

# WOMEN'S HEALTH TRENDS

## Why Women Do Not Always See A Doctor

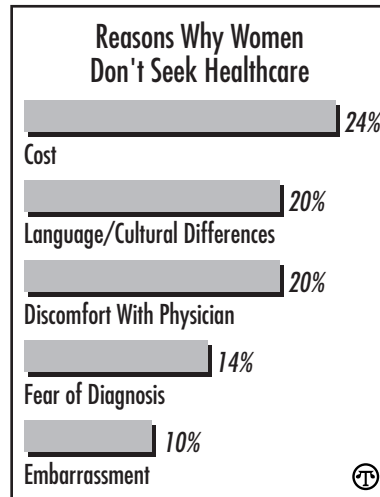
(NAPSA)—Learning more about why women do not always seek the care they need may help more women live healthier lives. Despite the fact that failure to seek medical care for gynecologic issues can pose serious health risks, many women are avoiding these important visits.

A recent survey of African American, Hispanic and Caucasian women released by the American Social Health Association (ASHA) found that over half of the women (55 percent) cited at least one reason that prevented them from seeking help from their doctor. Moreover, the survey revealed that despite differing ethnic backgrounds, women cited similar reasons for not seeking gynecologic health care.

Regardless of ethnicity, women claim that either cost (24 percent), language or cultural differences (20 percent) discomfort with physician (20 percent), fear of diagnosis (14 percent) or embarrassment (10 percent) interfere with their obtaining gynecologic care.

“These survey results are alarming considering women may be avoiding routine gynecologic exams due to barriers, which can lead to serious health consequences,” said Sharon Hillier, PhD, Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

When asked about vaginal yeast infections, a common gynecologic condition affecting women, 75 percent of those responding claimed they self-diagnosed and self-treated. The survey also revealed that 20 percent of women could not identify at least one typical symptom of a vaginal yeast infection.



**Women, regardless of their ethnic background, experience similar barriers to healthcare.**

Vaginal yeast infections can have similar symptoms to other vaginal infections, such as bacterial vaginosis and trichomoniasis. If not properly treated, these infections can lead to more serious conditions, including PID (pelvic inflammatory disease) and pregnancy complications.

“Barriers deterring women from their physicians, such as discomfort with physician, cost and embarrassment, can lead to serious long-term health problems,” stated Linda Alexander, executive director and CEO of ASHA.

It is important for women to visit a healthcare professional to properly diagnose whether the infection is indeed a vaginal yeast infection, and get treatment.

For more information, visit [www.ashastd.org](http://www.ashastd.org) or call 1-800-638-8255. For information about vaginal yeast infection treatments, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).