



How many  
Aussies  
diagnose their  
own symptoms  
with online  
research?



**An InstantScripts study**  
August 2022



## About the study

InstantScripts commissioned an independent survey of 1001 Aussies to gauge what proportion of the population are likely to diagnose and treat their own health symptoms using online research. Respondents were also asked to identify the reason they chose to diagnose themselves, from a list of seven, including lack of access to a doctor, trusting online research or being confident in their instincts about their personal health.

The survey respondents cover a geographical and population spread that is reflective of the Australian population.



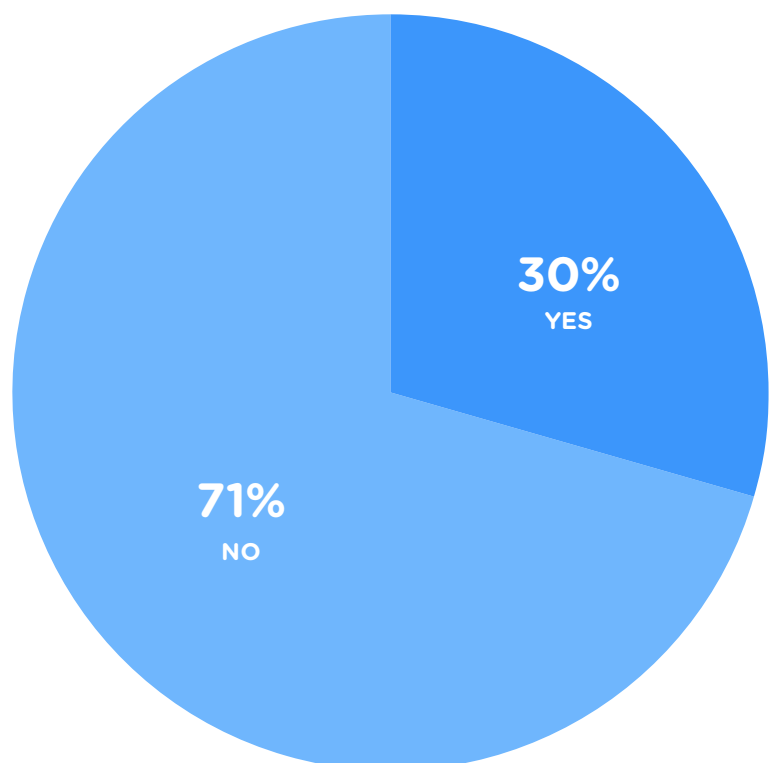
# Results

## What proportions of Australians are guilty of self-diagnosis?

Nearly a third (30 per cent) of respondents admitted they had used online research to diagnose a physical or mental health issue in the past.

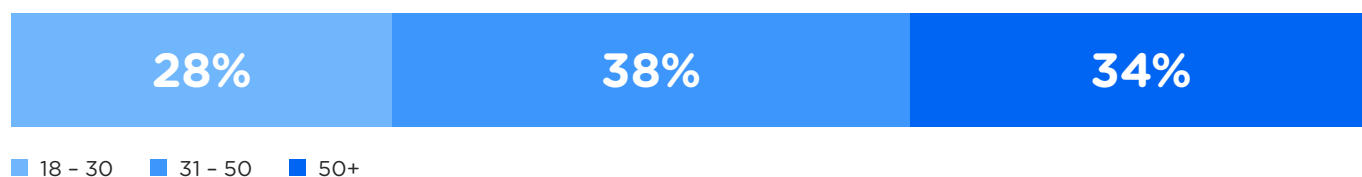
### HAVE YOU EVER CONDUCTED ONLINE RESEARCH TO DIAGNOSE A PERSONAL HEALTH ISSUE - PHYSICAL OR MENTAL?

- YES
- NO



Among respondents who have not self-diagnosed, 45 per cent were over 50, 34 per cent were aged 31-50 and 20 per cent were aged 18-30.

