

A Focus On Wellbeing & Body Weight

An annual survey of American consumers to understand perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors surrounding food and food-purchasing decisions. 2025 marks the 20th consecutive year that the International Food Information Council (IFIC) has commissioned the *IFIC Food & Health Survey*.



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY METHODOLOGY

- An online survey of 3,000 Americans ages 18 to 80 years.
- The survey was fielded from March 13-27, 2025.
- On average, the survey took ~20 minutes to complete.
- The survey was conducted via Dynata's consumer panel.

SUGGESTED CITATION:

International Food Information Council. 2025 IFIC Food & Health Survey: A Focus On Wellbeing & Body Weight. January 2026. [[2025 IFIC Food & Health Survey: A Focus On Wellbeing & Body Weight - IFIC](#)]

➤ The results were weighted to ensure that they are reflective of the American population ages 18 to 80 years, as seen in the [2024 Current Population Survey](#). Specifically, results were weighted by age, education, gender, race/ethnicity, and region.

➤ IFIC commissions Greenwald Research to conduct its annual *Food & Health Survey*.



The 2025 IFIC Food & Health Survey marks the 20th consecutive year that the International Food Information Council (IFIC) has surveyed American consumers to understand perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors surrounding food and food-purchasing decisions. In addition to exploring new perspectives, the 2025 IFIC Food & Health Survey takes a retrospective look at how perceptions have evolved over the last two decades.

Key findings from this year's online survey of **3,000 Americans** focus on:

- Food and beverage purchase-drivers
- Criteria used to define “healthy” food
- Familiarity with U.S. Dietary Guidelines and MyPlate
- Stress and mental and emotional well-being
- Trust in food information sources, including exposure and impact of social media
- Views on food colors and food safety, including the safety of imported foods and those produced in the U.S.
- Body weight, weight-loss medications, and perceptions of calorie sources that contribute to weight gain
- Current eating patterns, personal diet grades, and reflections on how they have changed from 20 years ago
- Beliefs about food production and food technologies, including impressions of GMOs and sustainability
- Approaches to sugar consumption and opinions of low- and no-calorie sweeteners
- “Ultraprocessed foods,” including familiarity with the term and criteria used to identify them.

Findings are presented for all survey respondents. Additional insights are provided based on how findings vary by different types of demographic groups, such as by age, race, gender, and household income.

Note: Significant changes in trend vs. 2024 (and/or in some cases, prior years) are indicated using up-and-down arrows and/or call-out boxes.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Focus On Wellbeing & Body Weight



2025

KEY FINDINGS ON WELLBEING & BODY WEIGHT

Nearly half of Americans describe their health as excellent or very good, a declining trend since 2012.

Since the inaugural *IFIC Food & Health Survey* in 2006, Americans have been asked each year to rate their overall health using a question modeled after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System ([BRFSS](#)) survey question. This long-standing measure provides a consistent lens for tracking changes in perceived health over time.

In 2012, when the question was revised in the *IFIC Food & Health Survey*, 60% of Americans rated their health as excellent (18%) or very good (42%). That share peaked in 2013 at 62%, with 19% rating their health as excellent and 43% as very good. Since then, however, self-reported health status has trended downward.

In 2025, fewer than half of Americans (49%) now describe their health as excellent (13%) or very good (35%), representing a notable drop of 13 percentage points from its peak. This sustained downward trend signals a meaningful shift in how Americans perceive their health.

Nearly two in three Americans were very or somewhat stressed over the past six months, a rising trend since 2022.

Beginning in 2022, the *IFIC Food & Health Survey* participants were asked about the level of stress they experienced in the prior six months. In 2022, 56% of Americans reported being very (22%) or somewhat (34%) stressed over the past six months. By 2024, that share had risen to 64% (24% very stressed, 39% somewhat stressed). Stress levels in 2025 remain similar to those reported in 2024.

KEY FINDINGS ON WELLBEING & BODY WEIGHT

Among Americans who report being very or somewhat stressed over the past six months, more than half cited the economy and personal finances as factors adding to their stress.

In the 2024 and 2025 IFIC Food & Health Surveys, Americans were asked to identify sources of stress experienced in the past six months. Concerns tied to broader societal and global issues have intensified in the past year. Compared to 2024, more Americans now report being stressed by the economy (58% vs. 51%), U.S. politics (42% vs. 30%), global conflicts or international affairs (27% vs. 20%), and environmental concerns (19% vs. 15%).

At the same time, stress related to more personal factors has declined. Fewer Americans say they are stressed by their own health or the health of family members (42% vs. 47%), personal relationships (37% vs. 43%), changes in employment status (22% vs. 26%), or their dietary choices (20% vs. 23%).

Generational differences reveal distinct stress patterns. Managing personal finances ranks among the top two stressors for every generation except Baby Boomers. Gen Z stands apart as the only generation most stressed by personal relationships, while Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers cite financial pressures and/or the economy as top sources of stress.

Household income strongly shapes Americans' self-reported happiness, stress, and health.

Since the 2006 IFIC Food & Health Survey, Americans have been to assess their personal health annually. In 2024, the survey was expanded to include measures of stress and happiness. An analysis of responses by household income reveals clear and consistent patterns.

As household income increases, self-reported happiness and health also rise, while stress declines. Among Americans in the highest household income tier (\$150K+), 89% report being very or somewhat happy in the past six months, compared with 71% of those in the lowest income tier (<\$20K). A similar income gradient appears in perceived personal health: nearly three-quarters (74%) of respondents in the highest household income tier rate their health as excellent or very good, versus just 33% in the lowest income tier.

Stress shows the opposite relationship. Just over half (54%) of those in the highest household income tier say they were very or somewhat stressed over the past six months, compared with 70% among those in the lowest income tier. Together, these findings underscore the strong link between household income and Americans' emotional and physical wellbeing.

KEY FINDINGS ON WELLBEING & BODY WEIGHT

Half of Americans are trying to lose weight, a decline from 2016.

Efforts to manage body weight remain common, though motivations have shifted in the past decade. In the 2016 *IFIC Food & Health Survey*, 57% of Americans said they were trying to lose weight. This year, that share has declined to 51%, driven primarily by a decrease in those trying to lose ten or more pounds (down to 29% from 34% in 2016).

At the same time, more Americans now report trying to maintain their weight (up to 28% from 23%) or gain weight (up to 8% from 3%). Meanwhile, about one in seven (14%) say they are not currently doing anything related to their body weight.

One in four Americans believes that sugars or carbohydrates are the calorie sources most likely to cause weight gain.

For the first 17 years of the *IFIC Food & Health Survey* (2006-2022), Americans were asked which source of calories they believe is most likely to cause weight gain. The responses over time reveal a clear evolution in public perception.

In 2006, 29% believed calories from all sources have the same impact on weight gain, followed by 26% who said calories from fat are most likely to cause weight gain, 20% said carbohydrates, 2% said protein, and 22% were unsure. When “calories from sugars” was added as an option in 2011, 40% said all calories have the same impact on weight gain, 14% cited fat, 11% sugars, 9% carbohydrates, 2% protein, and 24% were unsure.

In 2025, the picture looks markedly different. One in four (25%) still believe all calories impact weight gain equally, and just as many (25%) say calories from sugars are most likely to cause weight gain, followed closely by carbohydrates (23%), fat (16%), protein (6%), with only 6% unsure.

Since 2011, the share of Americans pointing to sugars (25%, up from 11%) and carbohydrates (23%, up from 9%) has more than doubled, while uncertainty (6%, down from 24%) and the belief that all calories have the same impact on weight gain (25%, down from 40%) have declined the most.

KEY FINDINGS ON WELLBEING & BODY WEIGHT

Americans grade their personal diet as healthier than the diet of the average American, although by a smaller margin than in 2013.

In the 2013 *IFIC Food & Health Survey*, Americans were asked to assign a grade to the healthfulness of their personal diet and to the diet of the average American. In 2025, 64% of Americans grade their own diet as a B- or better, while only 24% give the same grade to the average American's diet. In 2013, 67% graded their own diet a B- or better, but just 13% gave that grade to the average American's diet. Compared to 2013, Americans grade their personal diets similarly but now give higher marks to the average American's diet.

Nearly six in ten Americans report following a specific diet in the past year, a rising trend since 2018.

Since the 2018 *IFIC Food & Health Survey*, Americans have been asked about the diets they have tried. In 2025, 57% of Americans say they have followed a specific eating pattern or diet in the past year, a rising trend since 2018 when just 36% of Americans had tried a specific eating pattern or diet. In 2025, the top diets that Americans report following are high protein (23%) and mindful eating (19%), marking three straight years now that a high protein diet is the most common diet that Americans are following.

In 2025, “Good source of protein” takes the top spot for criteria used to define a healthy food, followed by “Fresh” and “Low in sugar.” The top three have remained the same since 2022.

The *IFIC Food & Health Survey* includes questions that ask Americans to select the qualities that best define a healthy food. For three years running, “Fresh” held the top spot, followed by “Low in sugar” and “Good source of protein.” This year marks a shift, with protein taking precedence, though the top three remain the same.

In 2025, the top ten criteria Americans selected to define a healthy food are: “Good source of protein” (38%), “Fresh” (36%), “Low in sugar” (34%), “Good source of nutrients” (31%), “Minimal or no processing” (28%), “Good source of fiber” (28%), “Low sodium” (28%), “Contains fruits or vegetables” (25%), “Limited or no artificial ingredients or preservatives” (25%), and “Natural” (24%). These same criteria made up the top ten in 2024 as well, albeit in a different order.

Compared to last year, the biggest gains were seen for “Good source of fiber” (+4%), “Minimal or no processing” (+3%), “Low in saturated fat” (+3%). Meanwhile, fewer Americans cited “Non-GMO” (-3%), “Low in total fat” (-3%), and/or “Fresh” (-2%) as defining characteristics.

Looking at the longer trend, since 2022 the greatest increases have occurred for “Good source of protein” and “Minimal or no processing” (each up 8%). In contrast, “Low in total fat” and “Produced in a way that is environmentally sustainable” have each declined by 5%.

KEY FINDINGS ON WELLBEING & BODY WEIGHT

One in ten Americans say they have used a prescription weight-loss medication within the past year.

In the 2024 and 2025 *IFIC Food & Health Surveys*, Americans were asked whether they had used a prescription medication to lose weight in the past year. Results are consistent across the two years. In 2025, 10% of respondents reported using a prescription weight-loss medication, compared with 9% in 2024.

Among the 10% who used a prescription weight-loss medication in the past year, the majority report positive experiences. More than eight in ten (81%) describe their experience as positive (45% extremely positive, 36% somewhat positive). Only 7% report a negative experience (2% extremely negative, 5% somewhat negative). Users were also asked whether they are still taking the medication, and two in three (66%) say they continue to do so.

Most survey respondents (89%) report not having used a prescription weight-loss medication in the past year. Among this group, 22% say they have considered using such medication, while two in three (66%) say they would not consider it.

The top two reported side effects from using prescription weight-loss medication are weight loss and decreased appetite.

The 2025 *IFIC Food & Health Survey* asked those who reported using a prescription weight-loss medication in the past year to report potential side effects. The most frequently cited effects align with the intended outcomes of treatment and related lifestyle changes. Nearly half (45%) report weight loss, and more than one-third (34%) say they experienced decreased appetite. Many users also report additional behavior changes, including eating healthier (24%), eating away from home less (23%), exercising more (21%), and having more energy (20%). Improvements in sleep are reported by 16% of users.

At the same time, some respondents report less favorable effects. Digestive problems are cited by 16%, mood changes by 15%, headaches by 13%, and less energy by 14%. Sleep disturbances are also noted, with 10% reporting worse sleep.

Other behavior changes are less common. Eight percent report eating away from home more, and 7% report exercising less.

Overall, experiences with prescription weight-loss medications are mixed yet skew positive. Most reported effects involve weight loss, appetite reduction, and healthful behaviors, while a smaller share of users report physical or emotional side effects. Notably, 9% of respondents say they experienced none of the listed effects.

KEY FINDINGS ON WELLBEING & BODY WEIGHT

More than half of Americans agree that prescription weight-loss drugs are effective for weight loss, while fewer agree they are safe.

The *IFIC Food & Health Survey* first explored Americans' views on perceptions weight-loss drugs in 2024. That year, more people agreed these medications were effective (48%) than safe (31%).

In 2025, perceptions remain similar, but confidence has grown. A majority (53%) now agree (12% strongly, 40% somewhat) that prescription weight-loss drugs are an effective way to lose weight, up 5% from last year. Thirty-five percent agree (8% strongly, 27% somewhat) they are a safe way to lose weight, up 4% from last year. Strong agreement is up for both efficacy (+2%) and safety (+1%).

Still, skepticism persists. More than one in three (36%) do not agree (15% strongly, 21% somewhat) that prescription weight-loss drugs are an effective way to lose weight and 11% are unsure. Similarly, many Americans remain cautious, with a majority 52% disagreeing (23% strongly, 30% somewhat) that they are safe way to lose weight and 13% are unsure.

Among Americans who have taken prescription weight-loss medication in the past year, eight in ten agree they are effective and seven in ten agree they are safe.

The 2025 *IFIC Food & Health Survey* compared perceptions of the effectiveness and safety of prescription weight-loss medications between those who reported using these medications in the past year and those who had not. Clear differences emerge between the two groups.

