

# Reader's Digest

## EUROPE HEALTH SURVEY 2008

### **1 out of every 4 consumers takes into account the manufacturer's reputation before buying their remedies**

*Although the recommendation of a doctor remains the most important influence on consumers' purchase of remedies and drugs, the reputation of pharmaceutical companies is increasingly coming under scrutiny*

In every country more people (+32%) are taking into consideration the reputation of the manufacturer when purchasing medicines or remedies for everyday ailments. Although currently ranked at No 9 across Europe, reputation is increasingly being evaluated, especially in France where its importance has grown from 10% to 28% (+180%) and Switzerland from 15% to 21%. It's in Finland where a pharmaceutical company's reputation has the greatest influence (42% agree).

These findings are highlighted in a recent consumer study conducted by Reader's Digest in 11 European countries\*. Over 20,000 adults participated in this survey focussed exclusively on health. The aim of the research was to capture people's opinions and understand more about who, and what, they trust on issues relating to their own and their family's wellbeing. It measures their attitudes towards advertising and the media, the actions they take to maintain their health and what influences their purchase of OTC remedies.

### **The importance of packaging and labelling of health products is increasing**

Since 2006 the greatest change has been in the influence that product packaging and labelling has on purchase, an increase of 55% (from 11% to 17%). This is highest in Finland where 37% of people say it influences their choice of product, more than 3 times as many people as before. The influence has doubled in Belgium and France, whereas in the Czech Republic and UK there's been no change.

***"We need to understand what is important to our readers in the fast changing health environment. It also helps advertisers' make better decisions in how they communicate"*** said Gavin Murray Regional Advertising Director Europe at Reader's Digest.

**London 1st October 2008**

**ENDS**

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## Notes to editors:

- Europe Health 2008 was conducted across 11 countries in Central, Eastern and Western Europe. To enable comparison it followed the same structure as the 2006 survey
- This consumer survey focuses on how people view their general health and wellbeing and the sources of information they use and trust
- It identifies the illnesses and ailments people suffer in each country and the different ways they treat these ailments
- Results enable comparison by country, and over time, of adults' perceived value of the many different sources of healthcare information
- For the first time it highlights their attitudes towards travelling abroad for medical treatment and purchase via the internet
- Respondents were drawn from the Reader's Digest subscriber database of more than 3.5 million households across Europe. Sample selection and results were weighted to reflect the broad population profiles of each of the participating countries
- A total of 20,357 questionnaires in 10 languages (including English) were analysed
- Fieldwork was carried out during June/July and August 2008 by post and on-line

**Table 1**

## Top 10

### Sources of influence on consumers' purchase of medicines and remedies

Rank	Average agreement 10 countries*(exc. Russia):	2008	2006	Diff
1	Recommendations of a doctor	84%	77%	9%
2	Previous use of the product	76%	69%	10%
3	Recommendations of the pharmacist	71%	59%	20%
4	Previously used the product on prescription	62%	55%	13%
5	Quality of the ingredients	50%	46%	9%
6	Price	41%	39%	5%
7	Well known brand	33%	28%	18%
8	Recommendations of friends/relatives	33%	30%	10%
9	Reputation of the manufacturer	25%	19%	32%
10	Product packaging and labelling	17%	11%	55%

\*NB although these questions were asked in Russia the phrasing was slightly different and therefore not comparable with other countries or the 2006 survey

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**Table 2**

**The reputation of the manufacturer influences my choice of remedy**

Reputation of the manufacturer	2008	2006	Difference
<b>10 country average*</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>32%</b>
Belgium	11%	8%	38%
Czech Republic	33%	26%	27%
Finland	42%	31%	35%
France	28%	10%	180%
Germany	20%	16%	25%
Netherlands	12%	9%	33%
Poland	27%	27%	0%
Portugal	26%	21%	24%
Russia*	NA	23%	NA
Switzerland	21%	15%	40%
UK	31%	27%	15%

\*NB although this question was asked in Russia the phrasing was slightly different and therefore not comparable with other countries or the 2006 survey

**Table 3**

**Product packaging and labelling influences my purchase of medicines and remedies**

Product packaging and labelling	2008	2006	Difference
<b>10 country average*</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>55%</b>
Belgium	12%	6%	100%
Czech Republic	14%	14%	0%
Finland	37%	11%	236%
France	20%	10%	100%
Germany	15%	16%	-6%
Netherlands	10%	9%	11%
Poland	11%	8%	38%
Portugal	17%	12%	42%
Russia*	NA	8%	NA
Switzerland	23%	16%	44%
UK	11%	11%	0%

\*NB although this question were asked in Russia the phrasing was slightly different and therefore not comparable with other countries or the 2006 survey

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