

# Insights and Trends from a National Survey: Patient Testing in America

Expectations are changing for diagnostic testing. Here's what U.S.-based patients say about cost, access, and their greater demand for control.



From diagnosing disease to driving healthy behavior, diagnostic tests have earned Americans' confidence. A survey of 1,000 U.S.-based patients, conducted by YouGov and commissioned by Siemens Healthineers, reveals nearly all respondents (98%) say lab results provide meaningful insights about their health—and 94% say they're more likely to follow a doctor's advice when it's backed by test data.

Yet as testing options broaden, new expectations are emerging that reflect society's greater access to health information, interest in self-directed care, as well as their growing mistrust in authority.<sup>1</sup> Patients want greater control, test results on-demand, and more predictive health insights, potentially at the expense of evidence-based medicine or insights from a healthcare professional with knowledge of their medical history.

The survey, conducted with adults over 18 who have had lab testing done in the past two years, reveals how patient-physician dynamics are shifting at the earliest touchpoint of patients' care journey—and how health information learned from social media is influencing this evolving relationship.

## Key takeaways:



**Patients insist on greater control** over test ordering decisions, though they are relying more on information collected on their own, including from social media. Some are willing to dismiss their doctors' expertise.



**Predictive health insights are in demand.** While some will pay out of pocket to appease their curiosity, others still struggle to afford basic, doctor-recommended tests that inform their care. Lab testing is favored over home testing.



**The perceived value of test results** seems to justify potential financial burden patients may incur. Testing is prioritized by patients over other diagnostic modalities.

More information about the respondents can be found in the appendix.

Click each topic to explore.

Highlights in 60 Seconds

Patient Trust in Testing

Testing Accessibility in the U.S.

Motivations for Patient Testing

The Testing Patients Want

The Social Media Effect

DIY Healthcare

How Cost Affects Testing Decisions

New Expectations for Testing

Expectations vs. Reality

Appendix: Methodology & Insights

# Top highlights from the national survey on patient testing

## Do patients trust lab testing?

**98%** believe laboratory testing provides insightful information about their health

**96%** trust lab tests to provide accurate results

**94%** would be more likely to follow a doctor's recommendation if it's supported by lab test results

## How accessible is testing in America?

**88%** can complete bloodwork within a 30-minute drive of their home

**12%** must travel longer than 30 minutes one-way



## What motivates patients to pursue testing on their own?

**49%** have administered a self-test (i.e., home test) related to an illness or symptom\*

**22%** have pursued a self-test out of curiosity\*

**27%** have pursued blood testing out of curiosity offered by a trusted lab provider independent of a doctor's recommendation\*

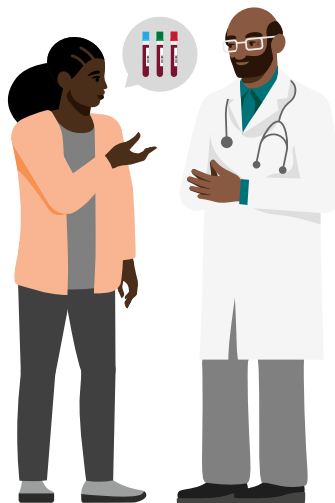
*\*Access to direct testing varies by state*

## How are patient expectations for medical testing in America changing?

**93%** of patients expect their doctor to order a test upon request

**13%** would not trust their doctor's guidance if they advise against a requested test

**89%** are interested specifically in lab testing that can predict health risks



## How is social media influencing patients' actions?

**17%** have requested a lab test they learned about from social media platforms (such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, or Reddit)



## How might DIY healthcare unintentionally compromise care?

**32%** of individuals believe results from self-administered tests are as accurate as tests conducted at a doctor's office or laboratory