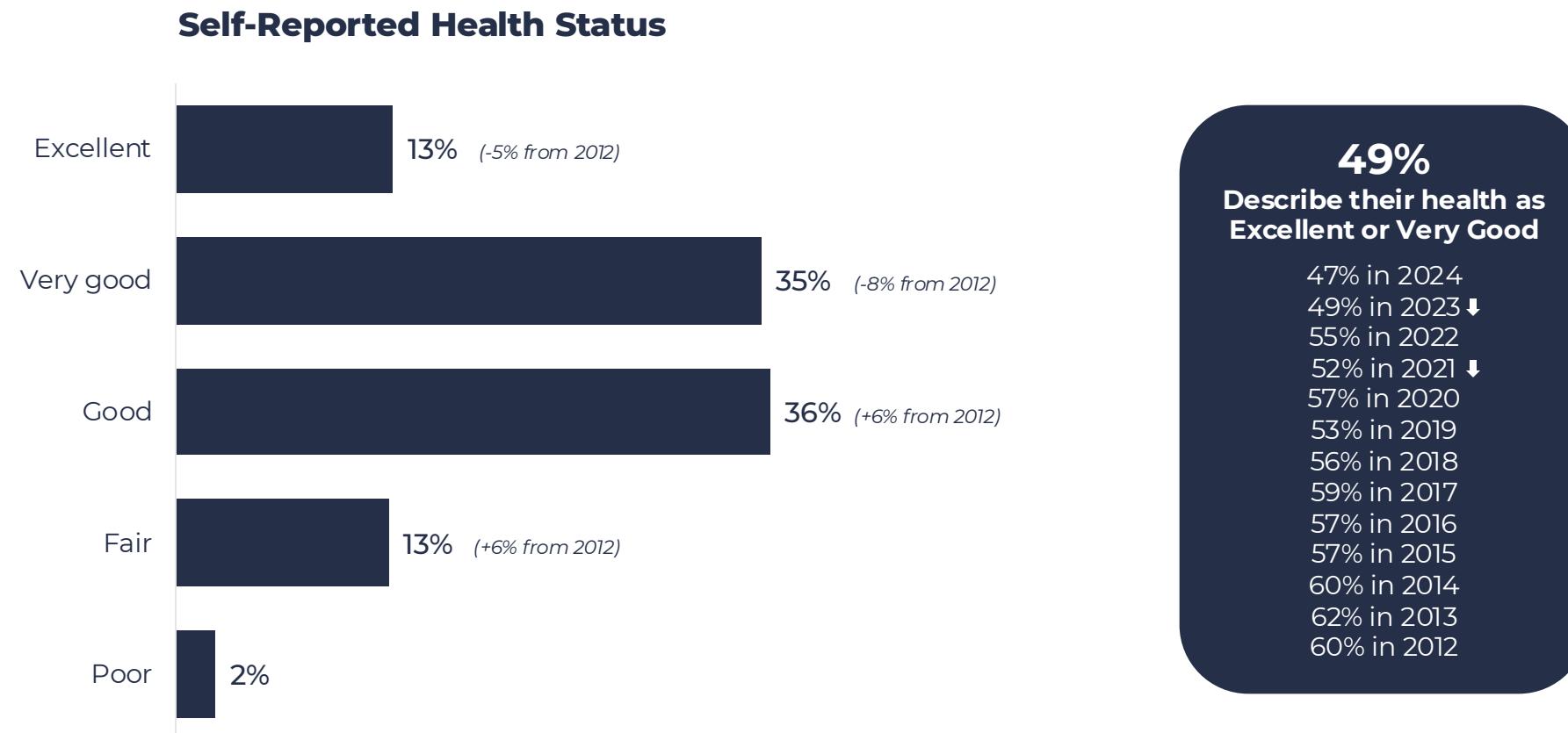
Users of prescription weight-loss medications are more than three times as likely as non-users to strongly agree that the medications are effective (36% vs. 10%). They are also far less likely to disagree with their effectiveness (17% vs. 38%) or to report being unsure (2% vs. 12%).

Users of prescription weight-loss medications are more than six times as likely as non-users to strongly agree that the medications are safe (33% vs. 5%). They are also far less likely to disagree with their safety (55% vs. 24%) or to report being unsure (3% vs. 14%).

These findings suggest that firsthand experience with prescription weight-loss medications is strongly associated with more favorable perceptions of their effectiveness and safety.

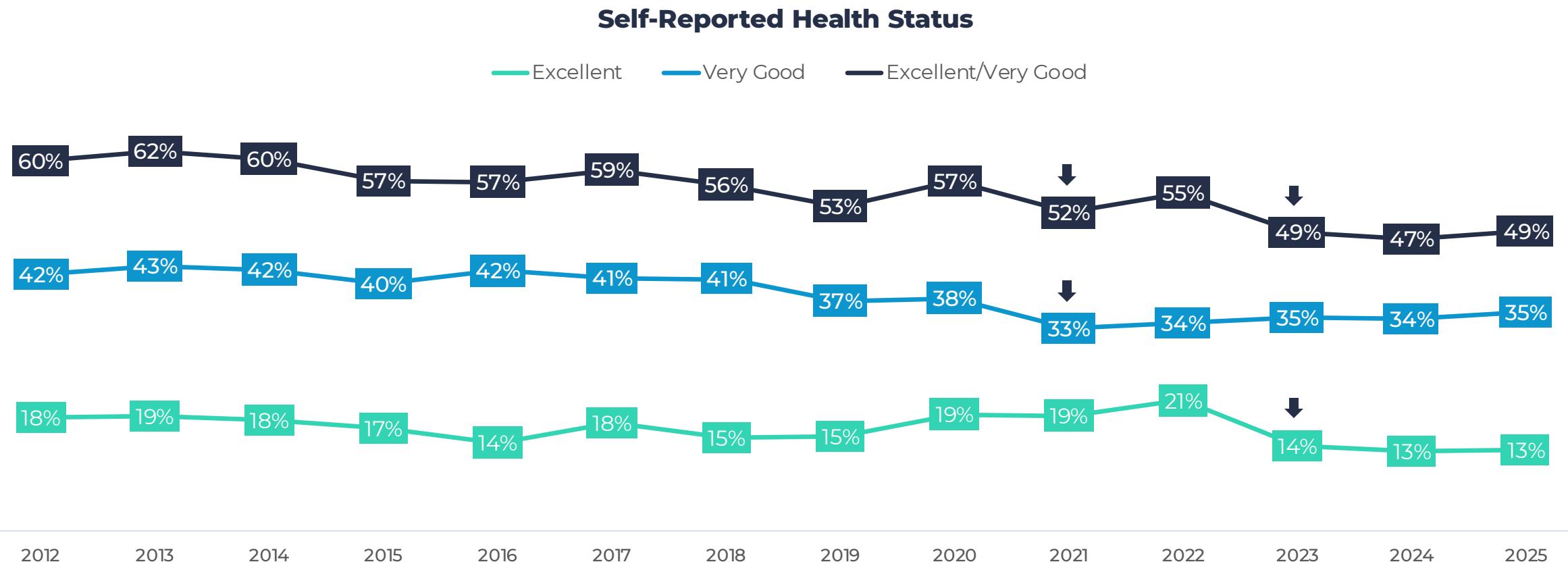
Nearly half of Americans describe their health as excellent or very good, a declining trend since 2012.

In 2012, 60% of Americans described their health as excellent (18%) or very good (42%) compared with 2025 when 49% described their health as excellent (13%) or very good (35%).



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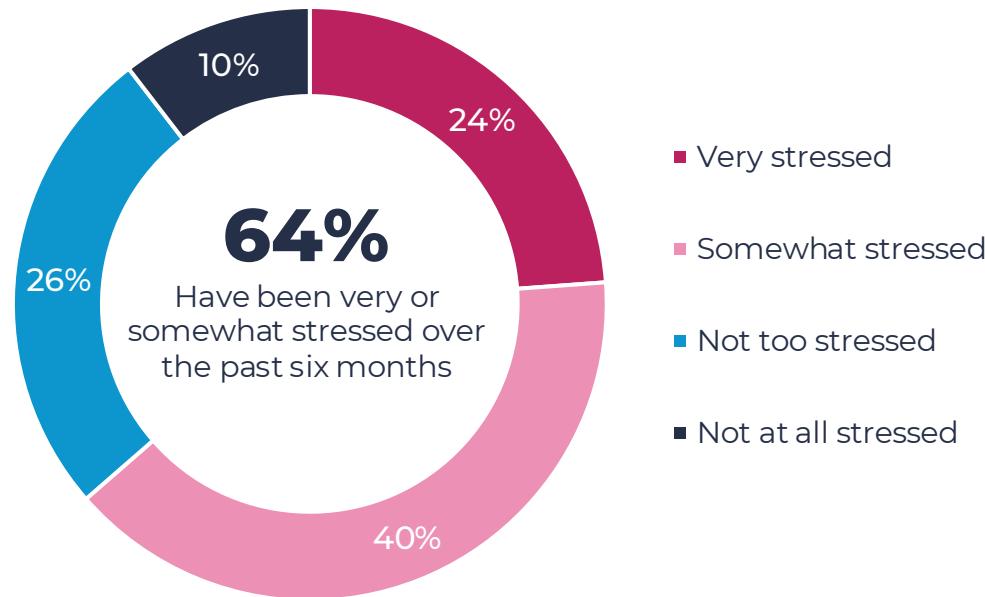
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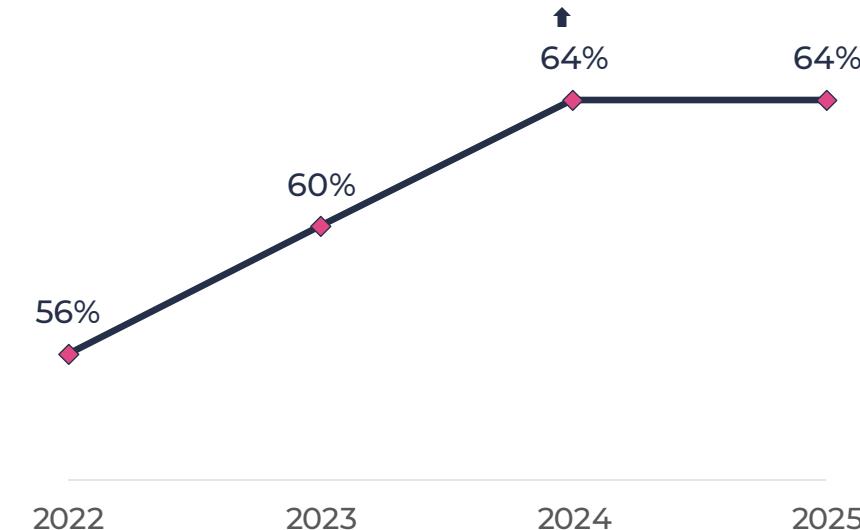
Nearly two in three Americans were very or somewhat stressed over the past six months, a rising trend since 2022.

In 2022, 56% of Americans reported being very (22%) or somewhat (34%) stressed over the past six months. By 2024, that share had risen to 64% (24% very stressed, 39% somewhat stressed). Stress levels in 2025 remain similar to those reported in 2024.

**Self-Reported Stress
Over The Past Six Months**



Self-Reported Stress
(% reporting very or somewhat stressed over the past six months)

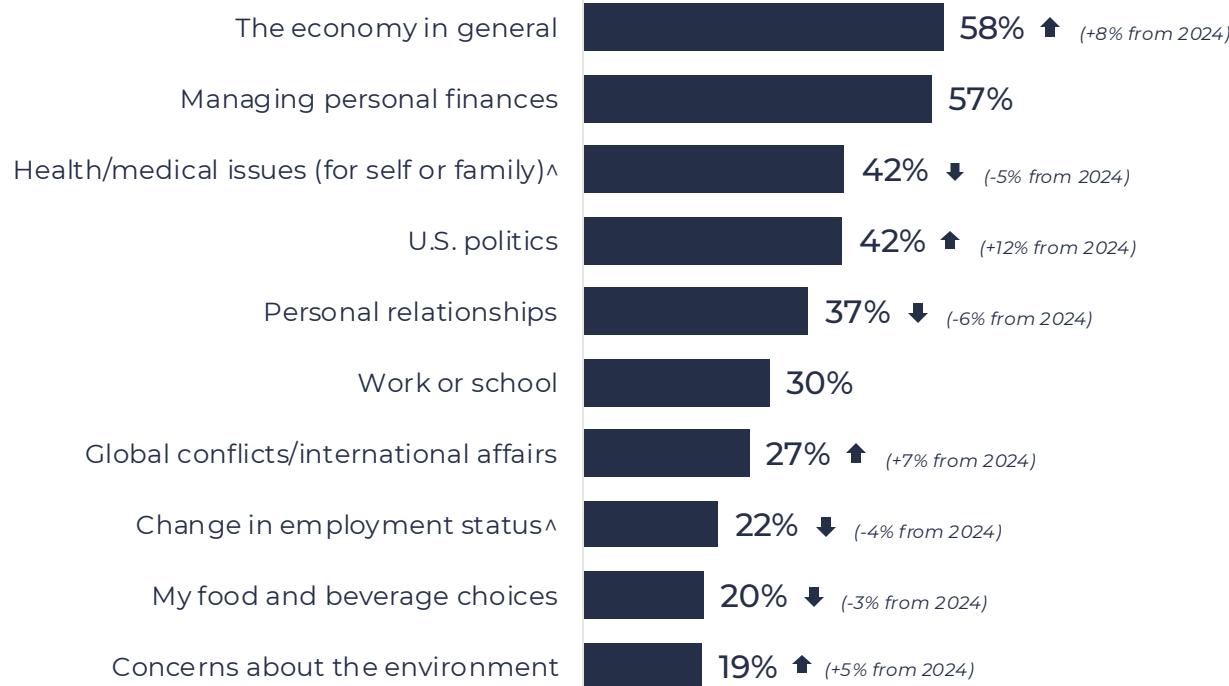


Among Americans who report being very or somewhat stressed over the past six months, more than half cited the economy and personal finances as factors adding to their stress.

