

A Focus On **Sugars & Sweeteners**



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 Sugars & Sweeteners. December 2025. <https://ific.org/research/2025-food-health-survey-sweeteners/>

- 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*.



This year's *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 Sugars & Sweeteners



**FOOD & HEALTH
SURVEY**



2025

KEY FINDINGS ON SUGARS & SWEETENERS

More than six in ten Americans are concerned with how much sugar they consume. More than half are concerned with the type of sugar.

The *IFIC Food & Health Survey* has measured Americans' concern about the amount and type of sugar they consume three times over the past 20 years. In 2006, 62% were extremely (24%) or somewhat (39%) concerned about the amount of sugar they consumed. Concern rose to 71% in 2015, with 33% extremely and 38% somewhat concerned. In 2025, 63% are concerned—20% extremely and 43% somewhat.

Concern about the type of sugar followed a similar trend. In 2006, 52% were extremely (21%) or somewhat (32%) concerned. This rose to 64% in 2015, with 29% extremely and 35% somewhat concerned. In 2025, 56% are concerned—19% extremely and 38% somewhat.

Three in four Americans are trying to limit or avoid sugars in their diet.

Since 2017, the *IFIC Food & Health Survey* has asked Americans about their approach to sugar consumption. This year, three in four (75%) say they are trying to limit or avoid sugars in their diet, below the peak of 80% seen in 2019.

Most Americans (61%) say they are trying to limit sugar intake, a decrease from 66% last year, but similar to recent results: 61% in 2023, 59% in 2022, 57% in 2021, 61% in 2020, 67% in 2019, 66% in 2018, and 65% in 2017.

A smaller share, 14%, say they are trying to avoid sugars entirely, a three-point increase from last year which matches levels seen in 2022, 2021 and 2019. Since 2017, the percentage of Americans fully avoiding sugars has remained relatively stable, ranging from 11% to 14%.

In contrast, one-quarter of Americans (25%) say they are not trying to limit or avoid sugar in their diet. That figure is similar to last year's 24% and similar to recent results: 28% in 2023, 27% in 2022, 28% in 2021, 26% in 2020, 20% in 2019, 23% in 2018, and 24% in 2017. Overall, the long-term trend shows that most Americans are making some effort to reduce their sugar intake.

KEY FINDINGS ON SUGARS & SWEETENERS

Among those trying to limit or avoid sugars in their diet, the majority are focused on reducing added sugars.

Since 2023, the *IFIC Food & Health Survey* has asked Americans what types of sugars they are trying to reduce in their diet. Among those who say they are trying to limit or avoid sugars in their diet, most continue to target added sugars.

This year, among the 75% of Americans who say they are trying to limit or avoid sugars, 63% are targeting added sugars. Far fewer (13%) are trying to reduce their intake of natural sugars. About one-quarter (24%) report reducing both added and natural sugars. This is lower than in 2024, when 30% said they were cutting back on both natural and added sugars.

Among those trying to limit or avoid sugars in their diet, the most common action taken remains choosing water over caloric beverages.

Between 2017 and 2021, the *IFIC Food & Health Survey* asked Americans who were trying to limit or avoid sugar intake what strategies they used. The 2025 survey revisited this question.

The most common approach remains drinking water instead of caloric beverages. This year, 55% of seeking to limit or avoid sugars say they use this strategy, up from 51% in 2021 yet below the 64% reported in 2017. All six times this question has been asked in the *IFIC Food & Health Survey*, choosing water instead of caloric beverages has been the top response.

Compared with 2021, more Americans now report using several other strategies to manage sugar intake. These include using the Nutrition Facts label to select items with less added sugar (30% vs. 23%), limiting certain foods and beverages (41% vs. 33%), eliminating certain foods and beverages (36% vs. 31%), choosing products labeled “reduced sugar” (27% vs. 22%), and buying “sugar-free” options when available (25% vs. 21%).

