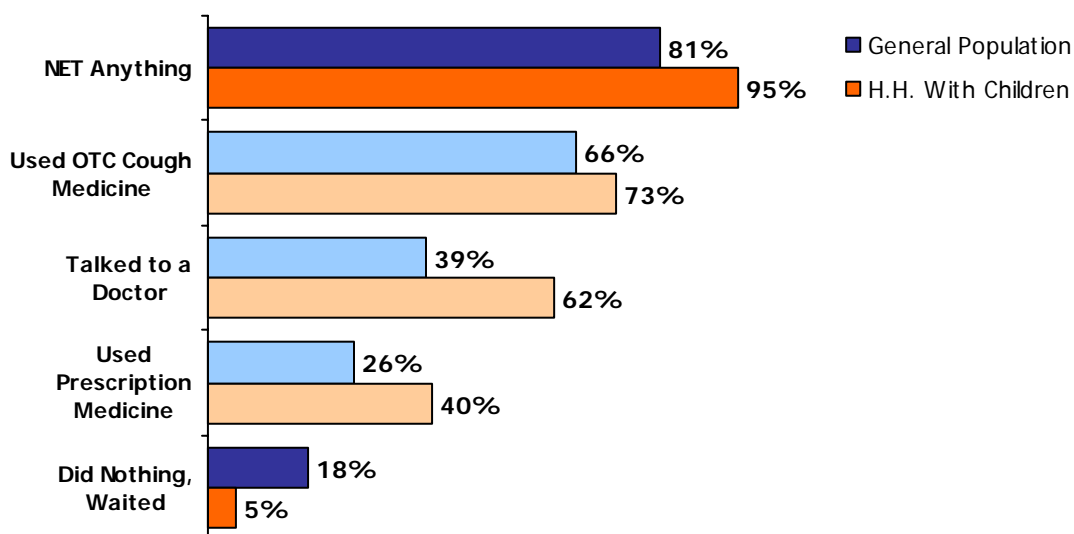
Far fewer adult Americans turned to medical professionals to treat their coughs, 39%, but parents and caregivers did consult with pediatricians and other health care providers (62%) when making decisions about how to treat the cough being experienced by a child in their household.

- Among adults, senior citizens (age 65 and older) are those most likely to have talked with a physician about treating their coughs (56%). Consequently, seniors are also those who most frequently report using a prescription cough medicine within the past three months to treat a cough (38% versus 26% overall).

# STEPS TAKEN BY ADULTS, PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS TO TREAT COUGH



Q: Which, if any, of the following did you do when [you/this child] had a cough?



## Percent Used OTC Cough Medicine in Past 3 Months

	<u>General Population</u> 1,233	<u>In Households With Children</u> 648
TOTAL	66%	73%
Sex:		
Male	66%	73%
Female	65%	73%
Respondent Age:		
18-24	66%	71%
25-34	69%	71%
35-44	69%	78%
45-54	69%	72%
55-64	70%	63%
65+	58%	46%
Children in Household:		
None	60%	--
Under 18	72%	73%
Under age 12	74%	73%
Age 12-17	70%	75%
Region:		
Northeast	63%	70%
South	69%	71%
Midwest	67%	73%
West	61%	78%

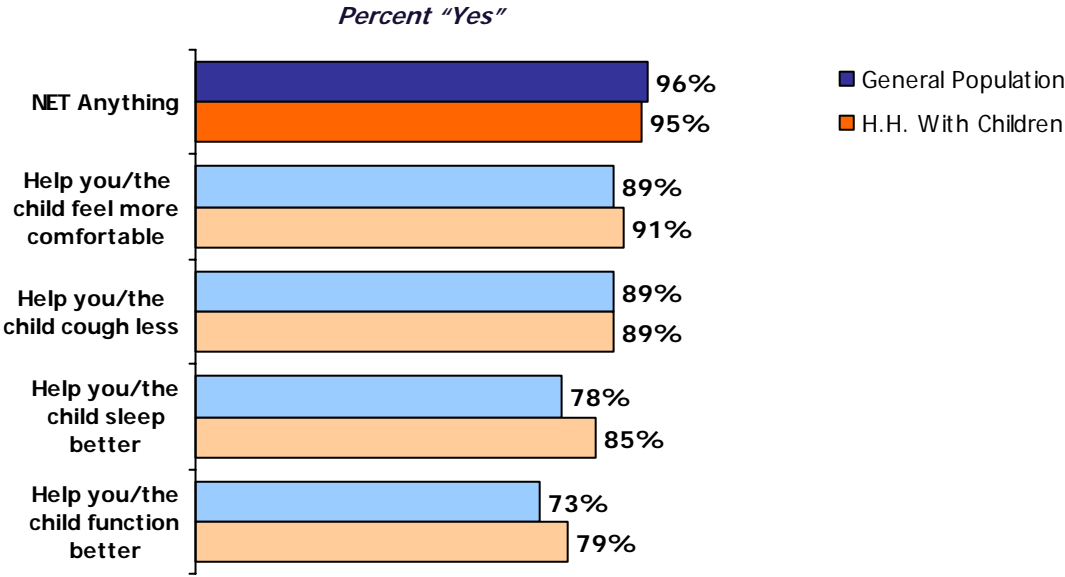
**Nearly all who recently used OTC cough remedies say it provided some relief.**



A significant 96% of American adults who used OTC cough remedies to treat a cough they or a child in their household was experiencing, report it was helpful and provided at least one form of relief.

- Importantly, 89% of adults, parents and caregivers say the cough remedies they used effectively helped them or the child in their household *cough less*.
- 89% of adults and 91% of parents and caregivers also say the cough remedies used helped them or the child *feel more comfortable*.
- More than three-fourths of adults, parents and caregivers also indicate that cough remedies helped them and the child both *function and sleep better*.

**Q: Did the over-the-counter cough medicine you purchased without a prescription [for the child with a cough] have any of the following effects?**



*Base: Used an OTC Cough Medicine in Past 3 Months  
 For General Population, weighted n=808  
 For Households with Children Under 18, weighted n=472*