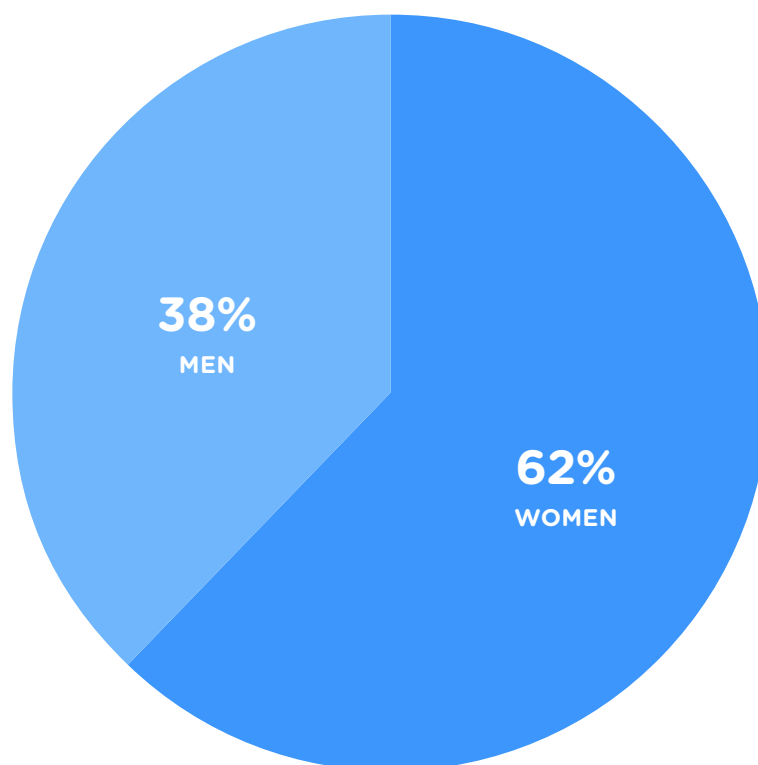
## AGE BREAKDOWN AMONG RESPONDENTS WHO SELF-DIAGNOSED



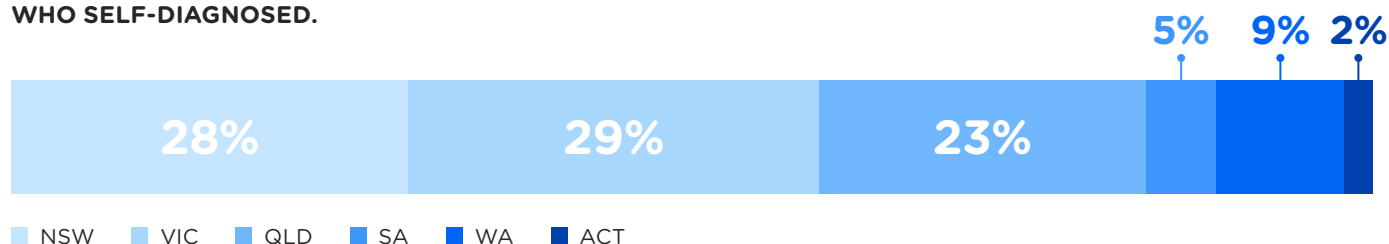
## GENDER BREAKDOWN AMONG THE RESPONDENTS WHO SELF-DIAGNOSED

■ WOMEN  
■ MEN

Among the respondents who self-diagnosed, a higher proportion (62 per cent) were female.