Managing personal finances ranks among the top-two stressors for every generation except Baby Boomers. Gen Z is most stressed by personal relationships, while other generations are most stressed by personal finances or the economy.

Stress Factors

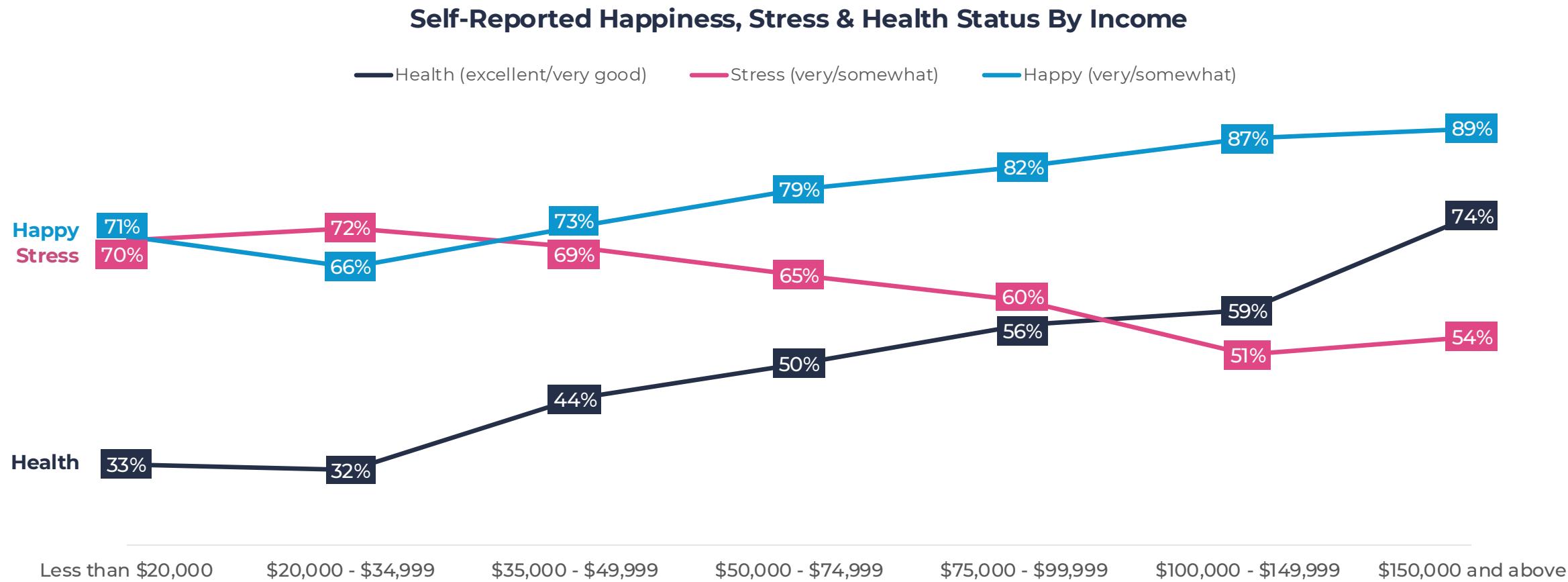
(Among those at least somewhat stressed over the past six months)



Top 4 Stress Factors by Generation			
Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X	Boomer
55% Personal Relationships	59% The economy in general	62% Managing personal finances	64% The economy in general
52% Managing personal finances	58% Managing personal finances	61% The economy in general	58% U.S. politics
51% Work or school	41% Health/medical issues	44% Health/medical issues	52% Managing personal finances
47% The economy in general	38% Personal Relationships	40% U.S. politics	51% Health/medical issues

Household income strongly shapes Americans' self-reported happiness, stress, and health status.

As household income increases, reported happiness and health status rise, while stress declines.



Americans grade their personal diet as healthier than the diet of the average American, although by a smaller margin than in 2013.

In 2025, 64% of Americans give their diet a B- or better, while 24% give the same grade to the average American's diet. In 2013, 67% of Americans gave their diet a B- or better, while just 13% gave the same grade to the average American's diet.

Healthfulness Of Personal Diet

2025 vs. 2013

A
13% in 2025
vs. 11% in 2013

↑ 6% ■ A 4% ↑
8% ■ A- 3% ↑

B ↓
51% in 2025
vs. 56% in 2013

19% ■ B+ 5% ↑
↓ 18% ■ B 6% ↑
15% ■ B- 6%

C
28% in 2025
vs. 27% in 2013

13% ■ C+ 12%
9% ■ C 17%
5% ■ C- 16% ↓

D
6% in 2025
vs. 5% in 2013

3% ■ D+ 12%
2% ■ D 10%
1% ■ D- 5%
1% ■ F 5%

Healthfulness Of The Average American's Diet

2025 vs. 2013

A ↑
7% in 2025
vs. 2% in 2013

B ↑
17% in 2025
vs. 11% in 2013

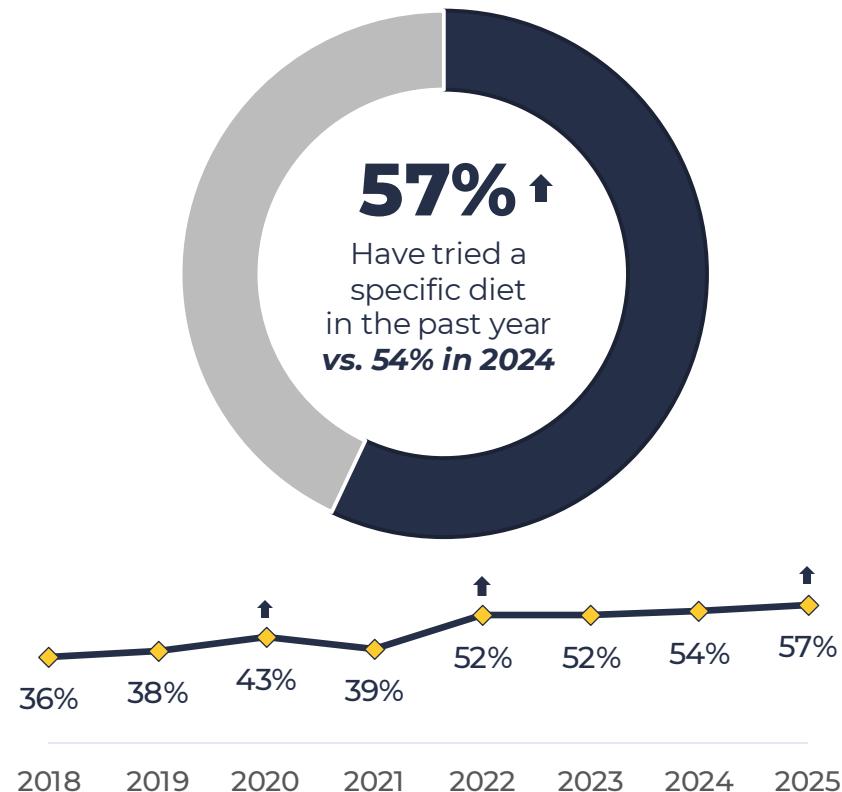
C ↓
44% in 2025
vs. 50% in 2013

D ↓
27% in 2025
vs. 32% in 2013

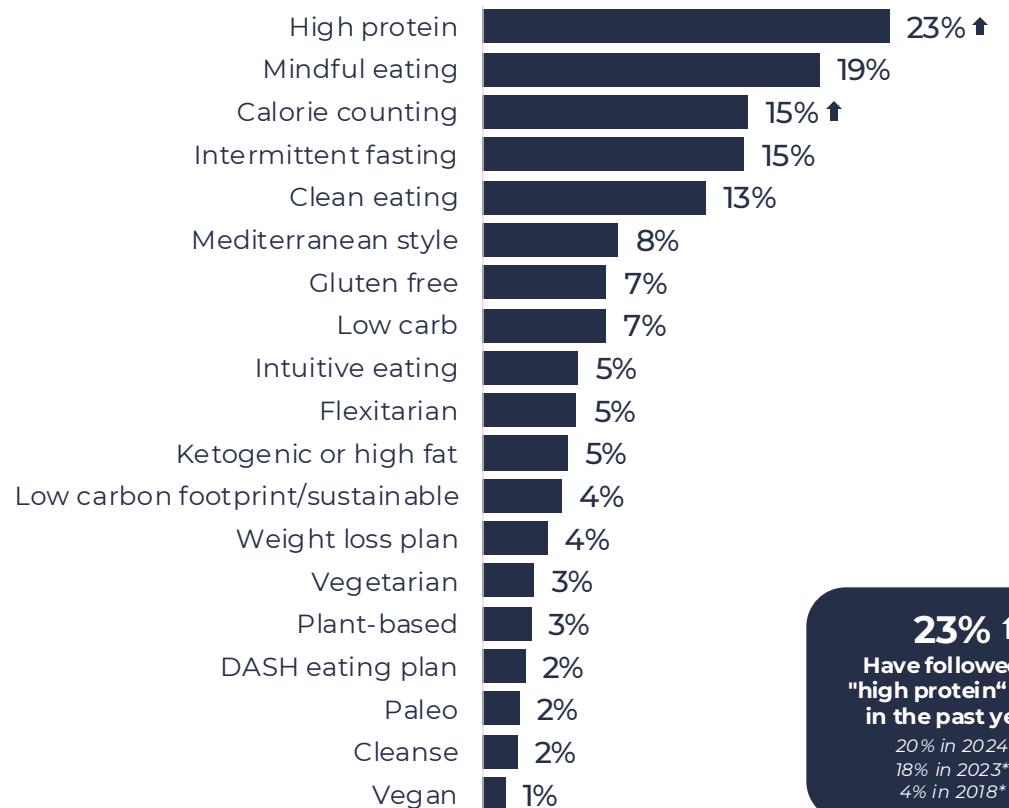
Nearly six in ten Americans report following a specific eating pattern or diet in the past year, a rising trend since 2018.

More Americans report following “High protein” (23%) and “Calorie counting” (15%) diets in 2025. For the third straight year, “High protein” is the most common diet that Americans are following.

Followed Eating Pattern/Diet In Past Year



Followed Eating Pattern/Diet In Past Year

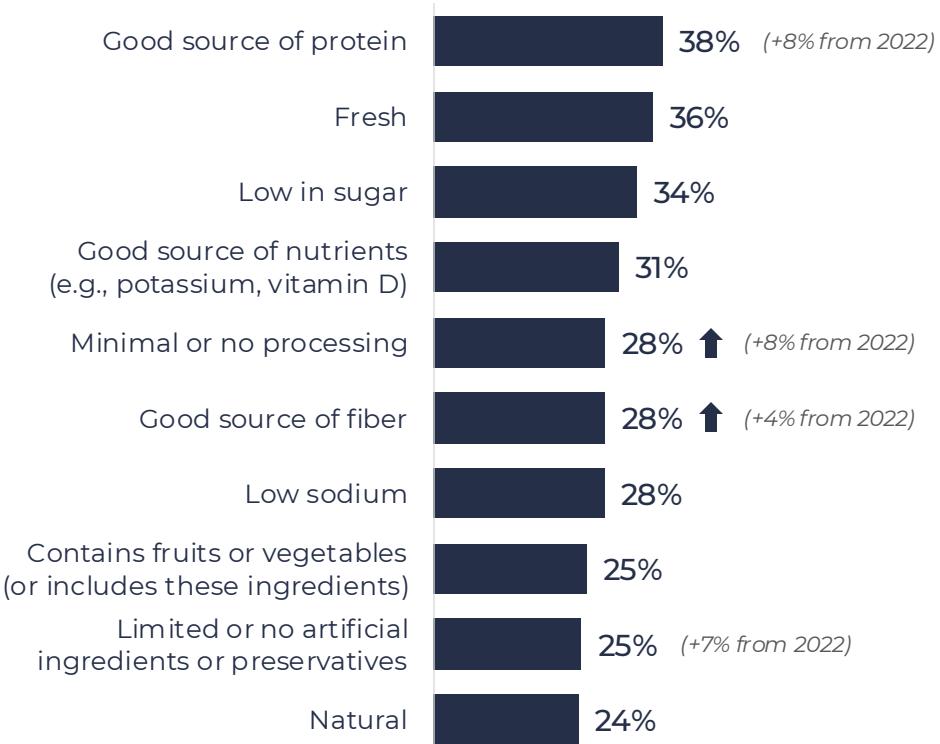


In 2025, “Good source of protein” takes the top spot for criteria used to define a healthy food, followed by “Fresh” and “Low in sugar.” The top three have remained the same since 2022.

