



The Caregiver Confidence Report

The real-world impact of conflicting health information on caregivers

About the study

Today's caregivers have access to more health information than ever before. Medical websites, patient portals, social media platforms, influencers, online communities and AI tools can all provide answers in seconds.

To better understand how caregivers navigate children's health information, Akron Children's surveyed 1,002 caregivers nationwide. The findings reveal a complex reality: Caregivers continue to place their greatest trust in healthcare professionals, but many are struggling to navigate conflicting information and determine which sources to believe.

The result is growing uncertainty for families and, in some cases, changes in healthcare decisions.

"I get overwhelmed easily and anxious about finding out the right thing to do."

— Survey Participant



Caregivers are making decisions in an era of conflicting information

Conflicting children's health information is pervasive, and caregivers encounter it across a wide range of sources. Sixty-one percent search online for children's health information at least monthly.

71%

of caregivers believe there is more conflicting medical information today than ever before.

37%

encounter conflicting health information at least weekly without actively looking for it.

Top online sources include health information websites (53%), patient portals (48%), hospital or health system websites (41%), social media (41%) and AI chatbots (37%).

The volume of available information gives caregivers unprecedented access to answers, but it also exposes them to a growing number of competing viewpoints.

"I just want to do what's right for my children. I do so much research my head spins."

— Survey Participant

Conflicting information is undermining confidence

As caregivers encounter competing viewpoints, many report feeling uncertain about whom to trust and how to make the best decisions for their children. For pediatric healthcare professionals, confidence matters. Parents' observations and instincts play an important role in recognizing changes in a child's health and informing care decisions. The survey suggests conflicting health information may be making some caregivers less confident in their decisions.

63%

worry about making the wrong healthcare decision.

61%

say it is difficult to know which medical information to trust.

54%

say conflicting information causes them to second-guess their instincts.

Healthy
Info,

Healthy
Kids

Healthy Info, Healthy Kids is Akron Children's commitment to helping families navigate children's health information with confidence. Through evidence-based content, expert perspectives and practical guidance, the initiative helps caregivers cut through confusion, understand complex health topics and make informed decisions for their children.

To learn more, visit akronchildrens.org/HealthyInfoHealthyKids.

"Families are navigating more children's health information than ever before. Healthy Info, Healthy Kids was created to help caregivers find clear, reliable answers to the questions they're already asking so they can make informed decisions with confidence."

— Shefali Mahesh, MD,
pediatrician in chief at Akron Children's

Your questions,
answered.

For some families, confusion changes decisions

The effects of conflicting information extend beyond uncertainty.

27%

say they have made a medical or health decision for their child that they later questioned or regretted because of conflicting information.

20%

report delaying healthcare decisions when faced with conflicting information.

17%

say they have changed their healthcare approach altogether.

Among those who changed their approach:

55%

sought a second opinion.

27%

delayed vaccinations.

32%

switched pediatricians or primary care doctors.

26%

delayed healthcare treatments.

29%

declined or questioned a recommended treatment.

26%

chose a holistic or alternative approach.

Trust remains rooted in pediatricians and healthcare professionals

Despite the growing number of information sources available, caregivers continue to place their greatest trust in healthcare professionals.

What caregivers want most is straightforward:

- Information that is clear and easy to understand (90%)
- Information backed by medical expertise and research (87%)
- Practical guidance they can act on (87%)

The survey also found that caregivers value healthcare sources that communicate with clarity, empathy and a reassuring tone, suggesting that how information is delivered matters alongside the information itself.

90%

trust pediatricians
and primary care providers.

87%

trust nurses.

84%

trust specialists.

83%

trust hospitals and health
systems.

The role of trusted health leaders

Caregivers are not looking for more information. They are looking for trusted guidance.

Nearly 8 in 10 caregivers (79%) believe children's hospitals should play a leading role in helping families navigate conflicting health information. Additionally, 74% say they would trust an organization more if it consistently addressed conflicting medical information and competing viewpoints.

Survey methodology

The findings in *The Caregiver Confidence Report* are based on a national online survey conducted April 15-27, 2026. The survey included 1,002 respondents and has a confidence level of 95% with a margin of error of +/- 3 percentage points.

Respondents were U.S.-based caregivers age 18 and older who play a role in making healthcare decisions for one or more children under age 18. To avoid surveying current Akron Children's patients and families, respondents from Ohio were excluded from participation.