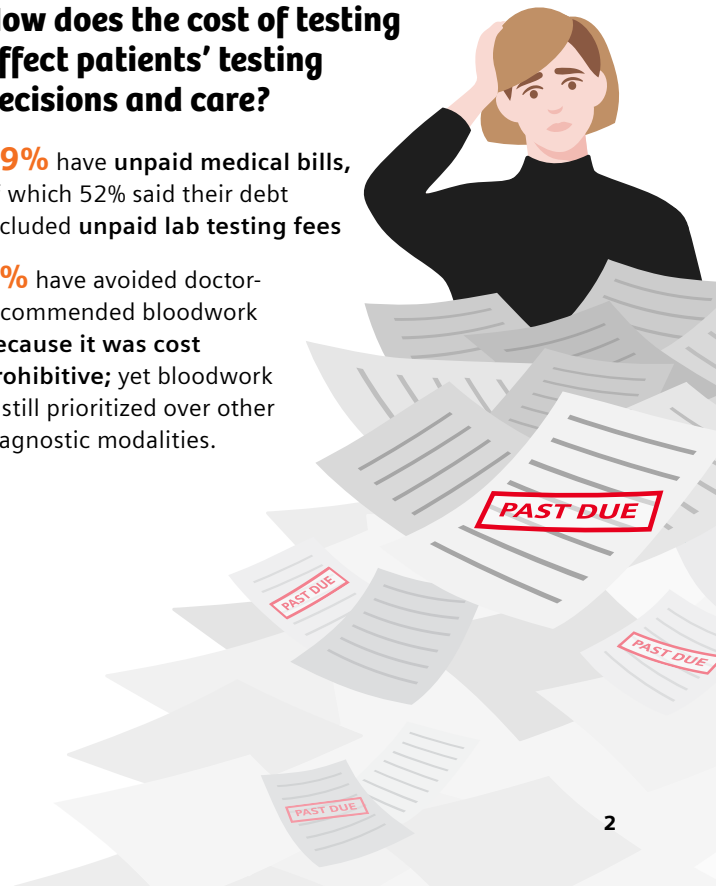
**49%** who have pursued testing out of curiosity have not shared results with a healthcare provider for guidance about next steps

**20%** would not disclose to their doctor if they took medical advice learned from social media

## How does the cost of testing affect patients' testing decisions and care?

**29%** have unpaid medical bills, of which 52% said their debt included unpaid lab testing fees

**5%** have avoided doctor-recommended bloodwork because it was cost prohibitive; yet bloodwork is still prioritized over other diagnostic modalities.



# Do patients trust laboratory testing?

Doctors use lab test results to help inform diagnoses, monitor illnesses and chronic diseases, prognosticate disease advancement, and guide next steps for care.

The information lab tests provide is valued by providers and patients alike.



**98%**

believe laboratory testing provides **insightful information** about their health



**96%**

say they **trust lab tests** to provide accurate results



**94%**

say they would be more likely to follow a doctor's recommendation—from lifestyle changes to starting a prescription—if the advice is **supported by lab test results**

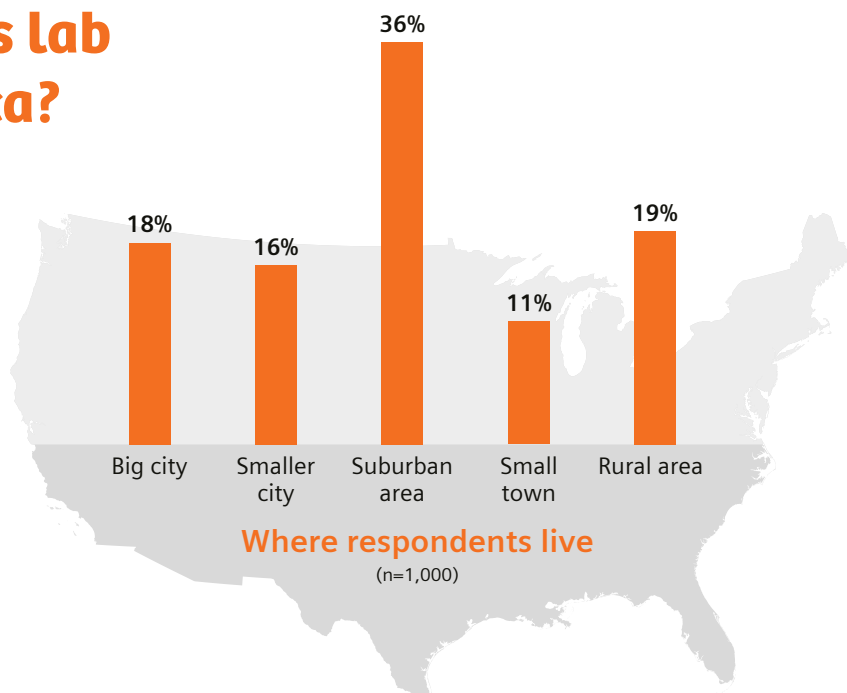
# How accessible is lab testing in America?

Near-universal accessibility to lab testing illustrates the critical role it plays in informing care decisions.

**91%**

of patients agree lab testing **is convenient to access**

Most patients (88%) can complete bloodwork within a 30-minute drive of their home. Still, 12% indicated they travel longer than 30 minutes one-way, with 2% traveling longer than one hour.



# What motivates patients to pursue testing on their own?

Americans were first introduced to self-testing (or home testing) in the mid-1900s with over-the-counter options for urine testing.<sup>2,3</sup> New options again proliferated during the COVID-19 pandemic when quick answers could return people to their day-to-day activities.