KEY FINDINGS ON SUGARS & SWEETENERS

More than one in four Americans have a positive opinion of low- and no-calorie sweeteners, up from 2017 and 2018.

The 2025 IFIC Food & Health Survey revisited Americans' opinion of low- and no-calorie sweeteners (e.g., sucralose, aspartame, and stevia), a topic last explored in 2018. This year, 10% hold a very positive view, 17% somewhat positive, 28% are neutral, 19% somewhat negative, 22% very negative, and 4% are not sure.

Positive sentiment has grown slightly since 2017, driven largely by an increase in "very positive" views, which have doubled from 5% in 2018 to 10% in 2025. At the same time, strong negative sentiment has eased, with "very negative" opinions declining to 22% from 26% in 2017.

Overall, these results suggest a softening of negative views and a rise in positive perceptions. In total, 27% of Americans now view low- and no-calorie sweeteners positively, an increase from 23% in 2018 and 20% in 2017. Neutral opinions remain steady at 28%, roughly matching previous years. Unfavorable sentiment has declined, with 41% holding a negative opinion compared with 45% in both 2017 and 2018.

More than one-third of Americans believe the U.S. government is responsible for approving the use of low- and no-calorie sweeteners.

Since 2021, the IFIC Food & Health Survey has asked Americans who they believe is responsible for approving low- and no-calorie sweeteners (LNCS) in the U.S. food supply.

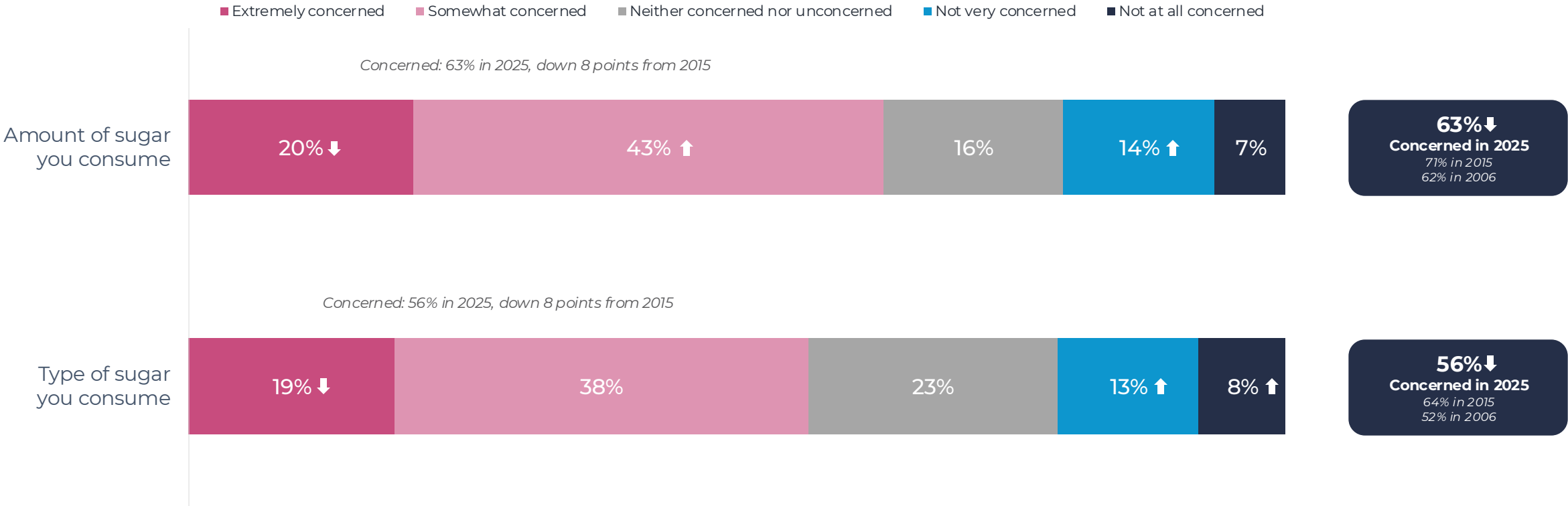
Compared with 2021, more Americans now identify the government as responsible, rising to 35%, a four-point increase. Fewer are unsure, dropping seven points to 18%. About the same share (28%) believe companies are responsible, with 16% pointing to LNCS manufacturers and 12% to companies that sell products containing them. One in ten (10%) now believe no authority oversees LNCS approval, up from 8%. The same share (7%) attribute responsibility to independent scientists.