## STATE BREAKDOWN AMONG RESPONDENTS WHO SELF-DIAGNOSED.



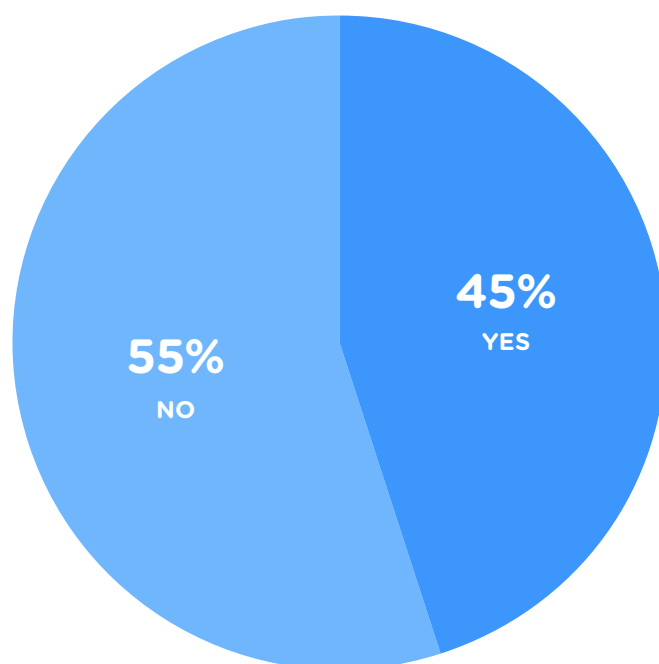
Among the respondents who have self-diagnosed, a higher proportion were located in Victoria and NSW, at 29 and 28 per cent respectively. Nine (9) per cent were in Western Australia, 5 per cent were in South Australia, and 2 per cent were in the ACT.

# What proportion of Australians have treated themselves for a health condition after self-diagnosing?

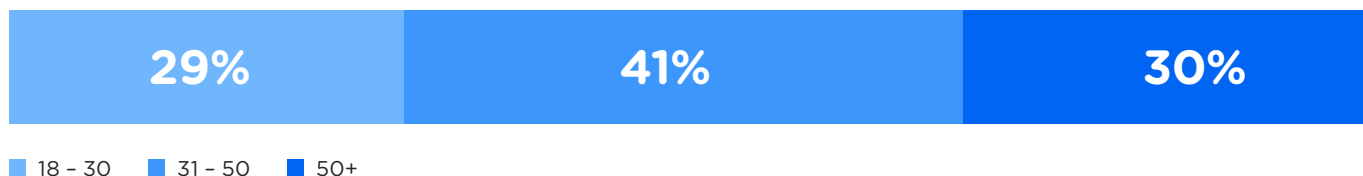
InstantScripts asked survey respondents who had self-diagnosed whether they had then treated their symptoms, including with over-the-counter medicines. Forty-five (45) per cent admitted they had.

## HAVE YOU EVER TREATED YOURSELF FOR A HEALTH CONDITION AFTER SELF-DIAGNOSING, FOR EXAMPLE, USING AN OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE?

- YES
- NO

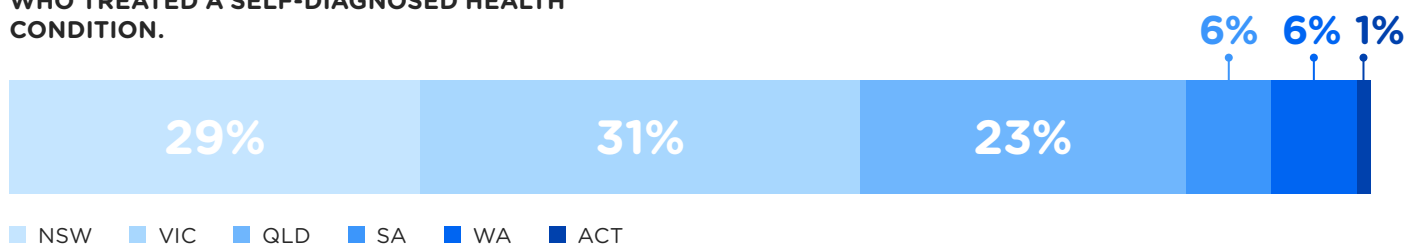


## AGE BREAKDOWN AMONG RESPONDENTS WHO TREATED A SELF-DIAGNOSED HEALTH CONDITION.



Among respondents who treated a self-diagnosed health condition, a slightly higher proportion (35 per cent) were aged under-50 and 30 per cent were over 50.

