Methodology

This analysis examines what health and wellness influencers promote to their audiences on social media. It is based on an analysis of 204,545 Instagram, TikTok or YouTube posts that contain promotional language, published by 5,830 influencers from Feb. 1 to April 30, 2026. Posts with recommendations represent 38% of the 535,512 posts published by 6,334 influencers in our broader analysis of the topics these influencers discuss.

Survey data in this analysis comes from the American Trends Panel (ATP), Pew Research Center's nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. It includes data from ATP Wave 173, conducted June 9-15, 2025.

Refer to the methodology of our first report on health and wellness influencers for more information about the survey methodology, including sampling, weighting and response rates.

Health and wellness influencers post analysis

In this analysis, **health and wellness influencers** are defined as people (not organizations or brands) who regularly post health and wellness information on Instagram, TikTok or YouTube. To be included in this analysis, they must have at least 100,000 followers on one of those three sites, primarily discuss this content in English, address a U.S. audience, and have published posts related to health and wellness during the study period. These influencers were first identified in our initial study of health and wellness influencers. Refer to the methodology of the first report for more information about how the influencer sample was constructed.

Furthermore, the posts analyzed here are a subset of those collected for our report that dive deeper into the topics in the content that these influencers are posting. Posts were identified as containing promotional language using a large language model-assisted classification process described in the methodology of that report. Our measurement of promotions was designed to be broad to capture the wide range of promotions – with varying levels of disclosure – that are found in social media posts. In our analysis, "promotion" includes not only posts that explicitly mention a sponsorship or brand partnership but also any posts that contain a suggestion to buy a product or subscribe to a service. For each post flagged as promotions, the LLM also extracted the snippet of text in which the product, service or other offer was mentioned. Refer to that report's methodology for details on how posts were collected by platform, classification of content topics, and how certain posts are flagged to contain promotional language.

Product type analysis

After identifying the posts with promotional language, we analyzed each snippet to learn what these influencers were recommending to their audience. Each snippet was batch classified by GPT-5.4 Mini into one or more of 14 product types, which we grouped into five broad categories:

- **Informational:** Instructional guides, other content
- **Physical products:** Supplements, personal care, apparel and accessories, wellness devices, food and drink, medication
- **Services:** Direct services/coaching, medical, complementary medicine, medical spas and wellness treatments
- **Events and communities**
- **Other**

Detailed definitions and examples of each type, along with the other categories we measured, are available in the product type classification codebook prompt. (For more information, go to Appendix A.)

The product type labels were not mutually exclusive. For example, a snippet promoting one-on-one coaching program and a workout guide was labelled as both direct coaching and instructional content. As a result, the combined shares across categories do not sum to 100%.

Types were assigned based on what was offered, not the health topic it relates to. For example, a meal plan for people taking weight loss medication was labeled as instructional, not medication. Treatment and services were classified by who administers them and how they are marketed. For example, a telehealth service marketed as medical care was labelled as medical, while one marketed as wellness, longevity or aesthetics was labeled as a medical spa and wellness treatments.

Other categories

We also identified two marketing strategies commonly used by influencers.

Affiliate, sponsorship or discount code. A snippet was flagged when it suggested a commercial relationship with a brand, such as through discount codes, affiliate links, sponsorship or partnership. General references to favorites, must-haves or “link in bio” language were not flagged.

Free resources. A snippet was flagged when it offered a free resource, free trial or free introductory call to attract sign-ups, such as free guide, webinar, challenge or discovery call. Free shipping or free gifts with purchase were not flagged.

Unclassified Posts

Of posts with recommendations, 6,448 were labelled as "unclear" because the snippet did not contain enough information to determine what was being promoted. Another 13 posts could not be classified because of errors in the classification process.

These 6,461 posts were not assigned a product type and are not counted in any product type category; however, they are included in the data as part of the denominator.

Inter-rater reliability

To check the validity of the product type definitions, two members of the research team independently labeled a sample of 500 snippets from our dataset. Coders assigned product types and the two marketing flags described above. The sample was built in two stages. The coders first labeled a random sample of 200 snippets. They then labeled an additional 300 snippets that were selected to deliberately oversample on rarer product types. Coders then assigned product types and the two marketing flags as described above.

Overall, the two coders reached an average Cohen's kappa of .75 across all labels. Kappas for individual product types and flags ranged from .65 to .86, with the exception of our "other" category (.53). All instances of disagreement between coders were discussed and resolved between members of the research team.

Post label inter-rater reliability scores

Agreement between human coders on a validation set of health and wellness influencer posts that contain promotional language

Post label	Agreement	Cohen's kappa
All topics (weighted mean)	96%	0.750
Instructional guides	91%	0.781
Other content	96%	0.760
Supplements	93%	0.701
Personal care	96%	0.741
Apparel and accessories	98%	0.862
Wellness devices	96%	0.761
Food and drink	97%	0.740
Medication	99%	0.774
Direct service/coaching	93%	0.696
Medical services	96%	0.660
Complementary medicine	99%	0.794
Medical spas and wellness treatments	97%	0.651
Events and communities	95%	0.739
Other	95%	0.526

Note: Classification was conducted with GPT-5.4 Mini reasoning effort set to "medium."

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Classification performance

Next, all snippets containing offered products or services were batch labeled with OpenAI's GPT-5.4 Mini model using the product type codebook prompt listed in Appendix A. To evaluate how well the model's label matched human judgement, we compared them with the labels from one of the coders on the same 500 labeled snippets, which served as the ground truth.

Based on this sample, the model achieved an F1 score of .83, with scores on individual product type and marketing flag codes ranging from .72 to .97.

Post classifier performance metrics

GPT-5.4 Mini classifier performance on a validation set of health and wellness influencer posts

Post label	F1 score	Accuracy
All topics (weighted mean)	0.825	97%
Instructional guides	0.856	92%
Other content	0.793	95%
Supplements	0.800	94%
Personal care	0.880	98%
Apparel and accessories	0.907	98%
Wellness devices	0.857	97%
Food and drink	0.806	98%
Medication	0.947	99.8%
Direct service/coaching	0.729	93%
Medical services	0.778	97%
Complementary/alt. medicine	0.800	98%
Medical spas and wellness treatments	0.821	99%
Events and communities	0.864	97%
Other	0.718	96%

Note: Classification was conducted with GPT-5.4 Mini reasoning effort set to "medium."

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Collaboration post analysis

To understand how many of the posts with promotions were part of brand collaboration or directly sponsored by any brands, we collected collaboration data for the posts in our dataset using the Modash Discovery API. For each account in the sample, the API returns the posts that were tagged as sponsored or published in collaboration with a brand, along with the name of the brand involved. This process identified 50,662 collaboration posts from 4,193 influencers.