Compared to 2024, more Americans use “Minimal or no processing,” “Good source of fiber,” and/or “Low in saturated fat” to define a healthy food. Fewer use “Low in total fat” and/or “Non-GMO.”

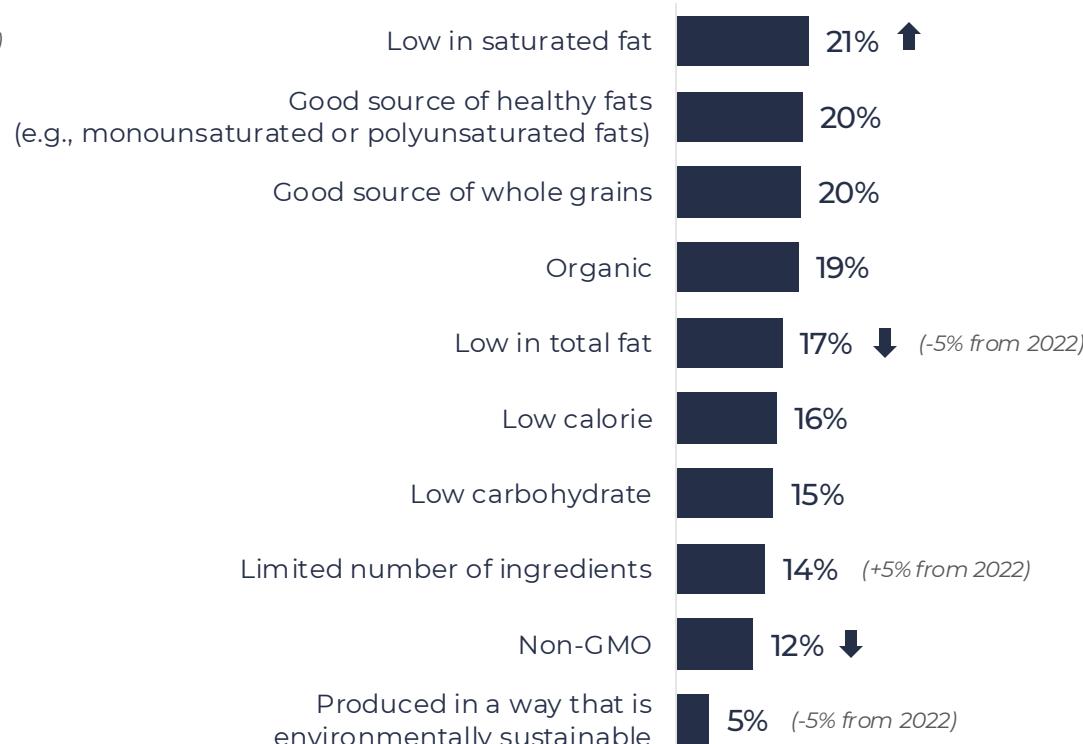
Criteria Used To Define A Healthy Food

(Top 10 Choices)



Criteria Used To Define A Healthy Food

(Bottom 10 Choices)

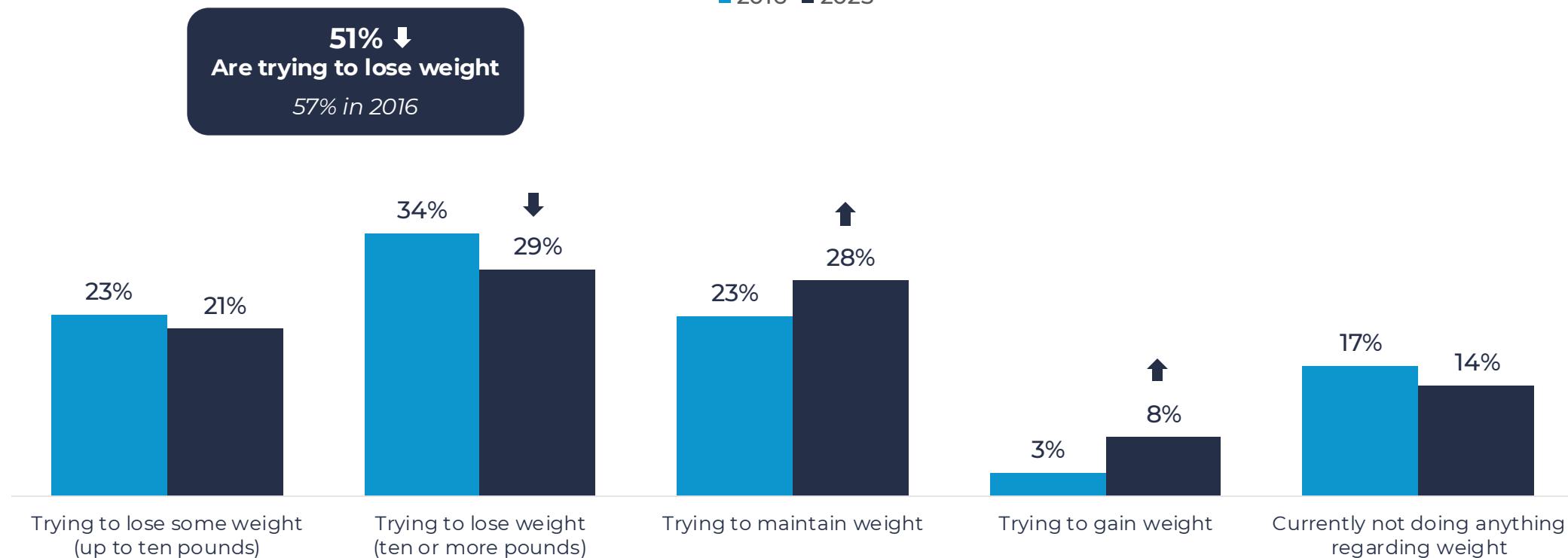


Half of Americans are trying to lose weight, a decline from 2016.

Compared to 2016, fewer Americans are trying to lose ten or more pounds, while more are trying to maintain or gain weight.

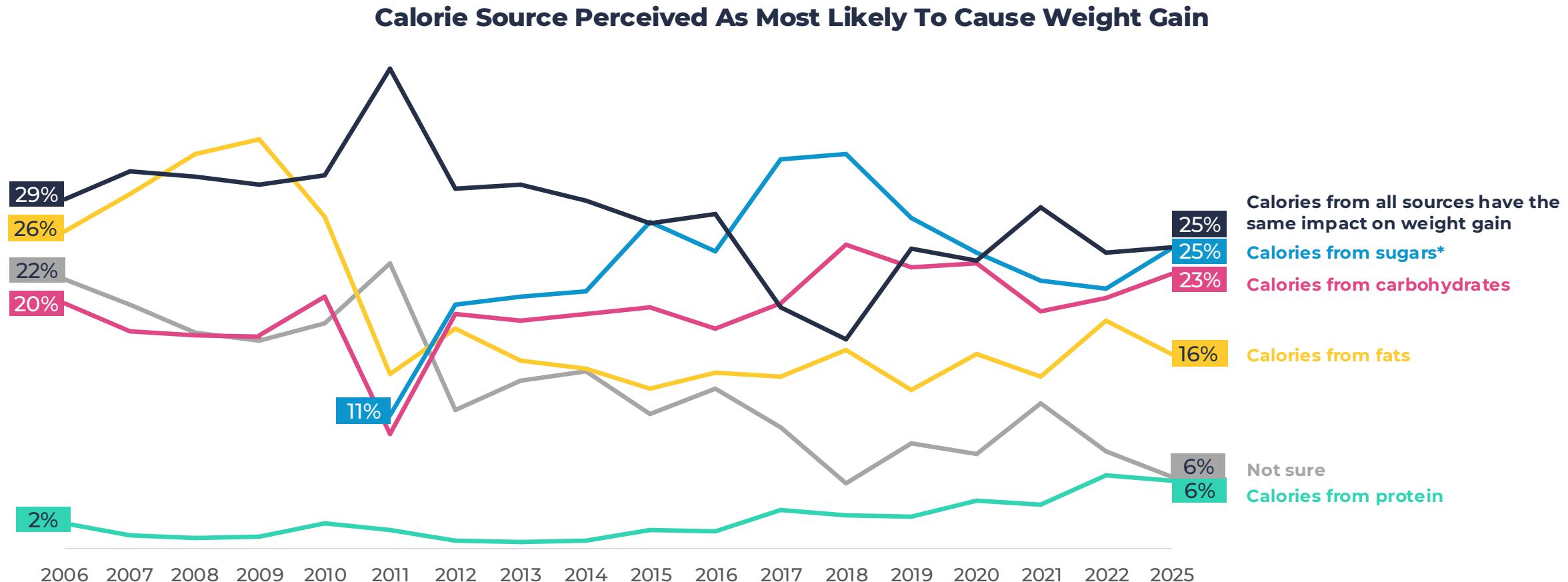
Current Actions Regarding Weight

■ 2016 ■ 2025



One in four Americans believes that sugars or carbohydrates are the calorie sources most likely to cause weight gain.

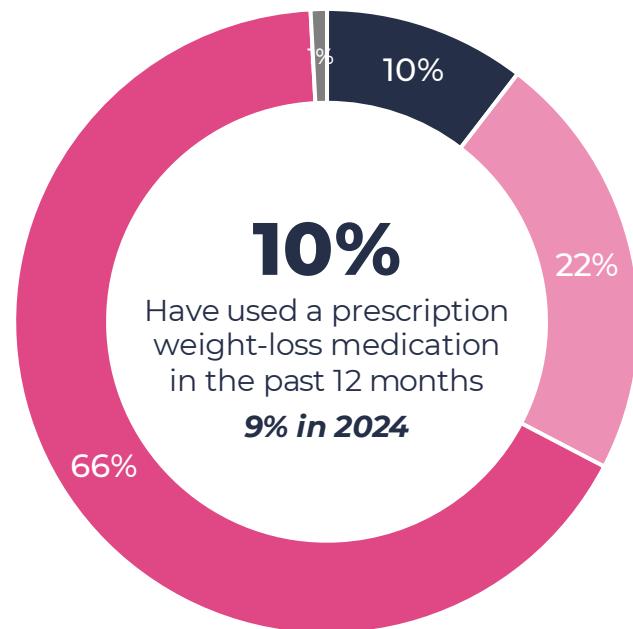
One in four Americans (25%) believe all calories contribute equally to weight gain, while fewer cite calories from fat (16%) or protein (6%). Belief that calories from sugars are most responsible has risen the most since 2011.



One in ten Americans say they have used a prescription weight-loss medication within the past year.

Among the 10% who used a prescription weight-loss medication in the past year, 81% say they had a positive experience.

Used Prescription Weight-Loss Medication In The Past 12 Months

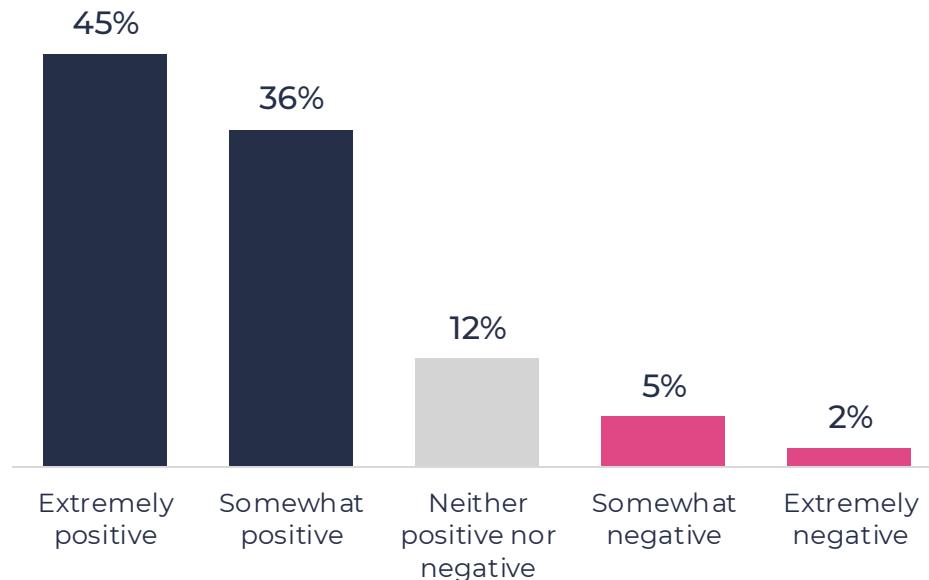


- Yes
- No, but I have considered it
- No, I would not consider it
- Prefer not to say

Rating Of Experience While Taking Prescription Weight-Loss Medication

(If used prescription weight-loss medication in the past year)

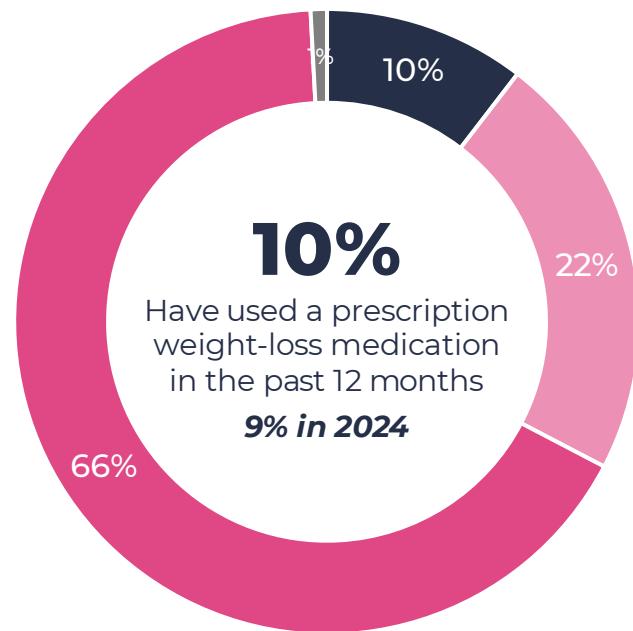
81% report a positive experience on weight-loss medication



One in ten Americans say they have used a prescription weight-loss medication within the past year.