## STATE BREAKDOWN AMONG RESPONDENTS WHO TREATED A SELF-DIAGNOSED HEALTH CONDITION.



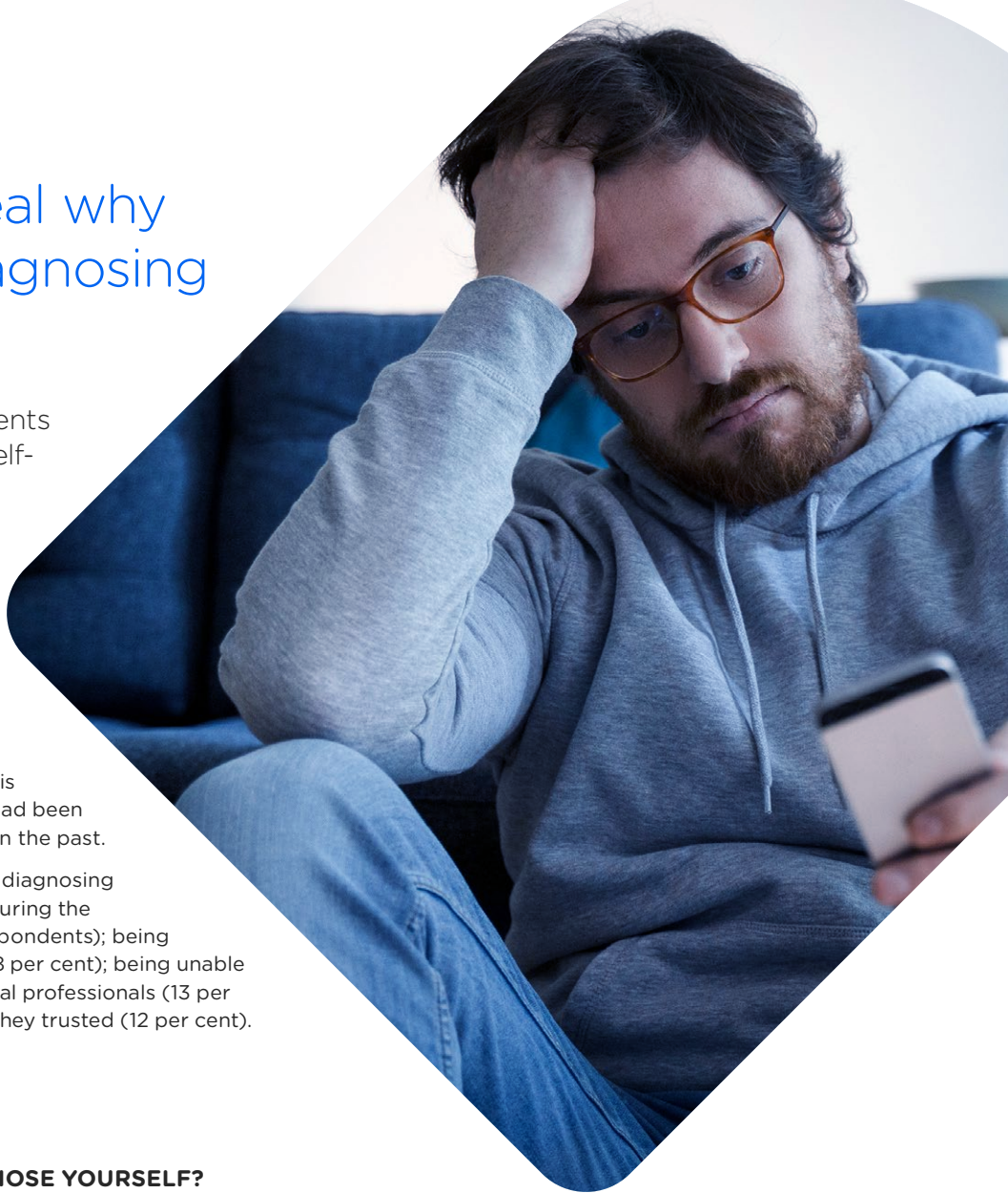
A higher proportion of those who self-treated were located in Victoria and NSW, at 31 and 29 per cent respectively. An equal 6 per cent were located in Western Australia and South Australia, and 1 per cent in the ACT.