Overwhelming demand led patients from traditional testing pathways that involved consultation with healthcare professionals and patients acclimated to a more proactive and engaged role in testing.

The data suggests interest in home testing persists, primarily for symptomatic concerns but also to appease curiosity.



**49%**

have taken a self-test related to an **illness or symptom** (e.g., COVID test, urinary tract infection, sexually transmitted disease)



**22%**

have taken one **out of curiosity** (e.g., genetic/DNA test, fertility/testosterone test)

People learn of tests advertised to provide wellness information or genetic insights by well-known laboratories, genetic testing companies, and even social media influencers. While direct access to lab testing depends on state-by-state laws, the data suggests this type of testing is of greater interest, or perhaps value, over similar home testing options available.<sup>4</sup>



**27%**

of individuals have pursued blood testing out of curiosity **offered by a trusted lab provider** independent of a doctor's recommendation

Disclaimers posted alongside these test options suggest patients consult their primary healthcare provider before acting on results. This is for good reason. Lab results are one piece of the puzzle, or snapshot in time, rather than a conclusive whole picture and are meant to be interpreted alongside other clinically relevant information.

While most people (95%) trust their doctor to relay important information about test results ordered for them, the data suggests this communication is a one-way street when patients pursue testing themselves.

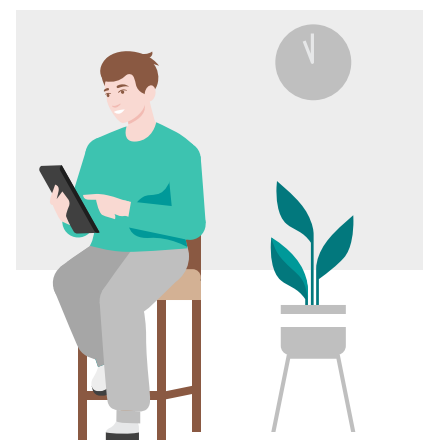
This could be because they feel empowered by having direct access to their test results (96%). Few indicate needing help to understand them.

**49%**

of individuals who have pursued testing out of curiosity (n=395) are **not sharing their results with a healthcare provider**

**78%**

feel they generally **understand test results without help** from a healthcare provider



These findings affirm a new trend, dubbed do-it-yourself healthcare, is indeed affecting physician-patient interactions.<sup>5</sup> Potential implications are explored in the section, "How might DIY healthcare unintentionally compromise care?"



# How are patient expectations for testing changing?

Patients overwhelmingly agree they should be able to influence what tests their doctors order.



**93%**

of patients expect their doctor to order a test **upon request**

When it comes to what type of testing people are interested in, the survey revealed high interest in prognostic risk indicators:



**89%**

are interested specifically in lab testing that can **predict health risks**



**92%**

would want to know their risk of having a major cardiac event within the next 365 days

While patients' expectations for what lab testing is conducted are shifting, it remains to be understood what expectations patients have as to how to act upon their results.

- ▶ **Are test results alone satisfactory to appease curiosity?**
- ▶ **If not, what expectations do patients have to act on test results?**
- ▶ **How might these expectations conflict with existing clinical guidelines that ultimately determine how physicians proceed?**

These answers matter because patient satisfaction (the evaluation of care relative to patient expectations) is a top-of-mind metric for healthcare institutions that can affect reimbursement, patient retention, and referrals. Patient expectations for lab testing—and what comes after—can serve as an early indicator of shifting expectations that may affect patient satisfaction ahead.

To offset potential dissatisfaction, patients and physicians alike may benefit from proactive conversations about established clinical guidelines and evidence that supports or negates next steps patients may wish to take. However, the data also suggests this approach may not be enough to satisfy patients who are convinced that they know best.



**95%**

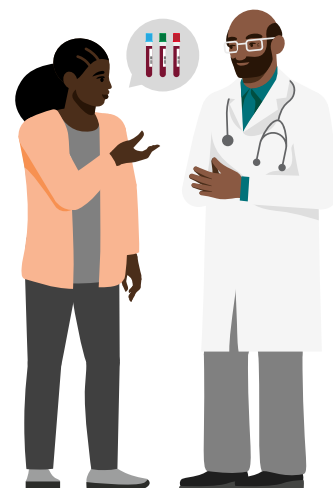
trust their providers to order the most appropriate tests

**87%** trust their doctor's guidance if they advise against a requested test

**13%** outright disagree

This evolving dynamic challenges providers to carefully navigate patient expectations while maintaining evidence-based care.