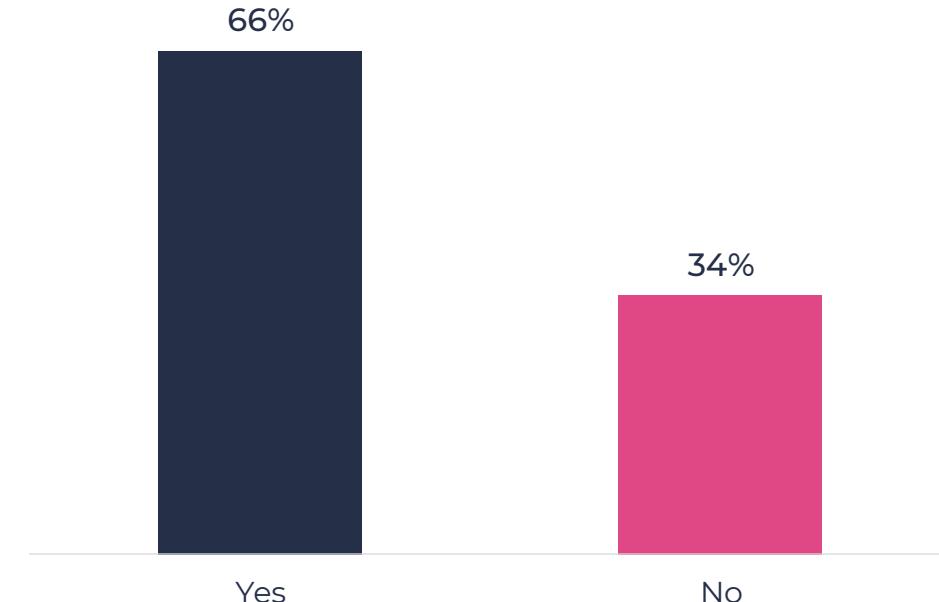
Among the 10% who used a prescription weight-loss medication in the past year, 66% are still taking it.

Used Prescription Weight-Loss Medication In The Past 12 Months



Still Taking Prescription Weight-Loss Medication (If used prescription weight-loss medication in the past year)

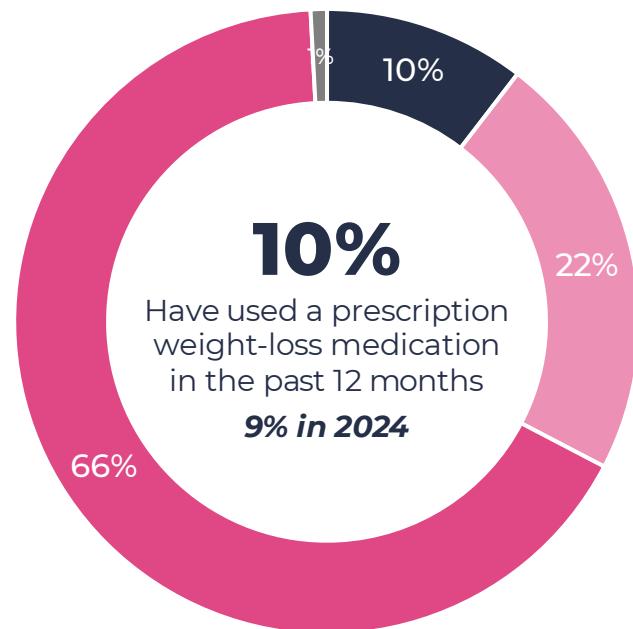
- Yes
- No, but I have considered it
- No, I would not consider it
- Prefer not to say



The top two reported side effects from using prescription weight-loss medication are weight loss and decreased appetite.

In addition to weight loss (45%) and decreased appetite (34%), more than one in five report eating healthier (24%), eating away from home less (23%), exercising more (21%), and/or having more energy (20%).

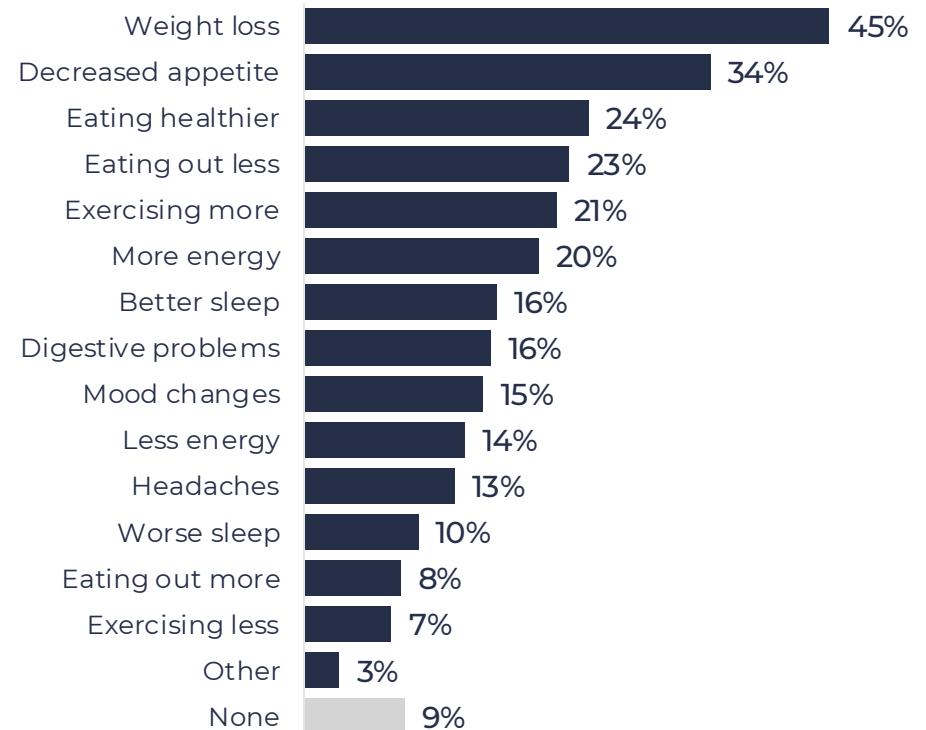
Used Prescription Weight-Loss Medication In The Past 12 Months



- Yes
- No, but I have considered it
- No, I would not consider it
- Prefer not to say

Reported Side Effects Of Prescription Weight-Loss Medication

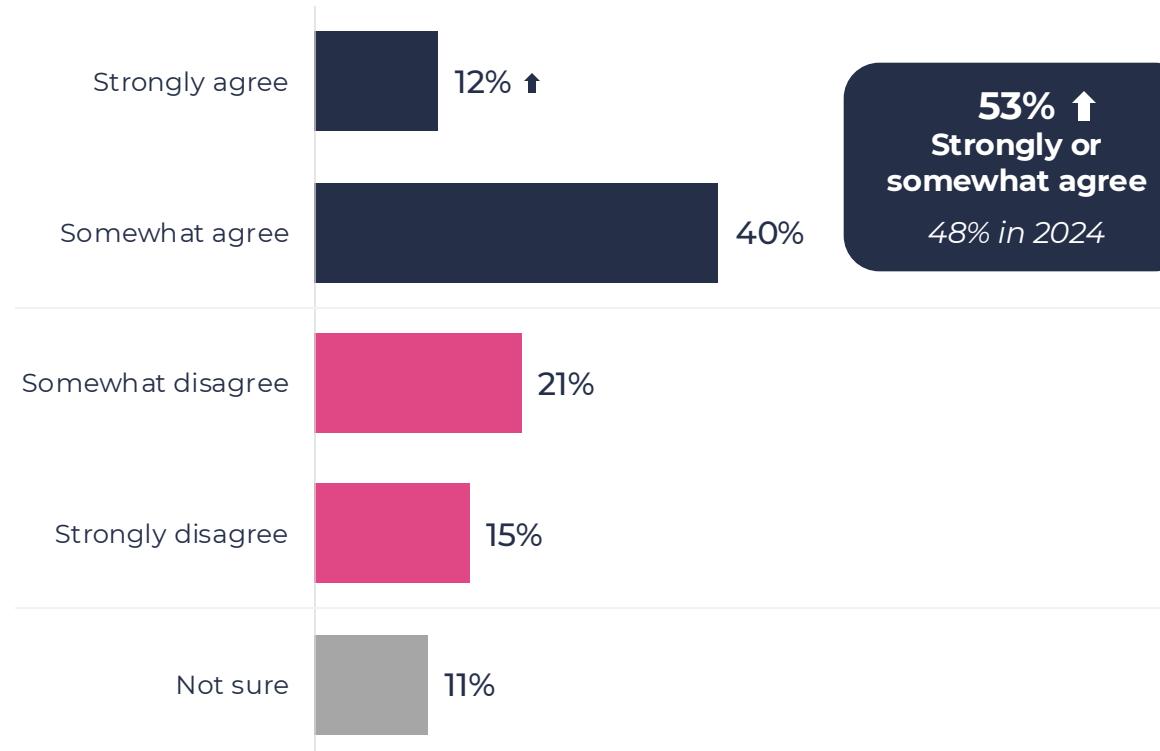
(If used prescription weight-loss medication in the past year)



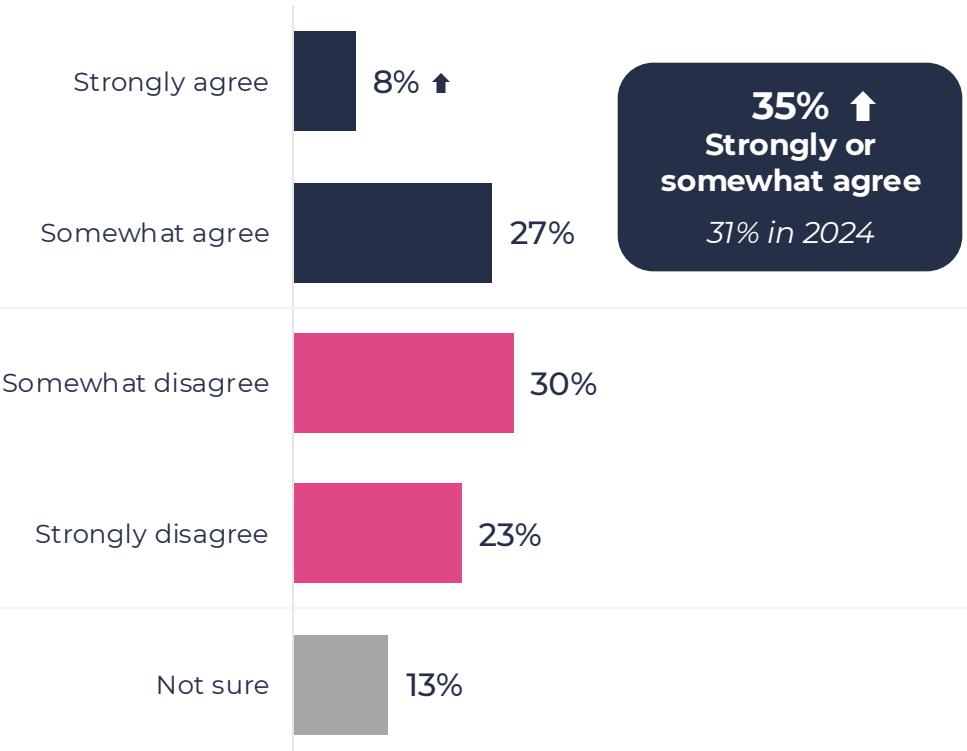
More than half of Americans agree that prescription weight-loss drugs are effective, while fewer agree they are safe.

Strong agreement about both the effectiveness and safety of prescription weight-loss drugs is up significantly from 2024.

