

# Study Reveals Women Are Far More Concerned About Physical Appearance and Weight Than Serious Diseases

**NEW YORK, N.Y. (May 21, 2008)**– Meredith Corporation (**NYSE: MDP**) and NBC Universal (**NYSE: GE**), two of the nation's leading media companies, today announced the second in a series of findings from the Meredith/NBC Universal "What do Women Want?"™ survey.

The below findings from the nationwide survey conducted among more than 3,000 women reveal key insights on the female psyche across topics including health and well-being:

- When it comes to health, women are more concerned about diet/weight (56%) and eating right (36%) than they are about cancer (23%), cardiovascular/heart health (20%), and diabetes (18%)
- Many women are skipping important medical examinations, including annual physicals and cancer screenings
  - o Less than two-thirds (59%) of all women get an annual physical, even lower among Gen Y women (44%).
  - o Nearly one-third of Boomer women are not getting their important annual mammograms, cholesterol checks or physicals.
  - o 62% of women regularly give themselves a breast self-examination, while only 14% of all women get a skin cancer screening at least once a year.
- Four in 10 women report that they are more than 20 pounds overweight
  - o Gen Y women are more likely than Gen X and Boomer women to say they are at their ideal weight (29% vs. 9%, 7% respectively).
  - o Relatively few (4%) overweight women say they would consider surgery as a weight reduction strategy; a substantial number say they would consider exercise (76%) and improving their diet (75%) to lose weight.
- Still, when it comes to achieving a healthy lifestyle, more women opt for simple strategies like "drinking more water" and "eating more fruits and vegetables" than more disciplined approaches like "exercising three times a week", "lowering calorie intake", "watching their sugar intake" and "using portion control"
- Not surprisingly, women are sensitive about their own weight, with 4 in 10 (40%) who say it's wrong for a man to tell a woman that she's overweight
  - o However, relatively fewer women think it's wrong for a woman to tell a man he's overweight (32%) or a parent to tell a child he or she is overweight (26%).
- Most women think the battle of the bulge starts at the schools at an early age; the majority of moms claim that while their child(ren) eat junk food, it's "not when I'm around"

## **DETAILED FINDINGS\*:**

*Top 10 Health Concerns (across all generations)*

1. Diet/weight control (56%)
2. Eating well/nutrition (36%)
3. Allergies (27%)
4. Aging process (26%)
5. Mental health (25%)
6. Arthritis (24%)
7. Cancer (23%)
8. Cardiovascular/heart health (20%)
9. Diabetes (18%)

## 10. Menopause (18%)

### Health & Wellness

#### **Medical check-ups:**

- Less than two-thirds (59%) of all women get an annual physical, while more than two-thirds get an annual blood pressure check-up (67%) and visit the dentist at least once a year (66%).
- Only 44% of Gen Y women get an annual physical, compared to 69% of Baby Boomer women.
- 62% of women regularly give themselves a breast self-examination, while only 14% of all women get a skin cancer screening at least once a year.
- Nearly one-third of Boomer women are not getting their important annual mammograms, cholesterol checks or physicals.

#### **Non-traditional approaches to health & wellness:**

- To improve health and well-being, some women have taken the following non-traditional approaches: natural herbs and supplements (26%), bought/adopted a pet (25%), meditation (11%), acupuncture (4%), visited a hypnotist (1%).

### What Women Want: To Look and Feel Good

#### **Dissatisfaction with physical appearance/energy levels:**

- While most women like who they are inside and are satisfied with their “identity and development as an individual” (68%), only 4 in 10 women say they are satisfied with their physical appearance (40%) and/or energy levels (37%).

#### **Professionals Women Would Want to Hire\***

1. Personal Trainer (47%)
2. Personal Chef (34%)
3. Financial Advisor (31%)
4. Live-In Housekeeper (31%)
5. Professional Masseuse (29%)
6. Nutritionist (28%)
7. Professional Organizer to de-clutter your living space or office (24%)
8. Stylist (19%)
9. Interior Decorator (15%)
10. Career Counselor (13%)

\*allowed up to 5 choices

#### **Women’s Lifestyles:**

- Most women don’t want to work too hard to achieve a healthy lifestyle, opting for simple solutions like drinking more water or eating more fruits and vegetables over the more disciplined approaches like exercising regularly, counting calories, and using portion control (see chart below)

#### **What Women Do to Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle\***

- Drink more water (80%)
- Eat more fruits and vegetables (70%)
- Read nutritional labels (49%)
- Avoid foods that are high in fat (47%)
- Make a conscious effort to lower calorie intake (44%)
- Watch my sugar intake (44%)
- Exercise at least three times a week (43%)

- Women with children are especially likely to say that “it is difficult for me to find time to take care of my physical appearance” (28% vs. 22% total women).