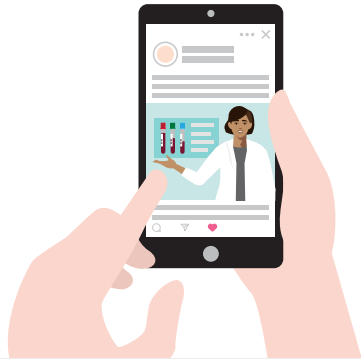
Doctors, meanwhile, have revealed how significantly patients are influencing their test ordering decisions: 84% agree they have ordered tests simply to satisfy a patient's request.<sup>6</sup>



To learn more about what's influencing physicians' test ordering decisions, see our supplemental report ***Decoding Doctors' Decisions: How System Friction and Patient Agency Affect Physicians—and What This Means for Lab Testing.***

# How is social media influencing patients' actions?

Access to health information online and, more specifically to social media content, is directly influencing patients' healthcare conversations with their providers.



**37%**

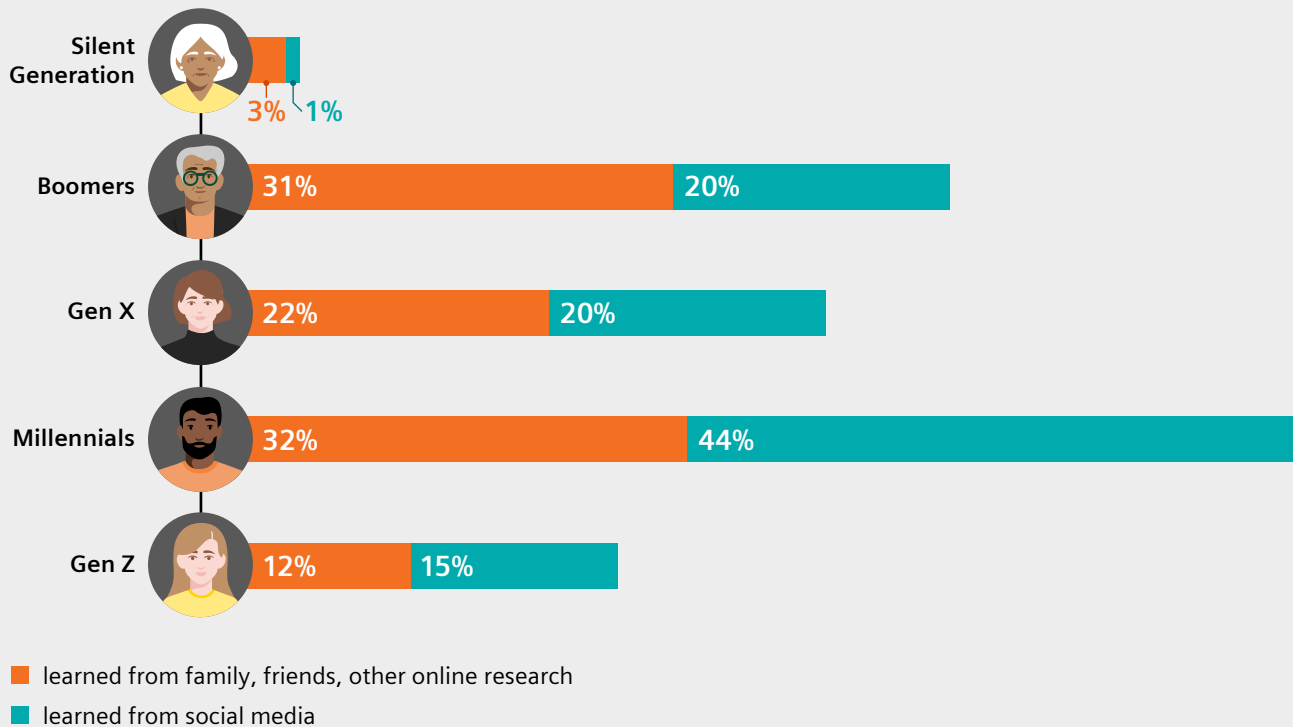
have requested a lab test based on health-related content they **learned through their own research**, such as from friends or family, online, or direct advertisements

**17%**

have asked for a lab test based on information **learned on social media platforms** such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, or Reddit

## Millennial patients request more tests than other generations, though Boomers are not far behind.

They also are the group most activated by test info learned from social media.



See Appendix Figure 3 for additional insights by generation.

# How might DIY healthcare unintentionally compromise care?

The data suggests “do-it-yourself healthcare” may be reshaping patient-physician transparency. In addition to patients not sharing test results with their healthcare provider, patients choose not to disclose other potentially important information.



**20%**

of patients indicated they **would not disclose to their doctor** if they took medical advice learned from social media

Such patients may not be aware that the supplements, vitamins, and dietary preferences they may think irrelevant or embarrassing to disclose could affect test results or inform how they are interpreted.