Prescription Weight-Loss Drugs Are Effective

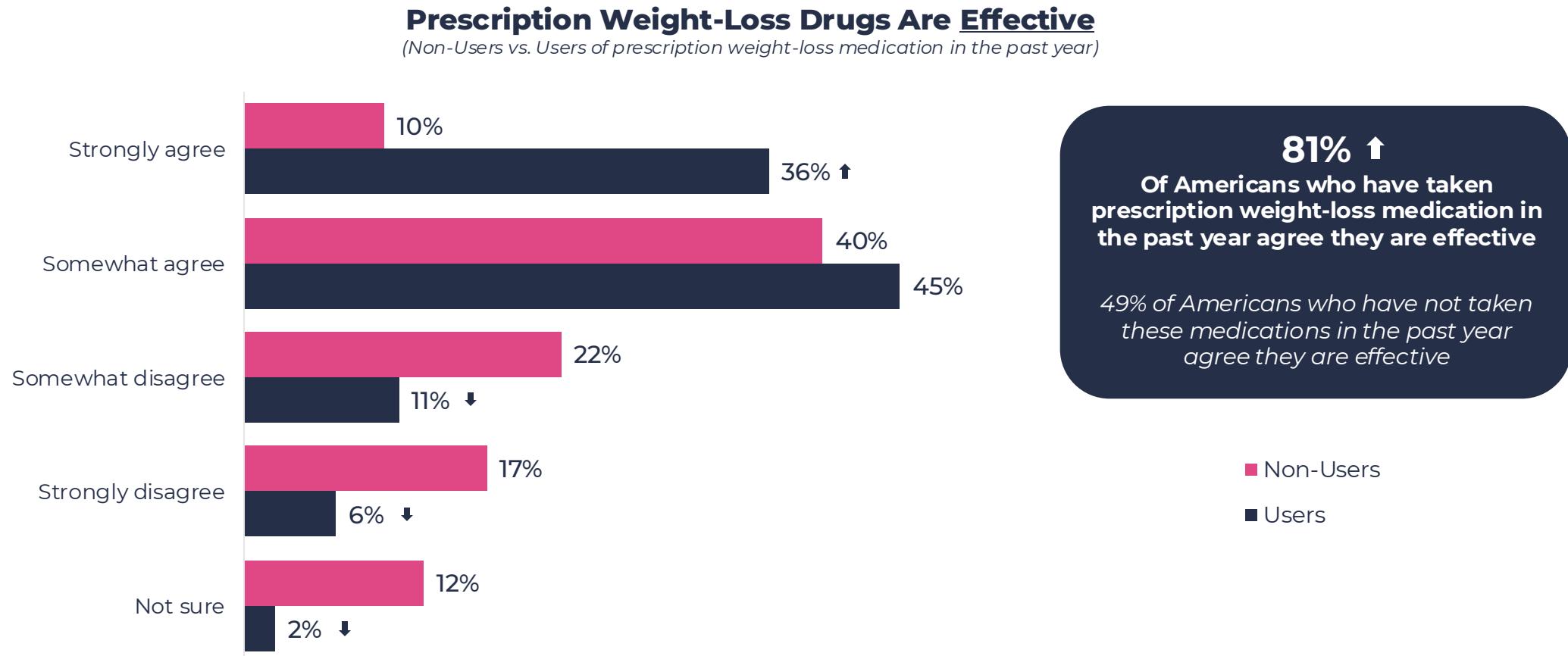


Prescription Weight-Loss Drugs Are Safe



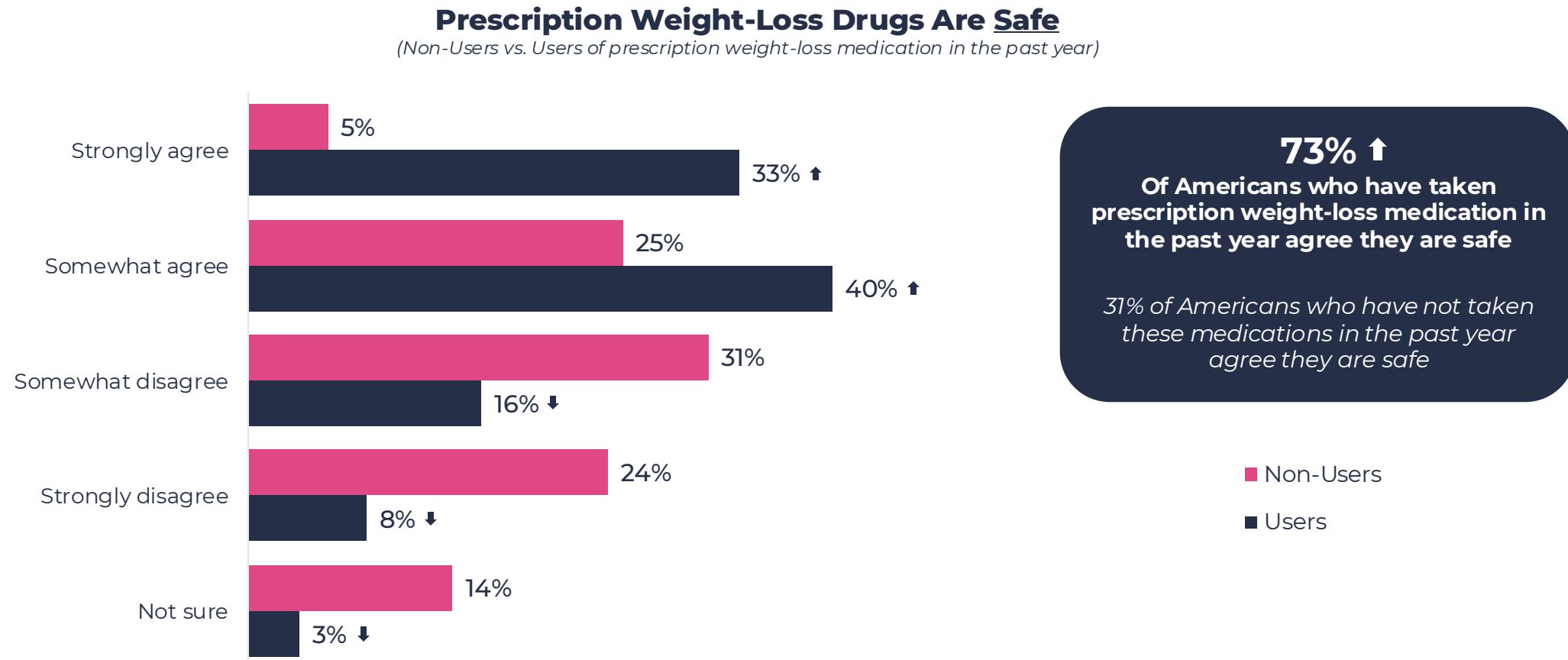
Among Americans who have taken prescription weight-loss medication in the past year, eight in ten agree they are effective.

Users of prescription weight-loss medications are more than three times as likely as non-users to strongly agree that the medications are effective (36% vs. 10%) and are far less likely to disagree (17% vs. 38%) or to be unsure (2% vs. 12%).



Among Americans who have taken prescription weight-loss medication in the past year, seven in ten agree they are safe.

Users of prescription weight-loss medications are more than six times as likely as non-users to strongly agree that the medications are safe (33% vs. 5%) and are far less likely to disagree (24% vs. 55%) or to be unsure (3% vs. 14%).