These findings suggest growing public recognition of the government's role in approving LNCS, although a substantial portion of Americans remain uncertain or assign responsibility elsewhere.

More than six in ten Americans are concerned with how much sugar they consume. More than half are concerned with the type of sugar.

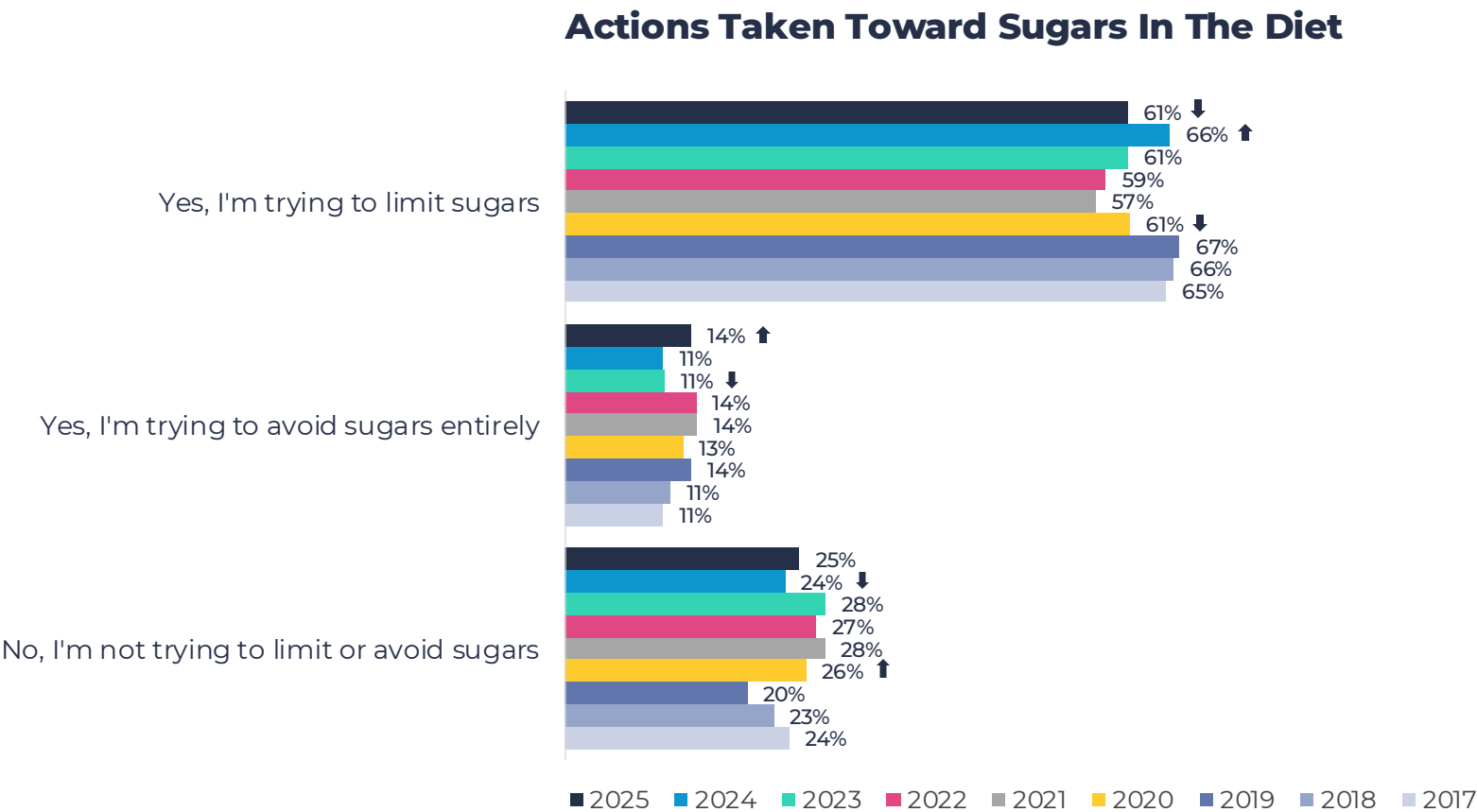
In 2025, concerns about the amount and type of sugar consumed are lower than in 2015 and similar to those expressed in 2006, the first year of the *IFIC Food & Health Survey*.