### The Obesity Epidemic

#### **Overweight Women:**

- The vast majority of American women (84%) feel they are overweight.
- 13% of women feel that they are the ideal weight, while 23% feel they are 21-50 pounds overweight and 16% report being more than 50 pounds overweight.
- Older women are more likely than younger women to report they are overweight and to join weight management programs

o More Gen Y women (29%) feel they are the ideal weight, compared to Gen X women (9%) and Baby Boomer women (7%).

o Gen X women (22%) and Baby Boomer women (20%) are more likely to get involved in weight management programs to improve their health and well-being than Gen Y women (14%).

o On the other hand, Gen Y women (24%) are more likely to do yoga or Pilates to improve their health and well-being than their Gen X (18%) and Boomer (8%) counterparts.

• Among women who feel they are overweight, exercise (76%) and improving diet (75%) are the top two strategies for weight reduction, while taking medications and/or dietary supplements (17%) and undergoing surgery (4%) are less popular methods.

#### **Childhood Obesity:**

• The majority of moms acknowledge that their children eat junk food however, most (72%) will tell you it's "not while I'm around"

o Only 11% of moms say their children eat healthy all the time while 17% of moms say their children eat too much junk food.

• Most women feel the battle against the obesity epidemic starts young, and in the schools with healthier choices for children (76%), mandated nutrition education starting at an early age (66%) and adequate funding of physical education programs (62%).

"While staying fit and trim definitely contributes to overall good health, it's only a piece of a proactively healthy lifestyle," says **Diane Salvatore, editor in chief, *Ladies' Home Journal***. "These findings should be a wakeup call to American women everywhere to make their yearly checkups without fail and make their own personal health a top priority."

"It is particularly important for marketers in the health and wellness category to have a clear understanding of women's behaviors, motivations and thoughts so that the messaging they create will resonate and have enhanced impact," said **Debbie Reichig, Senior Vice President, Market Development, NBC Universal**. "We are thrilled to be able to make this information available to them."

#### **About Meredith Corporation**

Meredith Corporation (NYSE:MDP: [www.meredith.com](http://www.meredith.com)) is a one of America's premier media and marketing companies. Meredith combines well-known national brands – including *Better Homes and Gardens, Parents, Ladies' Home Journal, Family Circle, American Baby, Fitness* and *More* – with local television brands in fast growing markets. Meredith is the industry leader in creating content in key consumer interest areas such as home, family, health and wellness, and self-development. The Company then uses multiple distribution platforms – including print, television, online, mobile and video – to give consumers content they desire and to deliver the messages of its marketing partners. Additionally, Meredith uses its many assets to create powerful custom marketing solutions for many of the nation's top brands and companies. The goals of these programs are to increase consumer loyalty and produce repeated consumer interaction. In the last two years, Meredith has significantly added to its capabilities in this area through the acquisition of cutting-edge companies in areas such as online, word-of-mouth and database marketing. Meredith employs approximately 3,000 people throughout the United States, including approximately 1,000 in Des Moines and 750 in New York City. The Company's 2007 annual revenues were \$1.6 billion.

#### **About NBC Universal**

NBC Universal is one of the world's leading media and entertainment companies in the development, production, and marketing of entertainment, news, and information to a global audience. Formed in May 2004 through the combining of NBC and Vivendi Universal Entertainment, NBC Universal owns and operates a valuable portfolio of news and entertainment networks, a premier motion picture company, significant television production operations, a leading television stations group, and world-renowned theme parks. NBC Universal is 80% owned by General Electric and 20% owned by Vivendi.

***\*Please credit all data to Meredith/NBC Universal "What do Women Want?" survey of 3,000 women***

Applied Research & Consulting conducted an online survey among 3,000\*\* women ages 18-64 from October 1 to October 12, 2007. The data was sample balanced to reflect the U.S. Census Bureau and has an overall margin of error or +/- 2.5% at the 95% confidence level. \*\* Some sections were administered to a split sample to accommodate the length of the survey.

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