

**Nine in Ten (89%) Americans say it's Important to Celebrate Birthdays, Feel Special when Others Put Lots of Energy into Celebrating their Birthday (85%)**

*Six in Ten (62%) Americans Make a Wish when they Blow Out their Birthday Candles*

**Public Release Date: August 12, 2015**



**Ipsos Reid**

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**Toronto, ON** – Americans of all stripes like to celebrate the birthdays of loved ones, with nine in ten (89%) saying that it is ‘important’ (57% very/32% somewhat) to celebrate the birthdays of their family, friends and those close to them, according to a new Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of Enbridge. Just one in ten (11%) say celebrating birthdays isn’t important (3% not at all/8% not very).

In fact, eight in ten (79%) ‘agree’ (34% strongly/44% somewhat) that ‘with life getting more complicated, it’s even more important to celebrate life’s simple moments, like a birthday’, while two in ten (21%) ‘disagree’ (6% strongly/15% somewhat). Women (83%) and young Americans 18-34 (86%) are especially likely to agree.

The poll has also revealed that one in four (26%) of Americans say that celebrating the birthdays of family, friends and those close to them is even ‘more important’ now than it used to be for them, including 39% of those aged 18-34. This compares to fewer (21%) Americans who believe that celebrating birthdays is ‘less important’ than it used to be.

Among those who say it’s more important to them, two in three (65%) say it’s because as they grow older, those close to them are even more important to them and worth celebrating.



Others say that birthdays are becoming more important because they think about their own life and the special moments that people celebrated with them (43%), that it's nice to slow down and celebrate with loved ones (41%), that with each passing year they grow closer to those close to them (41%), and because in a very digital world, they miss personal connections with people (22%) or some other reason (6%).

Celebrating birthdays is so popular among Americans that birthdays are second only to Christmas as the holiday that is their favourite to celebrate. While half (50%) of Americans say that Christmas is their favourite, two in ten (18%) say birthdays – either the birthdays of others (8%) or their own birthday (9%) – is their favourite to celebrate. Birthdays even place ahead of Thanksgiving (16%), Halloween (8%), New Year's Eve (4%), Easter (2%), and Valentine's Day (2%).

### ***Putting Energy into Making a Birthday Special...***

Nine in ten (85%) Americans 'agree' (44% strongly/41% somewhat) that they 'feel special when someone puts a lot of energy into celebrating' their birthday (including 89% of adults aged 18-34 and 86% of those 55 and older), while just two in ten (15%) 'disagree' (6% strongly/9% somewhat) that they feel this way. Moreover, 70% 'agree' (27% strongly/43% somewhat) that they 'like to put a lot of energy into celebrating the birthdays of those close to them' (including 75% of women and 84% of young Americans between 18-34), while 30% 'disagree' (9% strongly/21% somewhat) that they enjoy making a big deal of others' birthdays.

It's a source of pride for many: eight in ten (78%) 'agree' (35% strongly/43% somewhat) that they 'put special energy into always remembering the birthdays of their family and friends', while fewer than a quarter (22%) 'disagree' (6% strongly/16% somewhat) that they put



special energy into remembering to celebrate their loved ones on their birthday. Women (84%) are more likely than men (71%) to say they put special energy in remembering to celebrate their loved ones birthdays.

Nearly half (48%) of Americans 'agree' (14% strongly/34% somewhat) that they're 'disappointed' when others 'don't put in the energy or effort' for their birthday, while a slim majority (52%) shrugs it off, 'disagreeing' (21% strongly/31% somewhat) that it disappoints them. Women (53%) are more likely than men (43%) to express this disappointment, as well as adults aged 18-34 (69%) compared to those aged 35-54 (45%) and 55 and older (34%).

Perhaps unknowingly disappointing others, four in ten (40%) confess (14% strongly/27% somewhat) that they 'don't put much effort into celebrating birthdays', while six in ten (60%) 'disagree' (25% strongly/35% somewhat), suggesting that they do put energy into celebrating the birthdays of others. Men (47%) and those employed full-time (44%) are most likely to say they don't put much effort into celebrating birthdays, likely fueling the disappointment of the 48% who are upset when their birthday isn't celebrated with great energy.

