

Third of Brits reveal they have ‘unusual’ poo

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Despite identifying potential issues, almost two thirds of nation wouldn't seek medical advice

Press Release

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More than a third of UK adults have ‘unusual’ poo, with many choosing not to seek medical attention through fear and embarrassment, new research has revealed.

As many as 34% of individuals across the UK explained that they have ‘unusual’ poo, whilst as many as 7% admitted that they are not sure what normal is, according to data from not-for-profit healthcare provider, Benenden Health.

Despite millions believing their toilet habits are unusual, only 60% of UK adults would speak to a doctor about consistent problems with their poo, raising concerns that embarrassment and a lack of awareness could be leading to potentially serious medical conditions being ignored.

The survey of 2,000 adults across the UK also found women to be more aware of the warning signs in our poo than men, with only 63% of men believing blood in your stool to be a sign of unusual poo compared to 80% of women and almost one in ten (8%) males believing there to be no signs of unusual poo at all.

As a result of its findings, Benenden Health is calling on the nation to keep an eye on their toilet habits and not be afraid to seek medical advice should they find any irregularities.

The call comes as part of the mutual's ‘Time for a check in’ campaign, launched last year in partnership with Channel 4.

Having spoken in the campaign, television presenter AJ Odudu, said: “As Brits, our default setting is to keep things to ourselves and when it comes to going to the loo, that is definitely something we feel is our own business. However, there's nothing to be embarrassed about and if you do notice anything that doesn't seem quite right, stop being so British about it and get it checked out!”

Cheryl Lythgoe, Matron at Benenden Health, added: “The reality is that our toilet habits can give us a good indication of our overall health and as such, we should pay close attention to them.

“If you do experience something that doesn't seem quite right – this could be a change in the colour, shape, consistency or smell of your poo, finding blood in your stool or a change in the frequency of your toilet habits that lasts for two weeks or more – then please do get it checked out by a professional. The chances are it won't be anything serious, but for peace of mind and to get suitable treatment for any issues, it's really important to leave fear and embarrassment at the door and go get some medical advice.”

Benenden Health is on a mission to get everybody talking about and checking in with their health more. Through a Benenden Health membership, individuals can join 840,000+ others who are already checking in with their health through access to physical and mental health services, including 24/7 GP and Mental Health helpline, quick access to diagnosis and treatment and a whole lot more.

For more information about Benenden Health, go to: www.benenden.co.uk/time-for-a-check-in/.

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Notes to editors

The research was conducted by Censuswide, with 2,002 adults in UK between 7.12.2022 – 9.12.2022.

Through their 'Time for a check in' campaign, Benenden Health and Channel 4 are on a mission to get everybody talking about and checking in with their health more, with the ultimate aim of improving the nation's health.

With a Benenden Health membership, individuals can join 840,000+ other members who are already checking in with their health, with access to a GP 24/7, getting back on their feet with Physiotherapy, and taking the time to have that much needed conversation with a dedicated 24/7 Mental Health Helpline.

Benenden Health is a not-for-profit organisation, founded in 1905 with the purpose of people joining together to help pay for medical care. It is one of the UK's longest serving and most respected mutual healthcare societies, offering an affordable alternative to health insurance to more than 840,000 members. Further data from the survey is available on request.