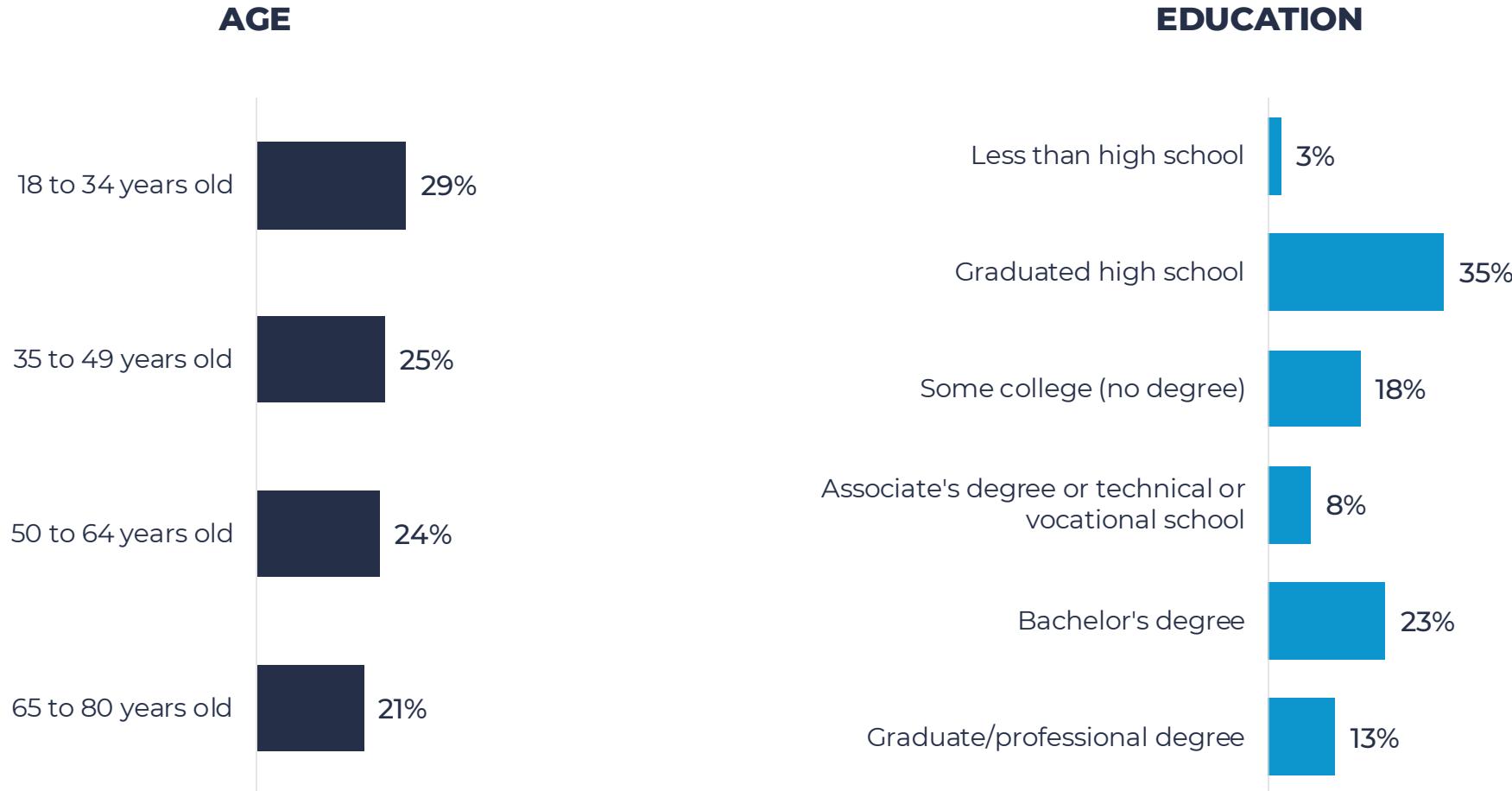
DEMOGRAPHICS



IFIC
FOOD & HEALTH
SURVEY

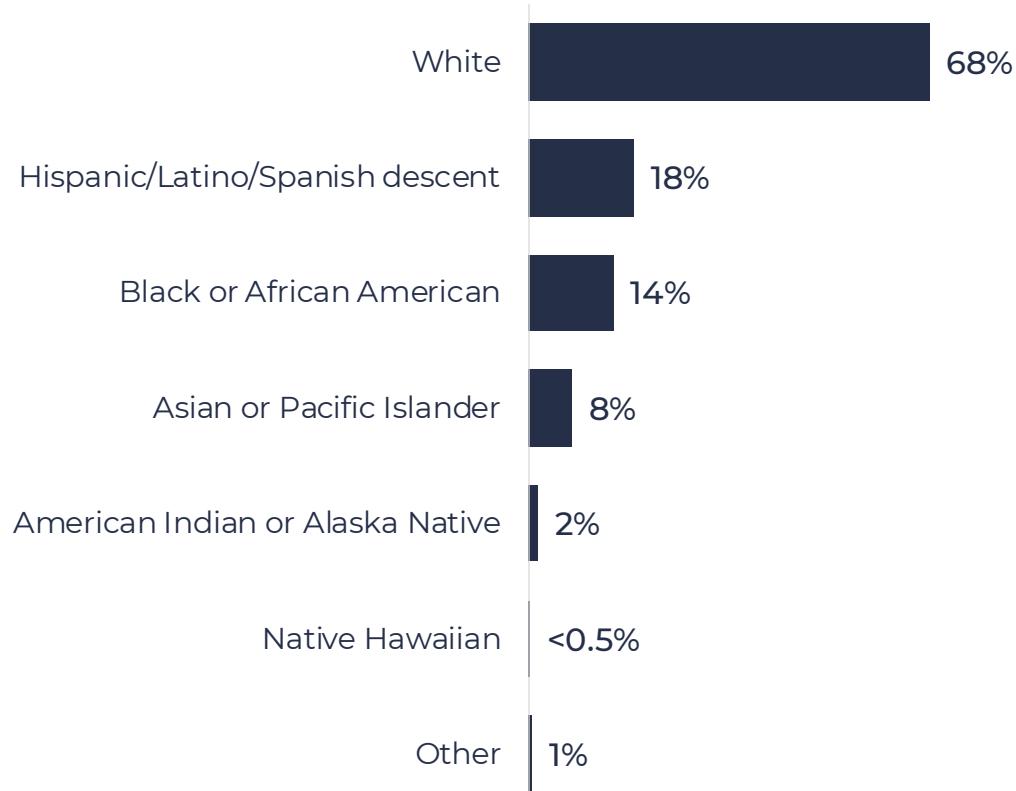
2025

Demographics

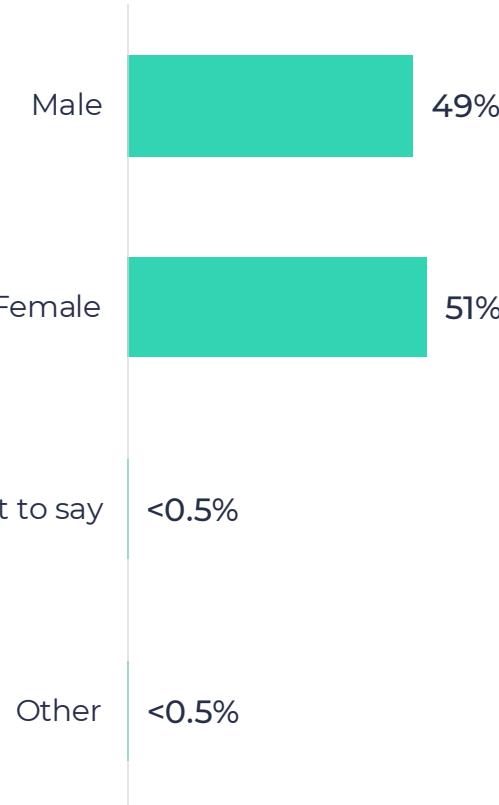


Demographics

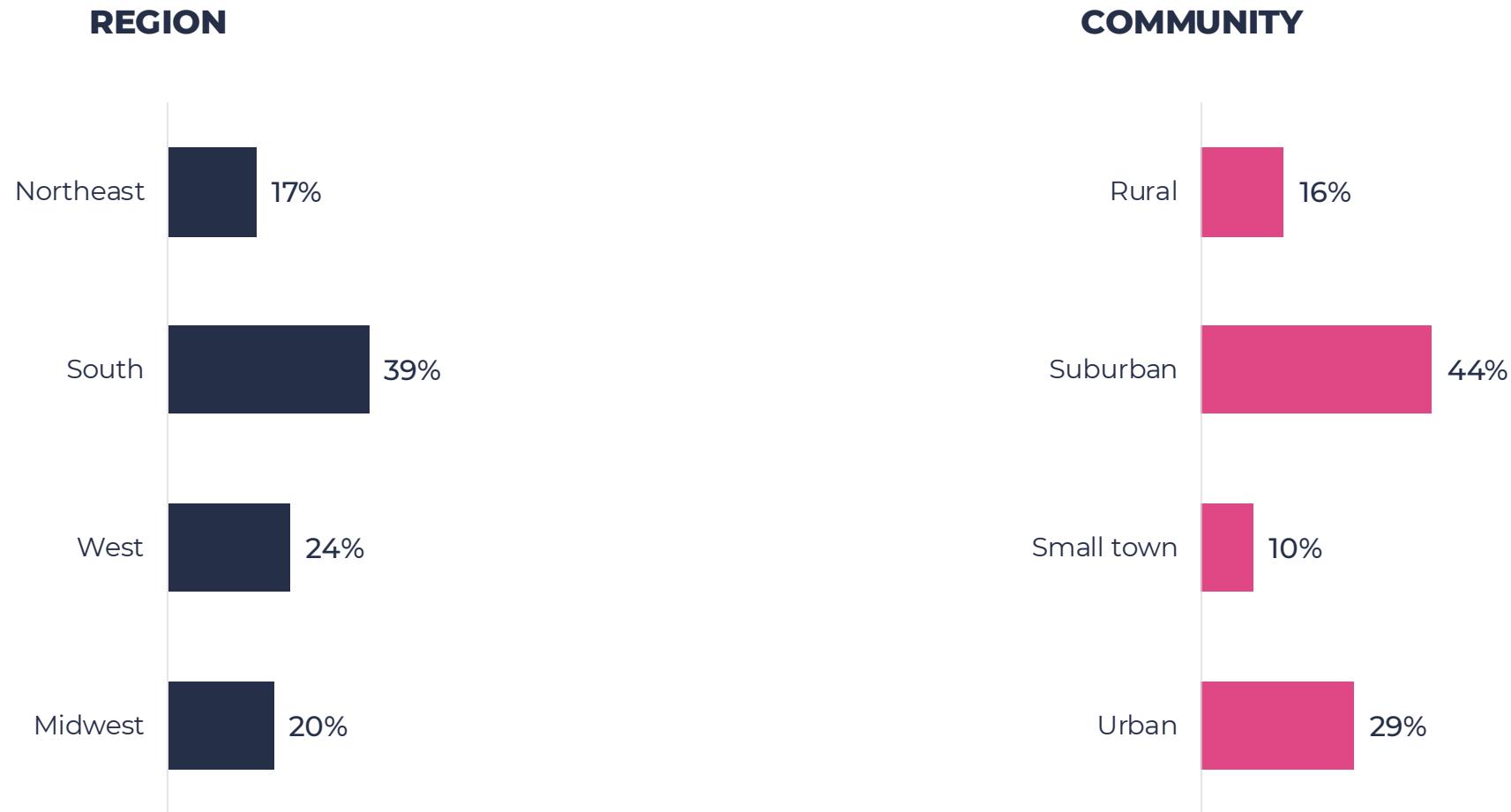
RACE/ETHNICITY



GENDER

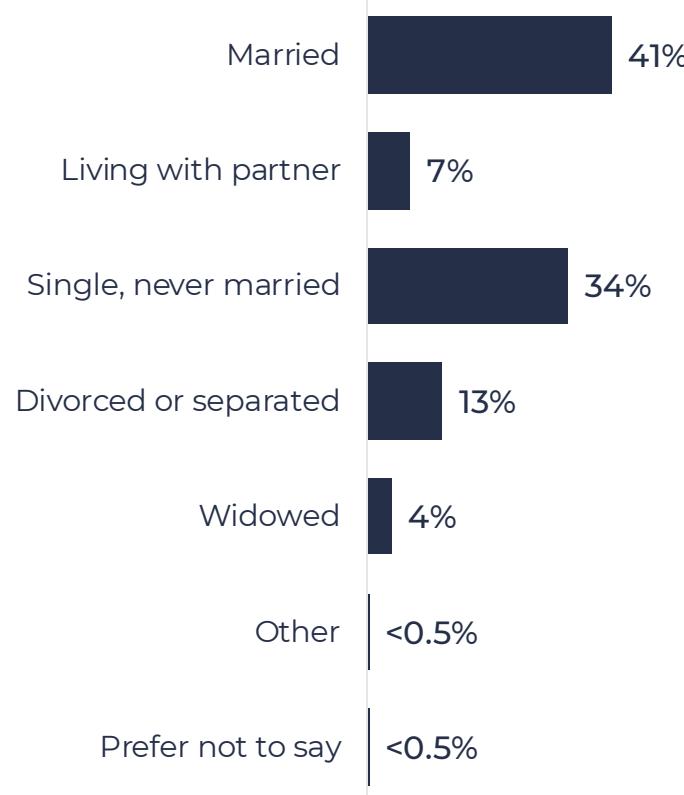


Demographics

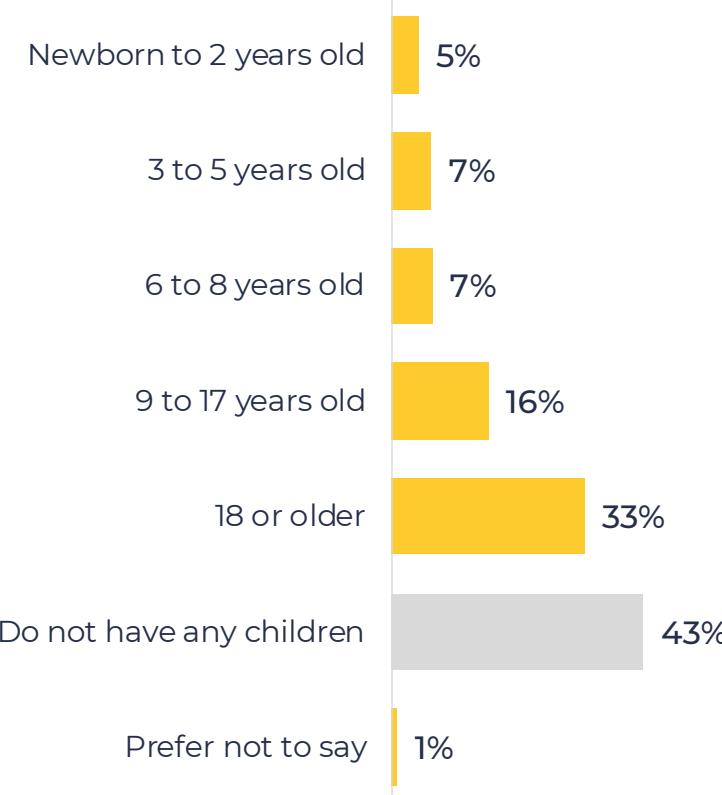


Demographics

MARITAL STATUS

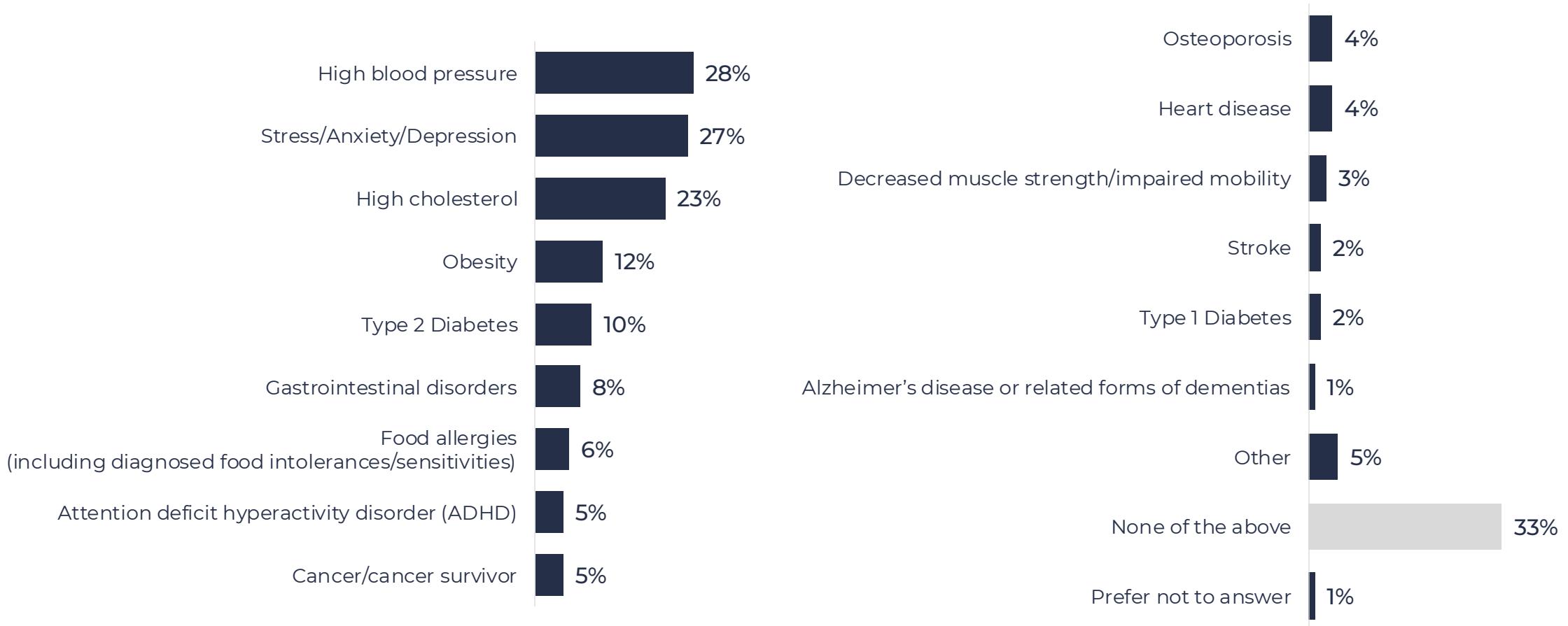


CHILDREN



Demographics

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

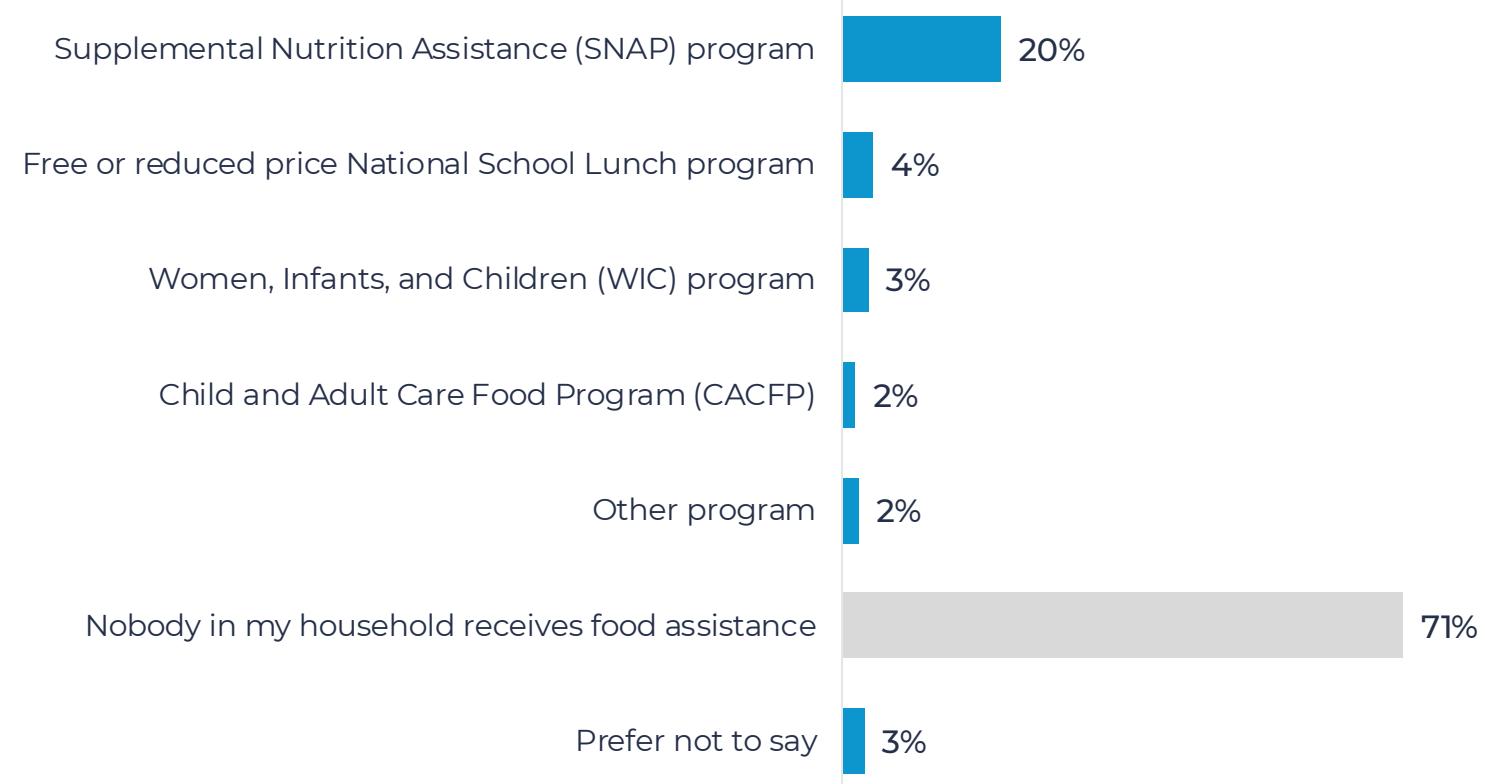


Demographics

INCOME

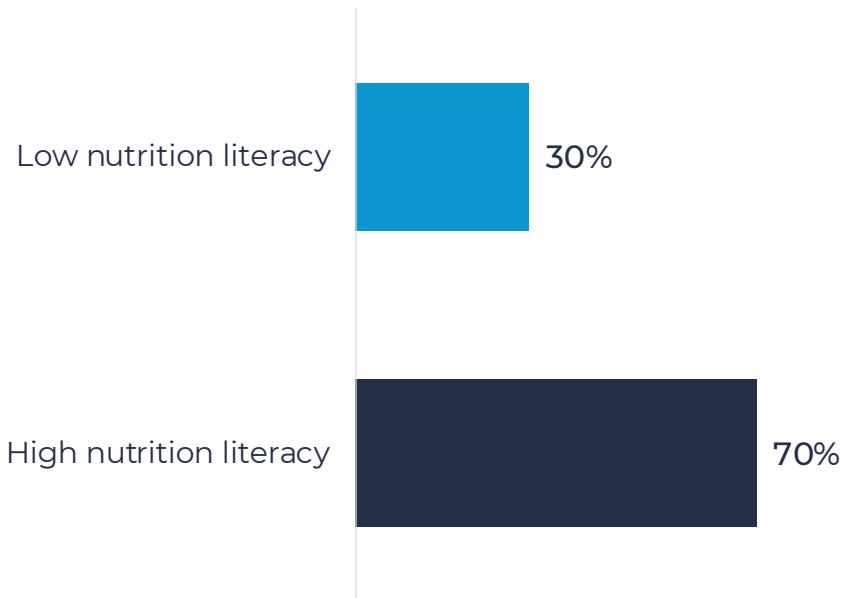


GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE



Demographics

NUTRITION LITERACY



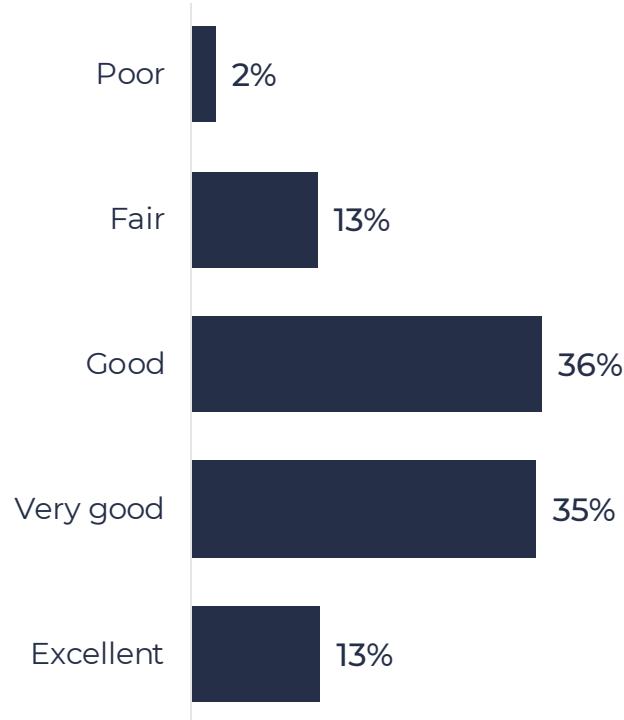
