



International
Microbiota
Observatory

4TH EDITION - 2026

Vaginal microbiota: how healthcare professionals can help turn awareness into practical health habits

Vaginal microbiota is becoming more familiar — but still not fully understood

Awareness is growing, but precise knowledge is not keeping pace

56% of women
are aware of the vaginal microbiota
(+2 points vs 2025)



But only
1 woman out of 4
know exactly what it is
(23%, -1 point vs 2025)

Some key facts are well identified...



69% of women
are aware that
antibiotics can alter
the vaginal microbiota
(-3 points vs 2025)



64% of women
are aware that vaginal
microbiota acts as a barrier,
protecting from pathogenic
microorganisms
(-2 points vs 2025)



64% of women
are aware that each
woman's vaginal
microbiota is unique
(-2 points vs 2025)

...but important blind spots remain



50% of women
know that smoking affects
the vaginal microbiota
(-5 points vs 2025)



45% of women
know that the gut microbiota
influences the vaginal microbiota
(same as 2025)

Vaginal microbiota-supportive behaviors: Partial uptake; harmful practices persist

Some protective habits are well-adopted...

74% of women
wear cotton underwear almost daily

69% of women
do not use deodorant or a hygiene spray on intimate areas

...but some harmful practices are still going on



47% of women
do not use
regularly soap-free
cleansing solution



44% of women
take vaginal
douches

Women want answers about their vaginal microbiota — but too few receive practical advice

Healthcare professional guidance remains too limited



40%
of women

have received explanation about the good behaviors to adopt to maintain a good balance of the vaginal microbiota
(-2 points vs 2025)



47%
of women

have received guidance on the appropriate way to clean intimate areas

Yet the demand for information is very high



86%
of women

would like to receive more information from their healthcare professionals about the importance of vaginal microbiota and its impact on health
(+1 point vs 2025)

A generational gap: younger women are better informed than older women

31% of 25-34 yo women

16% of over 60s women



Know exactly what the vaginal microbiota is

vs

23%
among all women

46% of 25-34 yo women

25% of over 60s women



Have been informed about the roles and functions of the vaginal microbiota

vs

36%
among all women

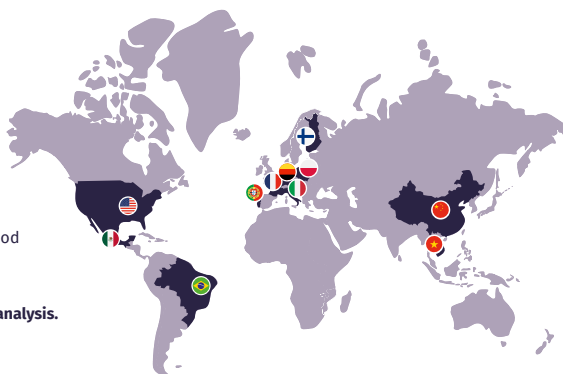
Methodology:

7,500 individuals were surveyed online February 3rd to March 13th, 2026 in 11 countries: USA, Brazil, Mexico, France, Portugal, Germany, Italy, China, Poland, Finland, Vietnam. Within this sample, 3,872 women were interviewed.

Representative samples by country are ensured by the quota method applied to the respondent's gender, age, region and occupation.

Trends are reported versus 2025 for comparable questions. However, newly introduced questions this year prevent evolution analysis.

BMI-26-30



11
countries

7 500
respondents

3 872
women interviewed

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