Concern With The Amount & Type Of Sugar Consumed



Three in four Americans are trying to limit or avoid sugars in their diet.

The percentage of Americans who report trying to limit sugars or avoid sugars in their diet peaked in 2019 (80%).

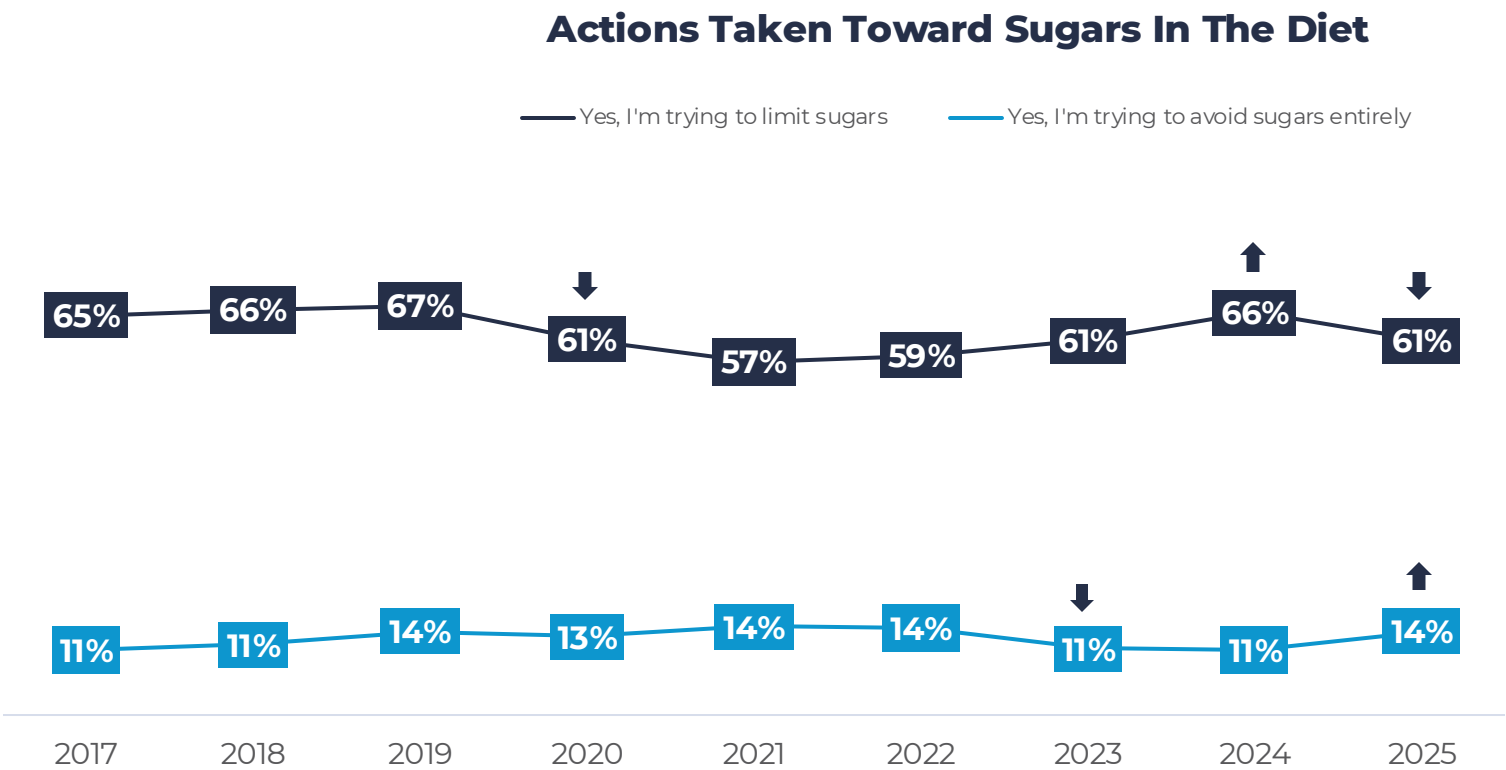


75%
Are trying
to limit or avoid
sugar in their diet

76% in 2024 ↑
72% in 2023
73% in 2022
72% in 2021
74% in 2020 ↓
