

American Moms Are Under Pressure: Their Finances, The Future, The Housework And 'Being a Mom' Found to Be Their Top Sources of Stress



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New York, NY – Two-thirds (67%) of American moms say they are at least “somewhat” stressed, including 14% who say they are “very” stressed, according to ***Growing Pains: The Stresses of Being an American Mom***, a new online survey of 1,000 moms ages 18+ conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs on behalf of the Clinton Foundation.

Moms most likely to report that they are at least “somewhat” stressed:

- are single (78% as compared to 64% for moms that are married/cohabiting);
- have a household income below \$50,000 (73% as compared to 63% for moms with a household income of \$50,000 or over);
- have children that live away from home at for at least part of a normal month (72% as compared to 65% of moms whose children are home full-time); and
- do not have a college degree (70% as compared 63% of moms with a college degree).

Overall stress levels are fairly consistent for moms across regions, for working and stay-at-home-moms, and moms with different aged and gendered children.

Top Sources of Stress

Moms’ top five sources of stress (from a prompted list of twenty potential stressors) are:

- Managing their money/finances (regarded as at least “somewhat” stressful by 73%);
- Thinking about their children's future (72%);
- Keeping on top of the housework (71%);
- Thinking about their own future (69%); and
- Being a mom (69%).

More moms say that ‘Being a mom’ is at least somewhat stressful (69% of all moms and 70% of working moms) than working is (64% of working moms).

Moms reporting that they find ‘Being a mom’ stressful is fairly consistent across demographic groups with the only differentiators being the age and gender of their children:

- 73% of moms with little kids (3 to 5 year olds) find being a mom at least “somewhat” stressful compared to 63% of moms with early teens (13 to 15 year olds);
- 62% of moms with teen girls find being a mom at least “somewhat” stressful compared to 70% of moms with preteen girls and 71% of moms with preteen boys.



Mom stress levels peak between 6am and 8am (mentioned by 18% of moms as the most stressful part of the past 24 hours) and then again between 4pm and 7pm (mentioned by 26% of moms). More specifically, 5pm is identified as the most stressful time of the day by the most moms (6%).

When asked what stresses them out the most about their children, moms are most likely to say their children's behavior and/or attitude (mentioned by 33%). Other top child-related stressors include concern for their children's current and future wellbeing (20%) and issues with their children's schooling/education (17%).

Top stressors are different for moms of preteens and teens: moms of preteens (and no teens) are most stressed out by their children's behavior and attitude (mentioned by 37%) whereas moms of teens (and no preteens) are most stressed out by their children's schooling/education (28%) and their children's current and future wellbeing (26%).

Impact of Pursuing Good Health, Rest and Relaxation

From a list of ten potentially healthy and/or relaxing pastimes or behaviors, spending time alone is regarded as at least "somewhat" relaxing by the most moms (81%). Indeed, more than half of moms (59%) find being alone "very" relaxing. Trouble is, nearly two-thirds (64%) report that the act of finding time for themselves is stressful.

More than half of moms also struggle with getting enough sleep (with 63% finding it at least 'somewhat' stressful); keeping to a healthy diet (62%); finding time to exercise (57%); and finding time for their husband/partner (56%).

After spending time alone, spending time with husbands/partners (regarded as at least "somewhat" relaxing by 72%), friends (69%) and children (67%) also rank as relaxing. More moms say that they find the winter holidays (including Christmas and Thanksgiving) stressful than relaxing (47% vs. 35%).

Unhealthy Behaviors

Moms were presented with a list of behaviors that are regarded as a cause and/or effect of an unhealthy stress level.

Half of moms (51%) say they spend too much time in front of a screen either spending time online (36% of all moms) and/or watching TV (29%). Just under half of moms (46%) say they spend too much time medicating or self-medicating by comfort eating (34% of all moms); smoking (13%); drinking alcohol (5%); and/or taking doctor prescribed medication to alleviate stress/anxiety (4%). A third of moms (36%) say they spend too much time in conflict situations either yelling (28% of all moms) and/or arguing (18%).



Moms who feel “very” stressed are significantly more likely than other moms to report over-indulging in a range of unhealthy behaviors:

- 43% of “very” stressed moms say they yell too much compared to 28% of all moms;
- 41% of “very” stressed moms say they comfort eat too much compared to 34% of all moms;
- 38% of “very” stressed moms say they watch too much TV compared to 29% of all moms;
- 35% of “very” stressed moms say they worry too much about what other people think of them compared to 23% of all moms;
- 35% of “very” stressed moms say they argue too much compared to 18% of all moms;
- 26% of “very” stressed moms say they smoke too much compared to 13% of all moms;
- 13% of “very” stressed moms say they take too much doctor prescribed medication to alleviate stress/anxiety compared to 4% of all moms.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted on behalf the Clinton Foundation between April 23 and May 8, 2014. For the survey, a national sample of 1,001 moms aged 18 and older with biological, adopted, or step children 17 years or younger (who all live, for at least part of a normal month, at the same address) from Ipsos’ U.S. online panel was interviewed online. Moms with children 18 years or older were excluded. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample’s composition reflects that of the U.S. adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of 1,001 and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points 19 times out of 20 of what the results would have been had the entire adult population of adults aged 18 and older in the United States had been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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