

### Consumer survey – women’s leg health

From January to March 2007 Antistax conducted a survey of 4,000 women from Germany, France, Great Britain and Mexico to gain insights into how women feel about their legs, how leg conditions impact their daily life and what they do to counter leg issues. 1,000 women responded from each country with some interesting findings...





#### Global highlights

- Leg problems are very common, with leg pain very often or often experienced by 24% of the women who were surveyed.
- 25% of the women most concerned with their legs felt the condition impacted on their daily life.
- Women seem to have a ‘laissez faire’ attitude towards their leg problems: They mostly put their legs up when they hurt (29% of sufferers).
- But also 25% of women suffering from leg issues stated they engaged in exercises and some opted for a treatment (12%) to help alleviate the symptoms and even decrease their chances of experiencing the problem again.

**First of all the women were asked to rate how often they suffered from a variety of different types of leg problems, ranging from ‘very often’, ‘often’, ‘rarely’ and ‘never’**

Interestingly the three most common ailments that women ‘very often’ or ‘often’ suffered across all countries were tired legs (28%), achy legs (24%) and heavy legs with 21% suffering.





The fact that an average 30% of women in Europe suffer from everyday leg problems suggests that today’s on-the-go lifestyle is putting more and more pressure on women’s legs. With more time spent commuting to work and sitting or standing on the job, less time is being spent on exercise. This combined with not eating properly (takeaway meals, too much fatty food, sweets etc.) can have a detrimental impact on overall leg health.

				
Very often or often suffer from tired legs	22%	36%	24%	30%
Very often or often suffer from achy legs	17%	16%	22%	29%
Very often or often suffer from heavy legs	18%	30%	13%	22%

**The women were next asked which treatments they used and how often they used them for their leg complaints, from a scale of ‘regularly’, ‘now and then’ or ‘never’. The following responses are all options that the women selected ‘regularly’ from the scale:**

When it comes to treating symptoms associated with leg complaints the majority of women put their legs up (29%) regularly. One quarter of women also took part in some kind of sport or exercise (25%), demonstrating that they intuitively know that staying active is best for the health of their legs.

Only 13% of women took some form of food supplement or medication, despite the availability of some very effective natural over the counter treatments. And a further 11% applied cream or gel externally to relieve symptoms. Due to invasive and aesthetic reasons, the least used treatments were surgery (2%) followed by the wearing of compression/support stockings (6%).





Women regularly...				
Put legs up	29%	24%	22%	34%
Take part in sport/exercise	25%	26%	24%	30%
Take a food supplement	14%	7%	15%	22%
Take oral medication	12%	17%	12%	12%
Apply medication externally	11%	10%	6%	14%
Have a massage	11%	9%	5%	20%
Have cold water treatment	8%	14%	Less than 1%	5%
Wear compression/support stockings	6%	6%	4%	7%
Undergo an operation/surgery	2%	2%	2%	1%

**Next women were asked whom they normally ask for advice on leg problems**

Not surprisingly, the doctor was the first port of call for women in all countries (68%). In addition to consulting a doctor, German women were the most likely to seek advice from a pharmacist (13%).

Outside of medical expertise, 14% of women sought practical advice from family and friends and a further 16% said they did not consult anyone at all with quite a variance between the countries.

Interestingly, despite the fact that nearly half of women (48%) use the internet to source health related information, less than 1% consulted the World Wide Web for information about leg health.

				
Consult a doctor	71%	73%	65%	63%
Talk to family/friends/relatives	15%	7%	7%	27%
Don't consult with anyone	15%	17%	19%	14%
Consult a pharmacist	13%	6%	4%	2%
Talk to a physiotherapist	7%	4%	2%	1%
Talk to a chiropodist	7%	1%	1%	1%
Look on the internet	1%	Less than 1%	1%	Less than 1%
Talk to a beautician	1%	Less than 1%	Less than 1%	1%





When it comes to leg health related concerns, it is clear that women value expert opinion and input from professionals with experience in the areas of leg health. With the launch of the world's first online global leg health resource - 'The Antistax Leg Health Center', which aims to provide women with an additional source of information offering the latest guidance on legs, common conditions, options for prevention and treatment and the importance of looking after legs.

**In addition to the questions about leg issues, countermeasure and advice, those women taking their leg problems more seriously were then asked their attitudes on legs with a series of questions ranging from how they feel about their legs, what types of leg issues they typically experience, how they deal with leg complaints and what types of treatments they turn to, to help manage symptoms day to day. The women were asked how much they 'agreed' or 'disagreed' based on a series of statements. The following are the overall results and specific breakdowns by country.**

*a) My leg problems will get worse as I get older, so I have to act now*





On average 31% of women across Germany, France, Great Britain and Mexico 'totally agreed' that their leg problems would get worse as they got older so they would have to act now.

Compared to the other countries, Mexican women were the most proactive with leg health and recognized the importance of looking after their legs now for the future.

	Germany 	France 	Great Britain 	Mexico 
Totally agree	18%	32%	19%	56%





*b) If my legs do not feel well, I don't feel well altogether*

One quarter (25%) of women 'totally agreed' that their leg health affected their overall health and feeling of well-being. Highlighting just how much a woman's overall health is affected by the condition of her legs.

				
Totally agree	27%	11%	13%	48%





*c) I'd rather speak to my doctor before I start self-medicating my leg problems.*

Nearly half (46%) of women 'totally agreed' that they would rather speak with their doctor before self-medicating their leg problems, supporting the importance of healthcare professional advice. This is understandable as leg issues can have many different causes and symptoms and women will therefore have many questions around their leg health.

				
Totally agree	42%	48%	31%	62%





*d) I have accepted my leg problems as part of my daily life*

Only 16% of women 'totally agreed' to accept leg problems as part of daily life. Reinforcing the fact that the majority of women do not want to put up with their leg problems, or let them influence their daily activities.

				
Totally agree	16%	14%	16%	26%

*e) In order to heal my leg problems, I have to deal with the causes rather than just fight the symptoms*

35% of women 'totally agreed' with the above statement, demonstrating a majority of women recognise the importance of overall leg health as opposed to just treating the problems. Based on earlier responses, it's not surprising that Mexican women also stated that they would rather treat the source of their leg problems not just fight the symptoms in contrast to Great Britain where only 22% shared this view.

				
Totally agree	34%	31%	22%	53%

Based on these statements it becomes clear that for women who are most concerned with their leg issues, the state of their legs has a big impact on how active they are. These women do not want to let their leg problems have an influence on their daily life and understand that it is necessary to act now on the causes rather than just fight the symptoms.

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The Antistax Leg Health Center wants to give women advice and guidance on what they can do to deal with their leg problems to prevent, relieve or treat them and thus be able to actively enjoy life to the full.