Doctors heavily rely on evidence-based clinical guidelines to inform which tests they order.<sup>6</sup> When questions arise about which tests would be best for their patients, they are supported by a network of medical laboratory professionals who specialize in understanding testing complexities largely obscured from public view.

Medical laboratory professionals validate and maintain more than 80,000 types of laboratory tests in use across U.S. laboratories to ensure accurate patient test results.<sup>7</sup> With around 338,000 laboratory professionals currently practicing, it is the equivalent of one laboratory scientist for every 1,000 Americans’ testing needs.<sup>8</sup>

Although the laboratory workforce is under pressure, the primary commitment of these professionals each shift is to uphold the quality controls that ensure patients receive test results they can trust.

These efforts, however, are invisible to a sizeable portion of the public:



**32%**

believe results from **self-administered tests are as accurate** as tests conducted at a doctor’s office or laboratory

Patients feel more empowered than ever, though their confidence in interpreting test results and navigating care decisions is not always backed by established clinical evidence.

Test results once solely interpreted by experienced clinicians with support from clinical laboratory professionals faces headwinds as patients’ confidence in their own interpretation capabilities increases. Also, as intermediary clinicians get involved who may interpret information independent of patients’ complete medical history or other clinically relevant information.

Though, as test options evolve and informed patients take a greater interest in testing, it also creates opportunities for laboratory professionals—who have primarily operated in the background—to take a more patient-facing role in healthcare.<sup>9</sup>



# How does the cost of testing affect patients' testing decisions and care?

Inadequate insurance coverage stresses U.S. patients' wallets and stymies earlier access to care.

Though 79% say they pursue doctor-recommended bloodwork, cost is among the top reasons why people dismiss their doctor's orders. Among uninsured individuals, it is the top reason.



## 29%

of respondents revealed they have **unpaid medical bills**, and more than half (52%) said their debt included **unpaid lab testing fees**

## Cost is a top reason why people dismiss their doctor's test orders.



Yet, compared with other diagnostic modalities, bloodwork is still prioritized.

**Patients are more likely to delay other types of care when cost is a factor—22% would delay imaging, whereas only 5% would delay bloodwork.**

## The Insurance Effect

While doctors aim to support their patients in avoiding unnecessary costs, 67% lack visibility into whether tests they want to order are covered by their patients' insurance. Of those with visibility, more than half say the cost of a test has led them to postpone tests they would have otherwise ordered.<sup>6</sup>

The data suggests insurance coverage strongly influences patients' decisions, too. Though 42% would opt for the test their doctor recommends, nearly as many (38%) would choose the insured test option instead—even if they understood it might be a less accurate option.

Cost uncertainty has consequences for patients:

- ▶ **Blood tests may not be ordered, or may be postponed if coverage is absent or vague.**
- ▶ **Earlier diagnosis or disease interventions may be delayed absent the information blood tests can help provide.**
- ▶ **Patient information more easily accessible through a blood test may be exchanged for insured procedures that could be riskier, less convenient, or more painful for patients—and demand more healthcare resources.**

More than 400 physicians unanimously agree that lab results help streamline how they use other healthcare resources, such as imaging and biopsy—underscoring that inadequate insurance coverage for lab testing can have a ripple effect on healthcare utilization and insurance providers, too.<sup>6</sup>

Inadequate insurance coverage of clinically validated lab tests, such as those used to help detect or predict disease progression earlier, stifles patient care from evolving. Meanwhile, patients are signaling they expect better.



# New expectations for patient testing are clear

Patients want predictive health insights. They insist on greater control over test ordering decisions, though they are relying more on information collected on their own. They aren't afraid to challenge the expertise of healthcare professionals who follow established, evidence-based guidelines.

Some patients are willing to pay out of pocket to appease their curiosity, while others still struggle to afford the basic tests they need to inform their care—though the value of test results justifies the potential financial burden they may incur.

Above all, in vitro diagnostics testing is a valued healthcare tool by patients and providers alike. It is prioritized by patients over other diagnostic modalities, and its wide accessibility and convenience affords patients favorable benefits along their care journeys.

