

## Most Americans Lie to Their Doctors, Research Shows

**Do you always tell your doctor the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?** If you're like most Americans, you probably don't. Four out of five people withhold important information from their health care provider, according to a recent study. That's a problem because omitting key details about your health could actually harm your health.

### Why Lie?

There are a variety of reasons why patients leave out information. According to the study, some of the most common ones include:

- Not wanting to be judged or lectured
- Not wanting to hear how harmful a behavior is
- Feeling embarrassed to admit something
- Not wanting the doctor to think that you're a difficult patient
- Not wanting to take up more of the doctor's time

- Feeling like the information isn't relevant
- Not wanting the information to appear on your medical record
- Not wanting to make a difficult lifestyle change that the doctor might recommend

Withholding information can be a serious issue. In fact, researchers found that people who were sicker or had chronic medical conditions were actually more likely to keep information from their health care provider. This is troubling because physicians need as much information as possible in order to make safe and effective decisions about your health care.

### Working Together for Your Well-Being

Both physicians and patients play a role in making sure that patients disclose as much information as possible. After asking a question—especially about sensitive topics—providers should wait and give patients time to answer before moving on.

As a patient, you should find a provider you trust. The more you know your doctor is really listening, the more likely you'll share all the information that matters.

Sources include JAMA Network Open, National Institutes of Health and American Academy of Family Physicians.

