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Survey: Most Americans use a portable device to monitor their heart, but they're missing a lifesaving step

What you should do with smartwatch data to prevent deadly heart events

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COLUMBUS, Ohio – Advances in technology have made it increasingly easier for people to self-monitor their heart health whether it's via a smart device on their wrist or finger or a blood pressure monitor. However, a new national survey commissioned by The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center found that while many Americans use a device to monitor their heart, few share that data with their doctor.

The survey of 1,008 Americans found nearly two-thirds use a device on a regular basis to monitor their heart health with the most popular being a smartwatch (32%), portable blood pressure machine (31%), fitness app (19%) and wearable fitness/movement tracker (13%). Of those who use a device, only 1 in 4 use that data to prompt a conversation about their heart health with their doctor.

"These self-monitoring devices are really helpful to patients and their healthcare providers because they can potentially catch things early. For example, if patients are monitoring their blood pressure at home and notice it's been going up over time, they may want to discuss it with their doctor sooner rather than waiting for their annual visit. Or they may capture some irregular heart rhythms on their devices, like atrial fibrillation, much sooner than would be diagnosed at the doctor's office," said Laxmi Mehta, MD, director of Preventative Cardiology and Women's Cardiovascular Health at the Ohio State Wexner Medical Center and Sarah Ross Soter Endowed Chair for Women's Cardiovascular Health Research.

Mehta said patients have increasingly been asking her about the pros and cons of self-monitoring health devices. One of those patients is Sue VanWassenhove, 78, of Upper Arlington, whose children got her a smartwatch to track her health after she fell a couple of times. VanWassenhove has sleep apnea, which affects her heart rate and breathing, and she keeps a close eye on what the device is capturing. When her smartwatch showed a pattern of her heart rate dropping, she set up an appointment with Mehta.

"A normal heart rate is between 60 to 100 beats per minute without exercise. Heart rates can vary due to heart conditions or a variety of non-heart related reasons such as infection, dehydration, anxiety or thyroid disorders. When someone's heart rate or rhythm seems different than usual, it's best for them to speak with their doctor," Mehta said.

When it comes to exercise, the maximum heart rate can be calculated by subtracting a person's age from 220. With moderate intensity exercise, the goal is to hit 50-75% of that number and 70-85% for vigorous exercise, Mehta said. The American Heart Association recommends 150 minutes of moderate intense aerobic exercise per week or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise per week for maintaining a healthy heart.

During an appointment with Mehta, VanWassenhove learned her smartwatch could do an EKG, which records the electrical signals in the heart, and she could send the results to Mehta through her electronic medical chart.

"Having a smartwatch is very empowering because I'm not being passive with my healthcare. I have some heart issues that need monitored, and it's important for me to talk to my cardiologist or primary care doctor about any health issues that show up on my watch," VanWassenhove said.

Survey Methodology

This study was conducted by SSRS on its Opinion Panel Omnibus platform. The SSRS Opinion Panel Omnibus is a national, twice-per-month, probability-based survey. Data collection was conducted from Dec. 16 – Dec. 18, 2024 among a sample of 1,008 respondents. The survey was conducted via web (n=978) and telephone (n=30) and administered in English. The margin of error for total respondents is +/-3.6 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. All SSRS Opinion Panel Omnibus data are weighted to represent the target population of U.S. adults ages 18 or older.

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Sue VanWassenhove, 78, is mindful about maintaining a healthy lifestyle. She says her smartwatch not only



Sue VanWassenhove, 78, uses a smartwatch to help maintain healthy habits and also to monitor her heart



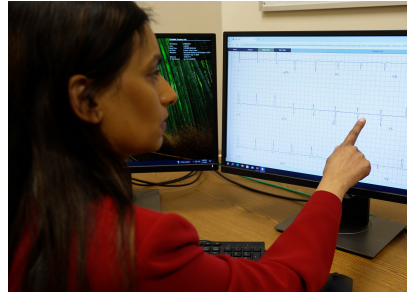
Your smart watch has a treasure trove of information to help manage your heart health, but a new

reminds her to do things like take more steps and drink more water, but also monitors things like her heart rate, giving her peace of mind that her heart condition is well managed.



Laxmi Mehta, MD, director of Preventative Cardiology at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, shows a patient how the functions on her smartwatch can monitor her heart health. Mehta says portable devices that allow patients to monitor their heart health at home have become a valuable tool to help manage heart conditions on an ongoing basis.

health. After being diagnosed with an arrhythmia, her cardiologist at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center showed her how to record an EKG on her watch and send it straight to her doctor's office via electronic medical records.



Cardiologist Laxmi Mehta, MD, reviews an EKG recorded on a patient's smartwatch and sent through electronic medical records. A survey by The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center finds that while most Americans use a portable device to monitor their heart health, few are sharing that data with their doctor, a critical step to determine if medical intervention is needed.

survey by The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center finds many are missing the critical step of sharing that data with their doctor.



Laxmi Mehta, MD, director of Preventative Cardiology and Women's Cardiovascular Health at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center.



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