# Australians reveal why they are self-diagnosing health issues

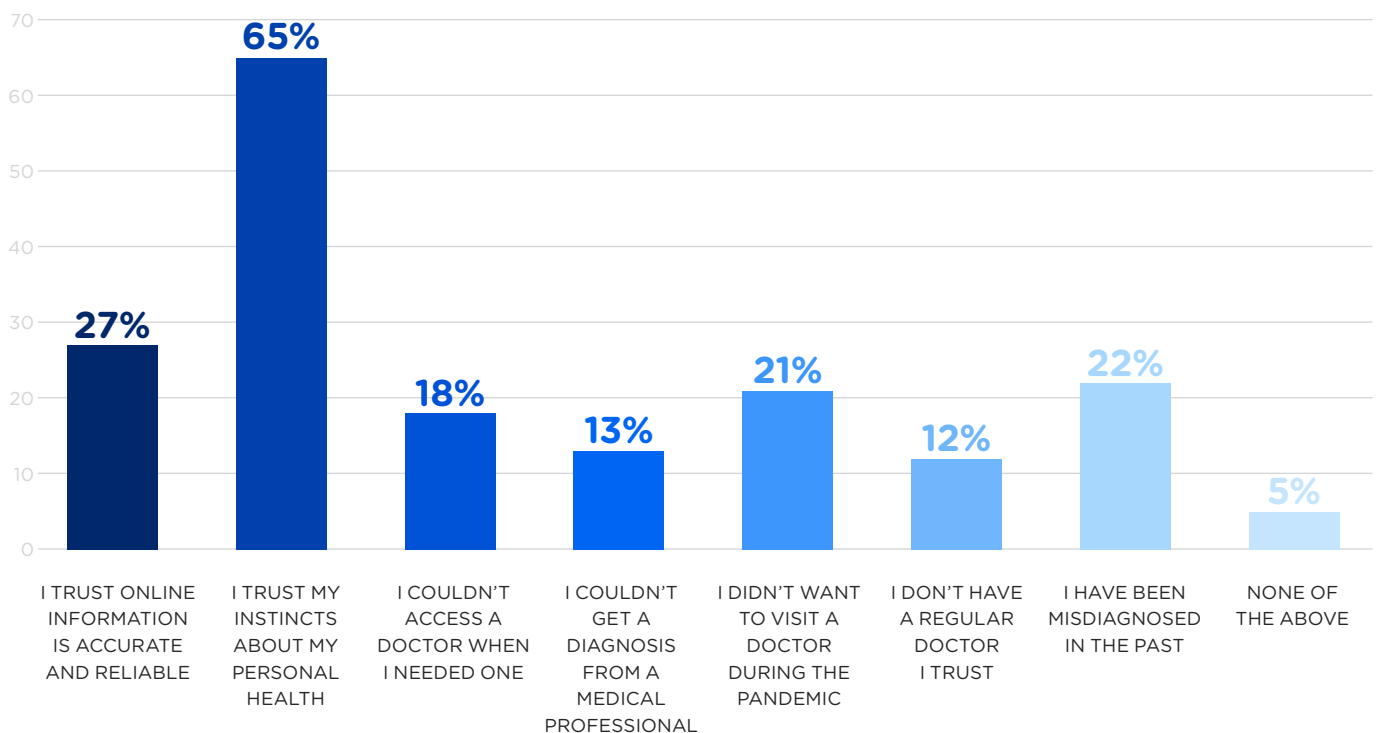
InstantScripts asked respondents to identify the reasons they self-diagnosed a health issue, from a list of seven choices.

