

New survey: 1 in 3 women have not talked to their doctor about heart health, the #1 killer of women

Star Jones, award winning television personality & women's heart health advocate, helps kick off heart health conversations this Mother's Day with the Medtronic 'Letter to My Mother' campaign

GALWAY, Ireland, May 7, 2025 [/PRNewswire/](#) -- A new Medtronic-sponsored survey of women ages 30-50 reveals a significant gap in awareness and discussion around heart health among women and their mother-figures. Despite cardiovascular disease being the [#1 killer of women in the U.S.](#), many women are still unaware of the risk and the importance of heart health.

The survey, endorsed by [WomenHeart](#) and conducted by Wakefield Research, found that nearly half of women (45%) were more likely to discuss sensitive topics such as politics, money, or relationships with their mother or grandmother before discussing family heart health history, despite the fact that as much as half of the risk for heart disease is hereditary.

For more than a century, heart disease has remained the leading cause of death in women, accounting for more deaths than all cancers combined. Yet, when it comes to serious heart concerns, women are up to 35% less likely to be treated with proven, minimally invasive solutions for heart valve failure than men, and women account for more than half (52%) of deaths caused by high blood pressure.¹ Additionally, women often experience heart attack symptoms differently, and heart disease disproportionately impacts women of color, with 43% of [Hispanic women](#) and 59% of [Black women](#) experiencing some form of cardiovascular disease.

The Medtronic *Letter to My Mother* campaign encourages women to make heart health a priority, starting with a conversation with their mother, or a woman in their life, about family history, risk factors, and the signs and symptoms of heart disease. The campaign, part of the company's ongoing commitment to leading and advancing clinical research for women's health, seeks to close the gap in awareness of heart disease and risks—particularly heart valve failure and high blood pressure—in women.

"The U.S. is at a tipping point when it comes to women's health, and heart health remains the deadliest concern of all," said Nina Goodheart, senior vice president and president, Structural Heart & Aortic, which is part of the Cardiovascular Portfolio at Medtronic. "At Medtronic, we're working relentlessly to ensure women receive personalized, evidence-based healthcare solutions, tailored to them. The launch of *Letter to My Mother* marks another step in our sustained commitment to improving health outcomes for all."

Results from the survey reveal a surprising disconnect between what women fear for their mothers or mother-figures as they age and the actual conversations happening around family health history:

- More than half of women (53%) worry that as their mothers age, they will ignore symptoms or fail to inform them when something is wrong.
- Yet, over half (56%) admit they have never discussed heart health with their mothers or other women in their family.
- For those with a family history of heart disease, only one-third (35%) asked their doctor to assess their heart risk.
- Only 44% of these same women actually talked about it with their mothers or mother-figures.

"As women, we are our own best advocates, but without the confidence, knowledge, or resources to discuss our health history, we are missing out on potential life-saving conversations," said Star Jones, attorney, award-winning television personality & longtime women's heart health advocate. "I come from a family with a long history of heart disease, yet this was rarely a topic we talked about. If only I had acknowledged my risk for heart disease earlier, I could've potentially addressed my concerns with my cardiologist sooner before it led to needing open-heart surgery. That is why I am speaking out now to get all women talking about this disease and how addressing symptoms could save their life – like it did for me."

The survey also revealed that personal heart health is often overlooked by women in the sandwich generation, the population of

women who bear the weight of making healthcare decisions for their children, parents, and family members. Almost all (94%) of women surveyed are responsible for making health-related decisions for loved ones, but over 60% of women find it hard to make their own health a priority.

"As physicians, we know heart health is not one size fits all. Women have a unique experience with heart disease and risk factors - like high blood pressure during pregnancy which may be the first sign of chronic high blood pressure persisting throughout their lifespan," said Dr. Raven Voora, hypertension specialist and nephrologist at UNC Health. "Too often, I've seen women present with risk factors or early signs of heart disease that they put on the backburner behind care for children and loved ones - or these signs and symptoms get brushed off as stress or anxiety. This survey shows us that patients need increased awareness and discussion surrounding heart health and to make sure they pay attention to their heart health."

This May, during Women's Health Month and timed to Mother's Day – Medtronic encourages people to take the pledge to talk to their mother or the women in their life about heart health today. For every pledge, Medtronic will make a donation to a cause that advances women's heart health.

Visit Alettermymother.com to take the pledge and learn more.

About the Medtronic Letter to My Mother Survey:

Medtronic engaged Wakefield Research to conduct a nationally representative survey to gain insights into consumer perceptions and awareness of heart disease in women aged 30 through 50, targeted to the "daughters" who are sandwiched between taking care of their health, their children and parents. The survey was deployed among 1,000 U.S. women, ages 30 to 50, with a living mother and a living child, between March 13th and March 17th, 2025, using an email invitation and an online survey.

Survey results are endorsed by WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease, the nation's leading voice for women living with or at risk of heart disease. WomenHeart is dedicated to promoting awareness, advocacy, and support for women with heart disease, empowering them to take charge of their heart health and improve outcomes.

About the Medtronic Letter to My Mother Campaign:

The Medtronic "Letter to My Mother" campaign aims to educate and close the gap in awareness of heart disease in women — the number one cause of death for more than a century. The campaign encourages people to start conversations with their mothers and loved ones about heart disease, including high blood pressure and heart valve failure, to better understand their family health history and risk factors. The campaign is part of the company's ongoing commitment to leading and advancing clinical research for women's health and was supported by the Medtronic Coronary & Renal Denervation and Structural Heart & Aortic businesses. To learn more about heart disease including signs, symptoms, treatment options and resources to start the conversation today, visit Alettermymother.com.

About Medtronic

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¹ Caoimhe T Rice, Sophie Barnett, Shea P O'Connell, Enoch Akowuah, Clare E Appleby, John B Chambers, Benoy N Shah, Daniel J Blackman - Impact of gender, ethnicity and social deprivation on access to surgical or transcatheter aortic valve replacement in aortic stenosis: a retrospective database study in England: Open Heart 2023;10:e002373.

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