Nutrition literacy was determined using a 3-point quiz containing two questions developed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in their consumer research on Front-of-Package Nutrition Labeling, as shown in Appendix D of the [FDA pretest screener](#).

Sums of scores from the 3-point quiz were used to determine nutrition literacy as follows:

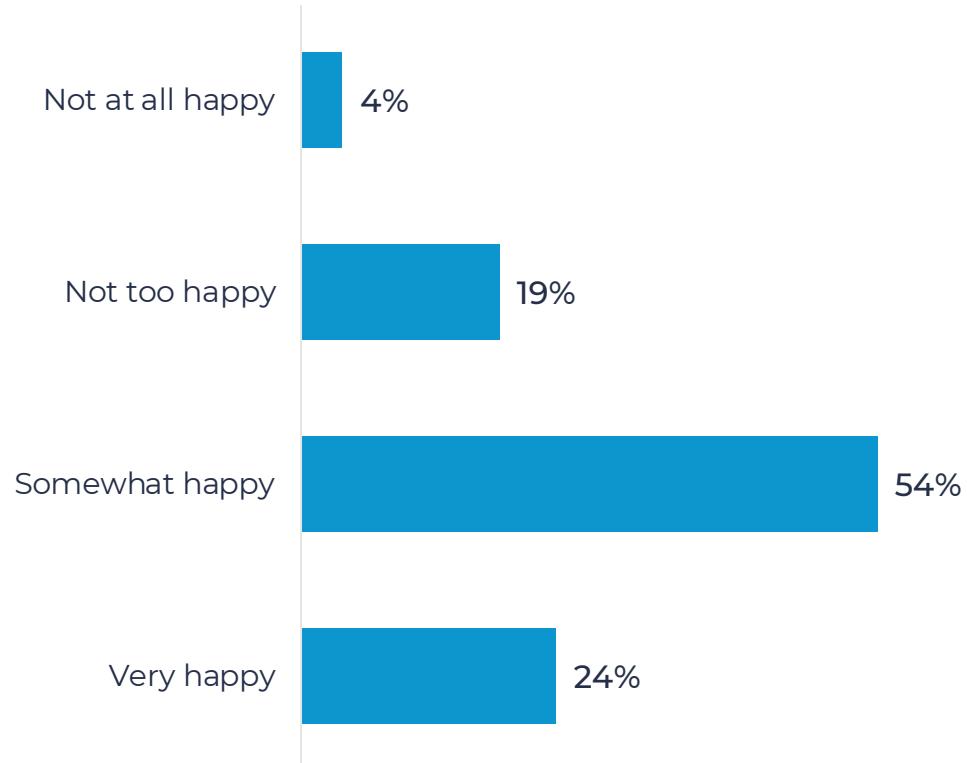
- 0 or 1 correct answers = **LOW** nutrition literacy
- 2 or 3 correct answers = **HIGH** nutrition literacy

Demographics

HEALTH STATUS

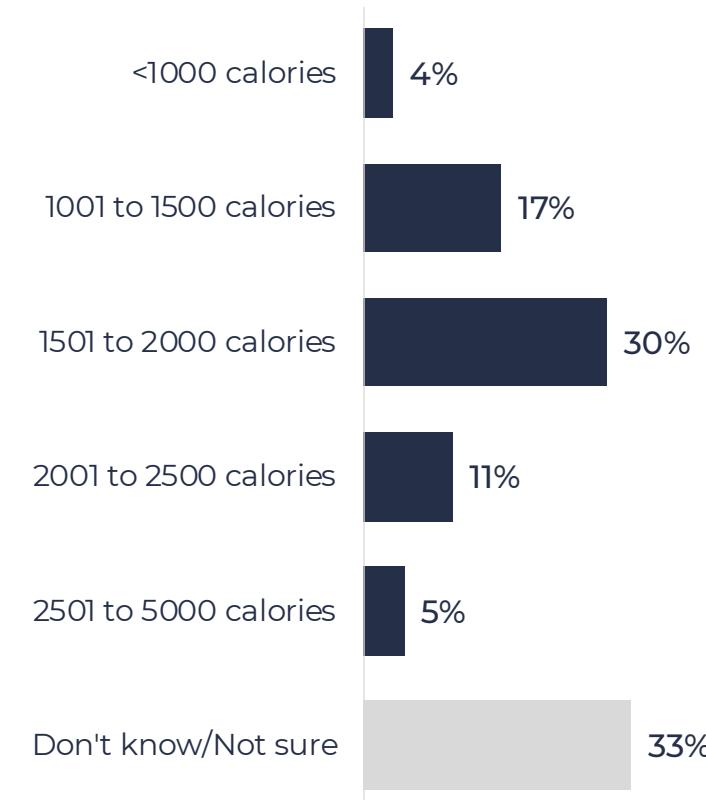


HAPPINESS

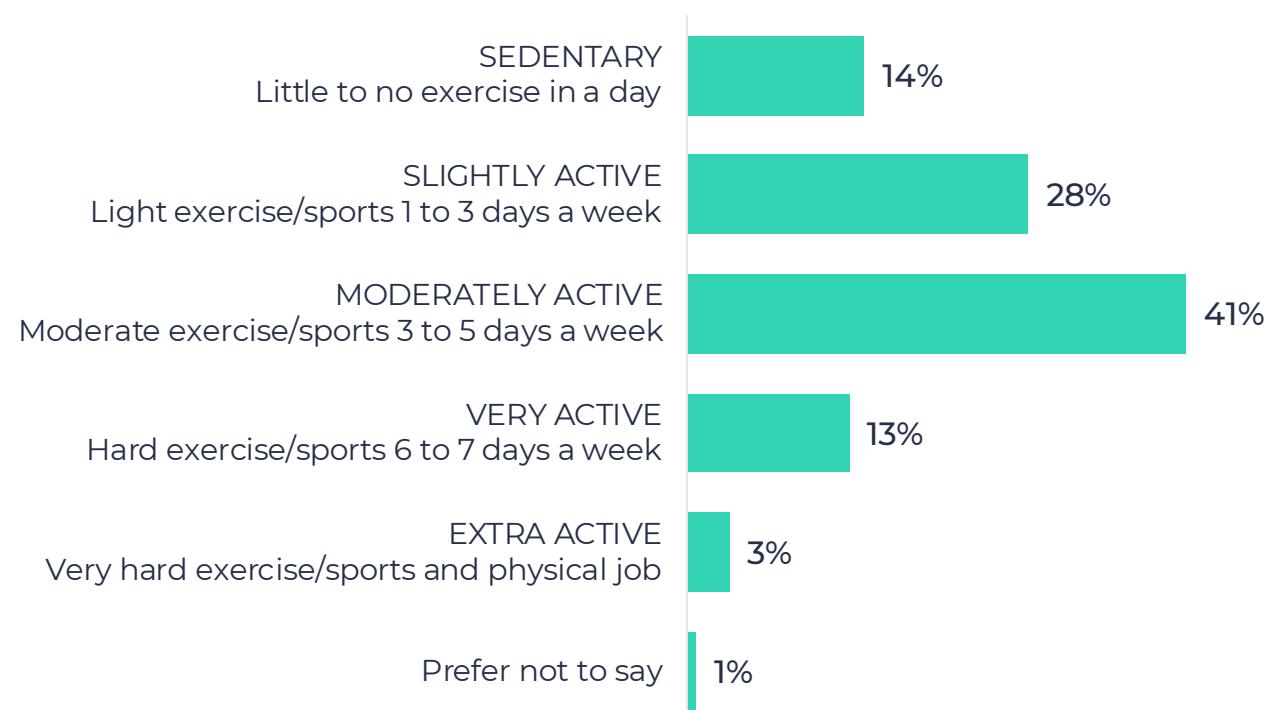


Demographics

ESTIMATED DAILY CALORIE NEEDS FOR WEIGHT MAINTENANCE



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVEL





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