They could select more than one reason. Nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) of respondents said they self-diagnosed because they trust their own instincts about their personal health, combined with online research, while 27 per cent said they trust the information found online is accurate and reliable, and 22 per cent had been misdiagnosed by a health professional in the past.

Other reasons behind respondents self-diagnosing included not wanting to visit a doctor during the pandemic (chosen by 21 per cent of respondents); being unable to access a doctor (chosen by 18 per cent); being unable to get a diagnosis from health or medical professionals (13 per cent); and not having a regular doctor they trusted (12 per cent).



## WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO DIAGNOSE YOURSELF?



Under-50s were three times more likely to self-diagnose because they trusted online information to be accurate and reliable: 43 per cent were under-50 chose this answer, compared with just 14 per cent were over 50.

The survey suggests that Australians are also less likely to have a regular doctor: 50 per cent of respondents who self-diagnosed because they don't have a regular doctor are under-30 – compared with 25 per cent of over-30s.



#### AGE BREAKDOWN AMONG RESPONDENTS WHO SELECTED A REASON FOR SELF-DIAGNOSING

Response	Age (%)		
	18-30	31-50	50+
I trust the information I find online is accurate and reliable	39	47	14
I trust my instincts about my personal health – and combined with some online research, I am confident I could find out the issue	33	39	28
I couldn't access a doctor when I needed one	29	42	29
I couldn't get a diagnosis from health or medical professionals	41	24	35
I did not want to visit a doctor during the pandemic	21	50	29
I don't have a regular doctor that I trust	50	25	25
I have been misdiagnosed by health professionals in the past	28	38	34
None of the above	0	43	57

More women respondents (60 per cent) said they self-diagnosed because they trusted their instincts about their personal health, compared with 40 per cent of male respondents who chose this answer.

Conversely, among those who said they self-diagnosed because they were unable to get a diagnosis from a health or medical professional, 59 per cent were men and 35 per cent were women.

GENDER BREAKDOWN AMONG RESPONDENTS WHO SELECTED A REASON FOR SELF-DIAGNOSING		
Response	Gender (%)	
	Men	Women
I trust the information I find online is accurate and reliable	50	47
I trust my instincts about my personal health – and combined with some online research, I am confident I could find out the issue	40	60
I couldn't access a doctor when I needed one	42	58
I couldn't get a diagnosis from health or medical professionals	59	35
I did not want to visit a doctor during the pandemic	54	46
I don't have a regular doctor that I trust	44	50
I have been misdiagnosed by health professionals in the past	45	52
None of the above	71	29

It seems more Victorians than residents in other States have been previously misdiagnosed: 41 per cent are in Victoria, compared with 28 per cent in Queensland, 24 per cent in NSW and 7 per cent in South Australia. Among those who self-diagnosed because they couldn't get a diagnosis from a doctor, 53 per cent are in Victoria, compared with 35 per cent in Queensland and 6 per in Western Australia.

STATE BREAKDOWN AMONG RESPONDENTS WHO SELECTED A REASON FOR SELF-DIAGNOSING						
Response	State (%)					
	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	ACT
I trust the information I find online is accurate and reliable	33	31	28	0	3	0
I trust my instincts about my personal health – and combined with some online research, I am confident I could find out the issue	26	29	24	9	7	0
I couldn't access a doctor when I needed one	33	21	29	4	4	0
I couldn't get a diagnosis from health or medical professionals	0	53	35	0	6	0
I did not want to visit a doctor during the pandemic	36	36	21	4	4	0
I don't have a regular doctor that I trust	19	38	13	19	13	0
I have been misdiagnosed by health professionals in the past	24	41	28	7	0	0
None of the above	29	14	29	0	14	14





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