

**Jennifer Cummings**  
585.214.7720  
jcummings@harrisinteractive.com

## New Year's Resolutions: Easier to Make than to Keep

*New survey shows U.S. adults struggle with their resolutions to lose weight, get more sleep and stop smoking*

A new Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Poll shows that while many U.S. adults who made health-related New Year's resolutions for 2005 did not meet their goals, it apparently did not deter them from making resolutions this year. Almost half (48%) of all U.S. adults say they made at least one New Year's resolution for 2006, up from 41 percent in 2005. The poll also shows that women are more likely than men to have made New Year's resolutions for 2005 (46% vs. 36%) and 2006 (52% vs. 43%).

Below are the results of the online survey of 2,243 U.S. adults conducted by Harris Interactive between Jan. 9 and 11, 2006 for the Wall Street Journal Online's Health Industry Edition.

Other interesting findings from the poll include:

- The most common 2005 New Year's resolutions appear to have been made for the benefit of one's physical fitness. One-quarter of adults made resolutions to exercise more frequently (26%), lose weight (25%) and eat a healthier diet or less food (24%). Fewer adults made resolutions to get more sleep (11%), stop smoking (6%), participate in stress-relief activities (5%), take medications as prescribed (4%) and consume less alcohol (3%).
- Some resolutions proved to be harder than others to achieve. While half of those who resolved to take their medications as prescribed (52%) and to eat healthier or less food (50%) were successful, only a quarter (24%) of those who resolved to stop smoking were successful, and only about a third (32%) of those who vowed to get more sleep did so.
- While women may be more likely than men to make New Year's resolutions, men as a whole are more likely to say they were successful with their 2005 resolutions. Men are more likely than women to say that they were successful in taking their medications as prescribed (59% vs. 48%), eating a healthier diet or less food (55% vs. 46%), exercising more frequently (47% vs. 40%), participating in stress-relief activities (54% vs. 37%), and getting more sleep (36% vs. 28%).

# Health-Care Poll

**TABLE 1**  
**New Year's Resolutions for 2005**

"Did you make any New Year's resolutions last year (to be accomplished in 2005)?"

Base: All adults

	Gender		
	All Adults	Males	Females
	n=2,243	n=1,039	n=1,204
	%	%	%
<b>Made a New Year's Resolution for 2005 (NET)</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>46</b>
Exercise more frequently	26	23	29
Lose weight	25	18	32
Eat a healthier diet or eat less food	24	20	28
Get more sleep	11	11	11
Stop smoking	6	6	6
Participate in stress-relief activities such as yoga or meditation	5	3	7
Take my medications as prescribed by my doctor	4	4	5
Consume less alcohol	3	3	4
Other	4	4	3
I did not make any New Year's resolutions for 2005.	59	64	54

Note: Multiple-response question.

**TABLE 2**  
**Success with 2005 New Year's Resolutions**

"Which resolutions for 2005 would you say you succeeded in?"

Base: Made a particular New Year's resolution for 2005 (variable base)

	Gender		
	Total	Males	Females
	%	%	%
Take my medications as prescribed by my doctor	52	59	48
Eat a healthier diet or eat less food	50	55	46
Exercise more frequently	43	47	40
Participate in stress-relief activities such as yoga or meditation	42	54	37
Consume less alcohol	42	42	41
Lose weight	36	36	36
Get more sleep	32	36	28
Stop smoking	24	27	22
Other	68	80	53
None	32	27	36

Note: Multiple-response question.

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**TABLE 3**

**New Year's Resolutions for 2006**

"Which New Year's resolutions, if any, have you made for 2006?"

Base: All adults

	Gender		
	All Adults	Males	Females
	n=2,243	n=1,039	n=1,204
	%	%	%
<b>Made a New Year's Resolution for 2006 (NET)</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>52</b>
Exercise more frequently	30	28	32
Lose weight	29	22	35
Eat a healthier diet or eat less food	29	24	33
Get more sleep	15	13	17
Stop smoking	6	7	6
Participate in stress-relief activities such as yoga or meditation	6	4	8
Take my medications as prescribed by my doctor	5	4	5
Consume less alcohol	4	4	3
Other	7	6	8
I have not made any New Year's resolutions for 2006.	52	57	48

Note: Multiple-response question.

Downloadable PDFs of Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Polls are posted at [http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters\\_wsj.asp](http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters_wsj.asp).

**Methodology**

Harris Interactive conducted this online survey within the United States between Jan. 9 and 11, 2006 among a national cross section of 2,243 adults, ages 18 years and over. Figures for age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, income and region were weighted where necessary to align with population proportions. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

In theory, with probability samples of this size, one could say with 95 percent certainty that the overall results have a sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points of what they would be if the entire U.S. adult population had been polled with complete accuracy. Sampling error for the sub-samples listed in the tables is higher and varies. Unfortunately, there are several other possible sources of error in polls or surveys that are probably more serious than theoretical calculations of sampling error. This includes refusals to be interviewed (nonresponse), question wording and question order, and weighting. It is impossible to quantify the errors that may result from these factors. This online sample is not a probability sample.

*These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.*

# Health-Care Poll

## About the Survey

The Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Poll is an exclusive poll that is published in the award-winning Health Industry Edition of The Wall Street Journal Online at [www.wsj.com/health](http://www.wsj.com/health).

## About The Wall Street Journal Online

The Wall Street Journal Online at [WSJ.com](http://WSJ.com), published by Dow Jones & Company (NYSE: DJ; [www.dowjones.com](http://www.dowjones.com)), is the largest paid subscription news site on the Web. Launched in 1996, the Online Journal continues to attract quality subscribers that are at the top of their industries, with 764,000 subscribers world-wide as of Q3, 2005.

The Online Journal provides in-depth business news and financial information 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with insight and analysis, including breaking business and technology news and analysis from around the world. It draws on the Dow Jones network of more than 1,800 business and financial news staff—the largest network of business and financial journalists in the world. The Online Journal also features exclusive content, including interactive graphics on business and world news, and online-only columns about the automotive industry, technology, personal finance and more.

The Online Journal offers three industry-specific verticals: the award-winning Health, Media & Marketing and now Law. Health offers authoritative analysis, breaking news and commentary from top industry journalists. Media & Marketing is designed for professionals in the advertising, marketing, entertainment and media industries. Law is designed to provide law firms and attorneys timely information on events and trends important to the legal market. Subscribers to all also get access to the full content of the Online Journal.

In 2005, the Online Journal was awarded a Codie Award for Best Online News Service for the second consecutive year, and its Health Industry Edition was awarded Best Online Science or Technology Service for the third consecutive year. In 2004, the Online Journal received an Eppy Award for Best Internet Business Service over 1 million monthly visitors.

The Wall Street Journal Online network includes [CareerJournal.com](http://CareerJournal.com), [OpinionJournal.com](http://OpinionJournal.com), [StartupJournal.com](http://StartupJournal.com), [RealEstateJournal.com](http://RealEstateJournal.com) and [CollegeJournal.com](http://CollegeJournal.com).

## About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive Inc. ([www.harrisinteractive.com](http://www.harrisinteractive.com)), based in Rochester, New York, is the 13th largest and the fastest-growing market research firm in the world, most widely known for *The Harris Poll* and for its pioneering leadership in the online market research industry. Long recognized by its clients for delivering insights that enable confident business decisions, the Company blends the science of innovative research with the art of strategic consulting to deliver knowledge that leads to measurable and enduring value.

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Media inquiries, contact:

Jennifer Cummings 585.214.7720

[jcummings@harrisinteractive.com](mailto:jcumings@harrisinteractive.com)