

# Deferred-care statistics reinforce need for biometric screenings



Over the past year, adults in the U.S. have skipped trips to the doctor at startling rates. While many decided to delay preventive care until after the pandemic, others have missed care for ongoing health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease or even cancer.

**44%** of adults<sup>1</sup>

**40%** with **at least one** chronic condition<sup>2</sup>

**56.3%** with **both physical and mental** health conditions<sup>2</sup>

Many people may have wanted to go in for care, but doctor's offices were closed temporarily for nonessential appointments. Others likely had good intentions — thinking that staying out of the doctor's office would reduce their chances of contracting COVID-19 — but experts say that skipping regular health care could have consequences that far outweigh that potential risk. Even a single missed yearly health screening could delay someone's ability to identify a health condition early, when it's easier to treat. And missing regular appointments for a serious health condition can jeopardize someone's ability to manage it. Of people who deferred care, 29% say their health has already suffered.<sup>3</sup> And 40% think it will suffer.<sup>3</sup>



IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON REGULAR HEALTH CARE SCREENINGS:



of people who deferred care say that their health has already suffered<sup>3</sup>



think it will suffer<sup>3</sup>

## Now more than ever, biometric screenings are essential

Biometric screenings play an essential role in identifying health risks and helping people learn about lifestyle changes or medications they can use to lower their health risks. And with so many people having deferred their care, screenings are more essential than ever in the months ahead.

Participation in a biometric screening drives 16% higher identification of health risks<sup>4</sup> that lead to diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and hypertension. And screenings have been proved to drive action.

Participants in biometric screenings also visit their primary care physician more and use the emergency room less than people who don't get screenings.<sup>5</sup> Biometric screenings can be a catalyst for getting people to take control of their health care by offering a simple first step on their health care journey.

## New options meet desire for at-home health screenings

While many preventive care screenings — such as mammograms and cervical cancer screenings — can't be done at home, biometric screenings can. At a time when virtual visits have skyrocketed, at-home kits fit consumers' current, and potentially lasting, desire to get care from the comfort of home when possible. They simply order a screening kit, complete a quick finger stick and return the sample in a prepaid envelope. They can access their results online to better understand their risk for heart disease and diabetes.

If your company isn't currently promoting biometric screenings — or you don't offer an at-home kit option — Optum can help.

Contact Optum at [optum.com/business/contact](https://optum.com/business/contact).

People who participate in a screening are:



as likely to engage in **wellness coaching** programs<sup>6</sup>



as likely to **reduce their blood pressure** risk category<sup>7</sup>



as likely to **reduce their cholesterol** risk category<sup>7</sup>

1. Minemyer P. Willis Towers Watson: 44% of employees have deferred care due to COVID-19. [www.fiercehealthcare.com/payer/willis-towers-watson-44-employees-have-deferred-care-due-to-covid-19](https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/payer/willis-towers-watson-44-employees-have-deferred-care-due-to-covid-19). October 28, 2020. Accessed March 20, 2021.

2. Gonzalez D, et al. Delayed and forgone health care for nonelderly adults during the COVID-19 pandemic. [www.urban.org/research/publication/delayed-and-forgone-health-care-nonelderly-adults-during-covid-19-pandemic](https://www.urban.org/research/publication/delayed-and-forgone-health-care-nonelderly-adults-during-covid-19-pandemic). February 16, 2021. Accessed March 20, 2021.

3. Willis Towers Watson. Employees flock to virtual health care during pandemic, Willis Towers Watson employee survey finds. [www.willistowerswatson.com/en-US/News/2020/10/employees-flock-to-virtual-health-care-during-pandemic-willis-towers-watson-employee-survey-finds](https://www.willistowerswatson.com/en-US/News/2020/10/employees-flock-to-virtual-health-care-during-pandemic-willis-towers-watson-employee-survey-finds). October 28, 2020. Accessed March 20, 2021.

4. Steinfeld D., "Comparison of Members With & Without a Biometric Screening," UnitedHealthcare Healthcare Economics. January 10, 2018.

5. Biometric Screening Quasi-Experimental Value Study/Well-Being Product Analytic Team, 2019.

6. The Association Between Biometric Screening and Wellness Program Participation in 2018, Prevention Analytic Team, Optum Customer Performance Management, July 2019.

7. UnitedHealth Group Risk Reduction Study, 2015.



Optum® is a registered trademark of Optum, Inc. in the U.S. and other jurisdictions. All other brand or product names are the property of their respective owners. Because we are continuously improving our products and services, Optum reserves the right to change specifications without prior notice. Optum is an equal opportunity employer.