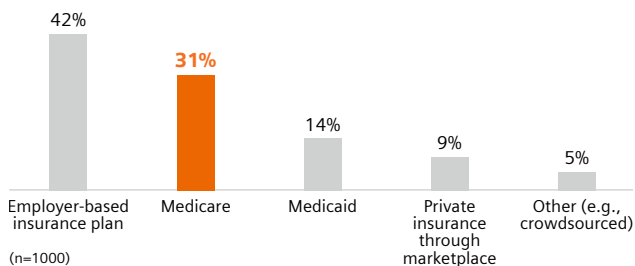


## The gap between patient expectations and testing realities

The survey data reveal patients want answers earlier, results on-demand, and more predictive health insights. Laboratories across the country, however, are bracing for a different reality: new payment cuts that challenge the long-term sustainability, affordability, and access of routine tests.<sup>10</sup>

More than 800 commonly used tests face up to 15% reimbursement cuts if bipartisan congressional action is not taken. Scheduled reimbursement cuts under the Protecting Access to Medicare Act (PAMA) have already led to payment cuts for 72% of tests used to screen, diagnose, monitor, and manage common diseases for patients.<sup>11</sup>

### Medicare is the second largest insurer among survey respondents.



These cuts have not led to lower laboratory testing costs for patients. Additional payment cuts will stifle revenue laboratories depend on—revenue that supports the innovative testing patients indicate they want. Laboratory professionals widely agree that lack of funding inhibits their ability to adopt new technology that enables new and faster patient testing.<sup>12</sup>

If the cuts continue and costs to offer these tests become unmanageable, community laboratories anticipate foregoing adoption of new tests and increasing the tests they send out to other labs, which can increase costs for patients and delay tests results.<sup>13</sup>

Congressional action with the Reforming and Enhancing Sustainable Updates to Laboratory Testing Services (RESULTS) Act is a well-supported effort to solidify the long-term viability of laboratory testing on which patients rely. It aims to provide payment stability, preserve Americans' access to the quality laboratory testing services clinical laboratory professionals provide, and protect the U.S. clinical laboratory infrastructure to allow for continued innovation in testing to advance personalized care patients desire.

More can be learned about the industry effort to prevent testing cuts [here](#).

**Did you know?** The looming reimbursement cuts are expected to affect routine diabetes, heart and metabolic disease, cancer, and infectious disease testing. Medicare spends more than \$130 billion annually, nearly a quarter of its spend, treating chronic kidney disease.<sup>14</sup> Yet the laboratory testing that catches it early—before dialysis, transplants, and end-stage renal failure—faces a reimbursement cut of 9%. But is it penny-wise and pound foolish? These tests have the potential to prevent an annual per patient cost of \$100,000 for dialysis.

# Appendix:

## Methodology and respondent insights

### Methodology

On behalf of Siemens Healthineers, a survey of 1,000 U.S. patients was conducted between June 6–12, 2025, to obtain patient viewpoints about the value of laboratory testing. Respondents qualified by having had laboratory testing done within the past two years; 90% of the respondents had bloodwork done within the year, from June 2024–June 2025.

The figures have been weighted and are representative of all U.S. adults (aged 18+). Data was weighted according to the dimensions of gender, age, race, education, and geography based on an ideal weighting from census data, or if not available, from industry accepted data.

The survey was collected on the YouGov Panels, where each member agreed to participate in online interviews and had received an email invitation with a link to the survey.

### Respondent insights

Figure 1. How frequently respondents get bloodwork done.