For many Americans, the effect of a well-celebrated birthday isn't just for one day, but carries over to the rest of the year: half (53%) 'agree' (16% strongly/37% somewhat) that celebrating their birthday 're-energizes' them for the coming year, while the other half (47%) 'disagrees' (17% strongly/30% somewhat) that this is the case.

When it comes to celebrating their own birthday, most say it's important to share it with family (86% total - 51% strongly/34% somewhat) and friends (71% total - 30% strongly/42% somewhat). Eight in ten (79%) say it's important (34% strongly/45% somewhat) to them when others make their birthday extra special, and two in three (66%) say that keeping birthday traditions is important to them (28% strongly/38% somewhat).

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### *Birthdays and Social Media...*

Interestingly, while for a majority (64%) it's not important (30% not at all/34% not very), four in ten (36%) Americans says that when it comes to celebrating their own birthday, sharing it through social media is important to them (10% very/26% somewhat). Adults ages 18-34 (51%) and people with children in the household (45%) are most likely to say so.

Two in three (66%) Americans 'agree' (21% strongly/45% somewhat) that 'getting birthday greetings and messages on social media' makes them feel special, while one in three (34%) 'disagrees' (14% strongly/20% somewhat) that it makes them feel this way. Still, perhaps feeling a social media greeting lacks a certain effort, a six in ten (59%) 'agree' (25% strongly/34% somewhat) that 'getting birthday greetings on social media feels impersonal' and that it's 'not the same as a real birthday celebration'. Four in ten (41%) 'disagree' (13% strongly/29% somewhat), believing a social media message is as good as a traditional greeting.

### *Traditions and Meaning...*

When asked to describe in their own words what birthdays mean to them...

- A majority said something **positive** (62%), such as experience like a celebration (22%), being alive (12%), or activities to make the day special (9%).
- One quarter (25%) said something about **family and friends**, like spending time with family, friends and loved ones (21%) or honouring their family and friends as being important to them (5%).
- Two in ten (21%) expressed a **feeling**, such as love/happiness (5%), blessings/health (5%), or a chance for renewal (4%).



- Half (45%) had a **neutral** assessment of birthdays, simply mentioning it's simply getting one year older (19%), made it through another year (11%), or that it's just another day (7%).
- Just 7% mentioned something **negative** about birthdays, including getting closer to death (2%), or not as important (2%).

Birthdays are a time of traditions, and the ultimate tradition for Americans is the birthday cake and blowing out the candles (25%). Others say their favourite birthday traditions include: going out for dinner (16%), spending time with family and friends (14%), eating with family (7%), birthday wishes/singing happy birthday (7%), being with friends (5%), opening presents (4%), having a good time in general (3%), eating ice cream (3%), birthday cards (3%), partying (2%), getting pampered (2%), getting drinks (1%), or relaxing/sleeping in (1%) among other things. Just 16% of Americans say they don't have a most important birthday tradition.

The cake has a special place in the birthdays of Americans. In fact, six in ten (61%) Americans say that having a cake makes their birthday more special – with women (67%) being more likely than men (55%) to say this is the case. Adults 18-34 (72%) are also more likely to say this is the case compared to those aged 35-54 (62%) or 55 and older (51%).

Six in ten (62%) of Americans still make a birthday wish when blowing out the candles, with women (67%) being more likely than men (56%) to admit they do, as are younger adults (73%) compared to those between the ages of 35 and 54 (59%) and older (55%) adults.

Thinking about what they wish for, half (49%) wish for personal happiness, with others wishing for the happiness of others (38%), personal health (33%), health of others (31%), personal success (29%), a better world (25%), or some other wish (11%).



*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between July 10 and July 14, 2015, on behalf of Enbridge. For this survey, a sample of 1,045 Americans from Ipsos' online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within +/- 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all American adults been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. 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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