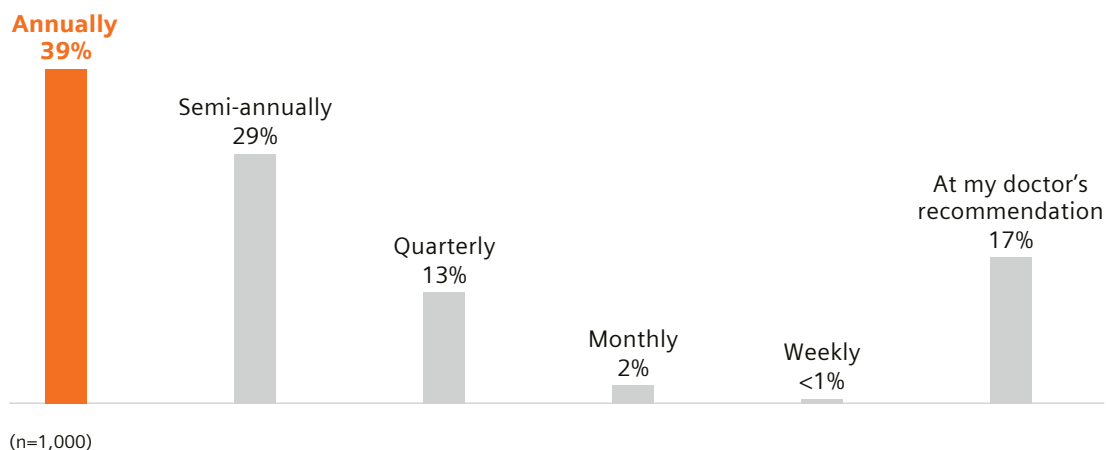
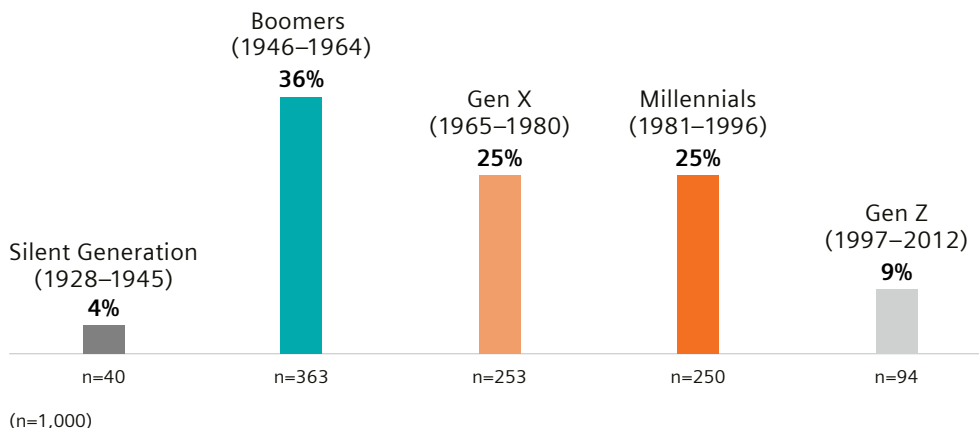
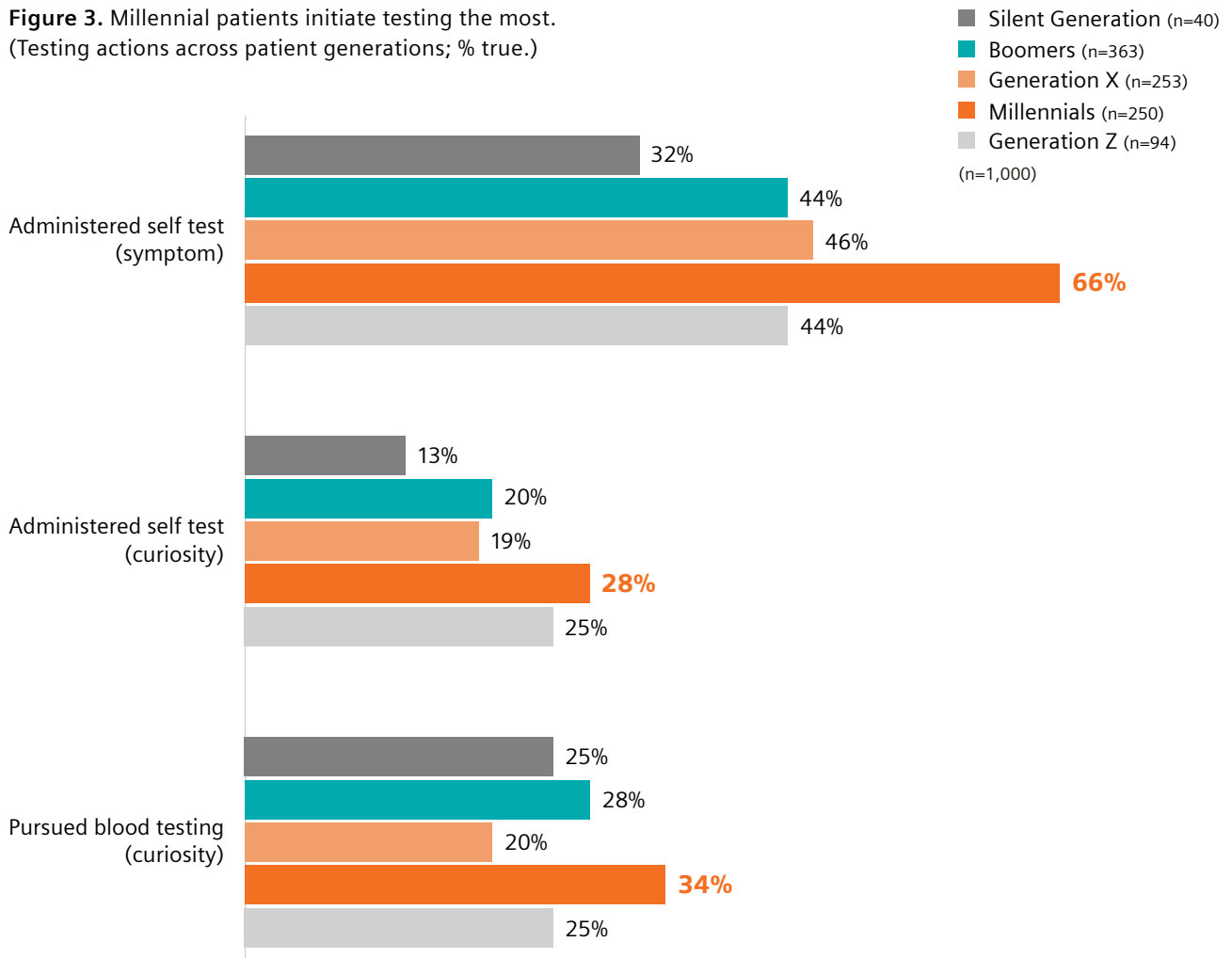


Figure 2. Respondent breakdown by generation.



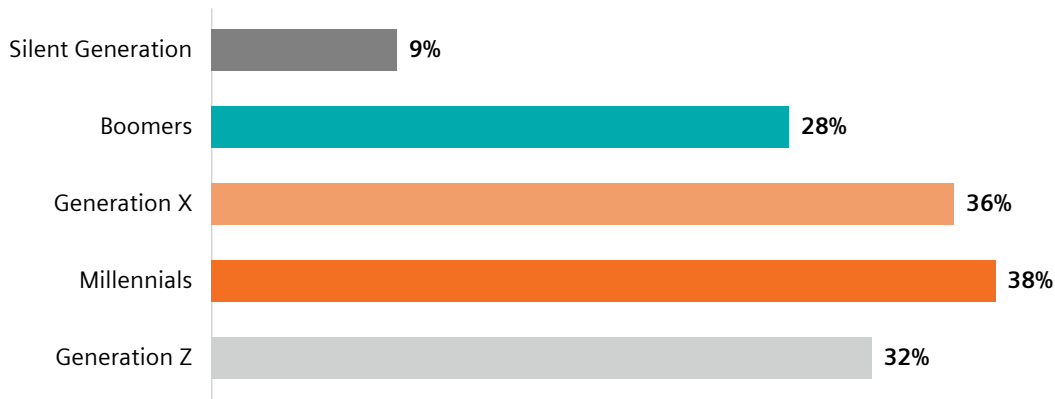
## Appendix: Methodology and respondent insights (continued)

**Figure 3.** Millennial patients initiate testing the most.  
(Testing actions across patient generations; % true.)

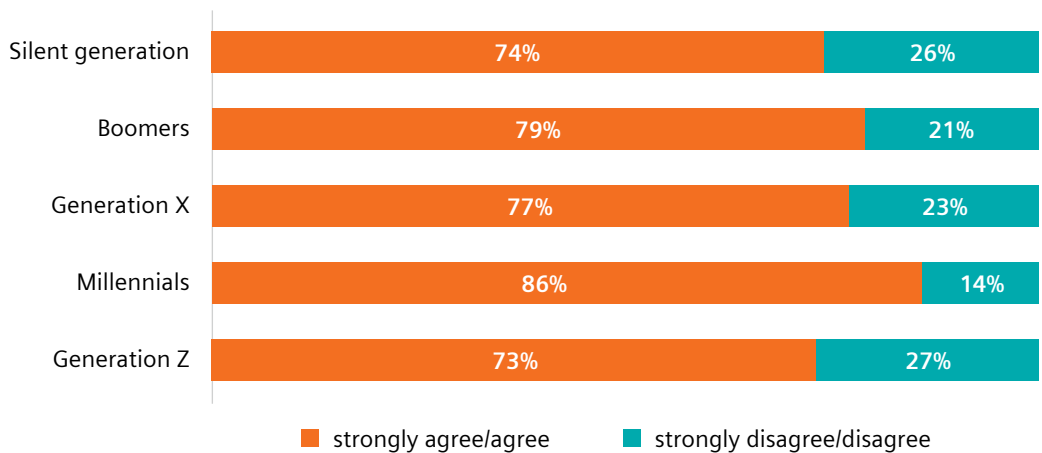


## Appendix: Methodology and respondent insights (continued)

**Figure 4.** Millennials' actions align with their belief that self-tests are as accurate as lab tests. (Belief across patient generations; % true.)



**Figure 5.** Millennials are most likely to disclose to their doctor if they took medical advice from social media. Gen Z is least likely. (Willingness to be transparent across generations.)



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Our portfolio, spanning in vitro and in vivo diagnostics to image-guided therapy and cancer care, is crucial for clinical decision-making and treatment pathways. With the unique combination of our strengths in patient twinning,\* precision therapy, as well as digital, data, and artificial intelligence (AI), we are well positioned to take on the greatest challenges in healthcare. We will continue to build on these strengths to help overcome the world's most threatening diseases, enable efficient operations, and expand access to care.

We are a team of more than 72,000 Healthineers in over 70 countries passionately pushing the boundaries of what is possible in healthcare to help improve the lives of people around the world.

*\*Personalization of diagnosis, therapy selection and monitoring, aftercare, and managing health.*

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