80% in 2019
77% in 2018
76% in 2017

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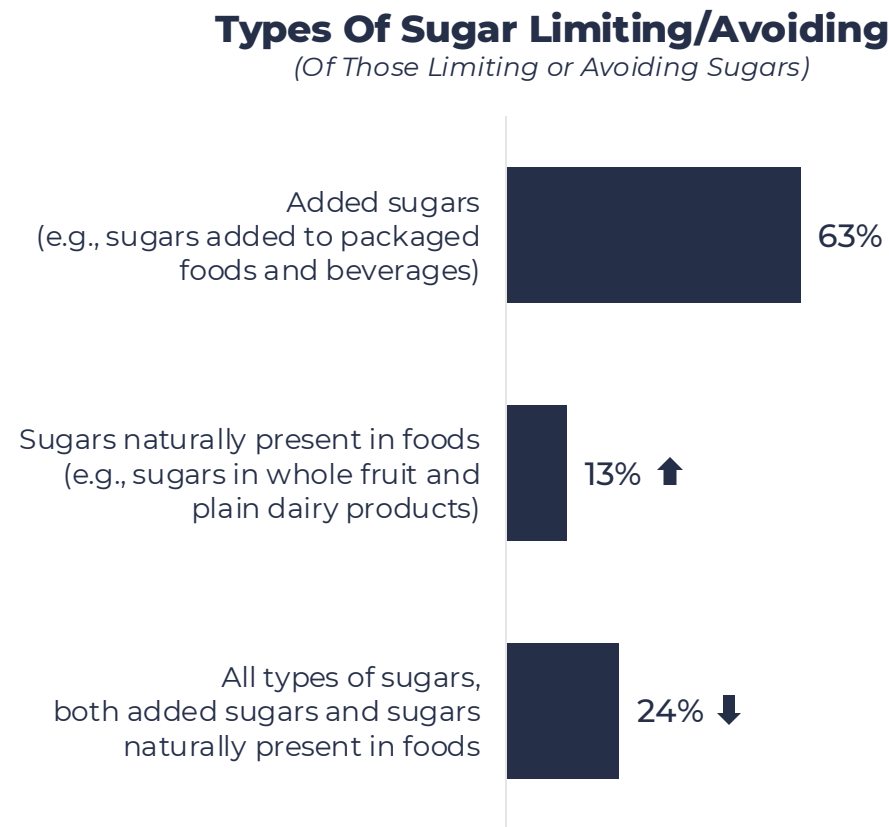


75%
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76% in 2024 ↑
72% in 2023
73% in 2022
72% in 2021
74% in 2020 ↓
80% in 2019
77% in 2018
76% in 2017

Among those trying to limit or avoid sugars in their diet, the majority are focused on reducing added sugars.

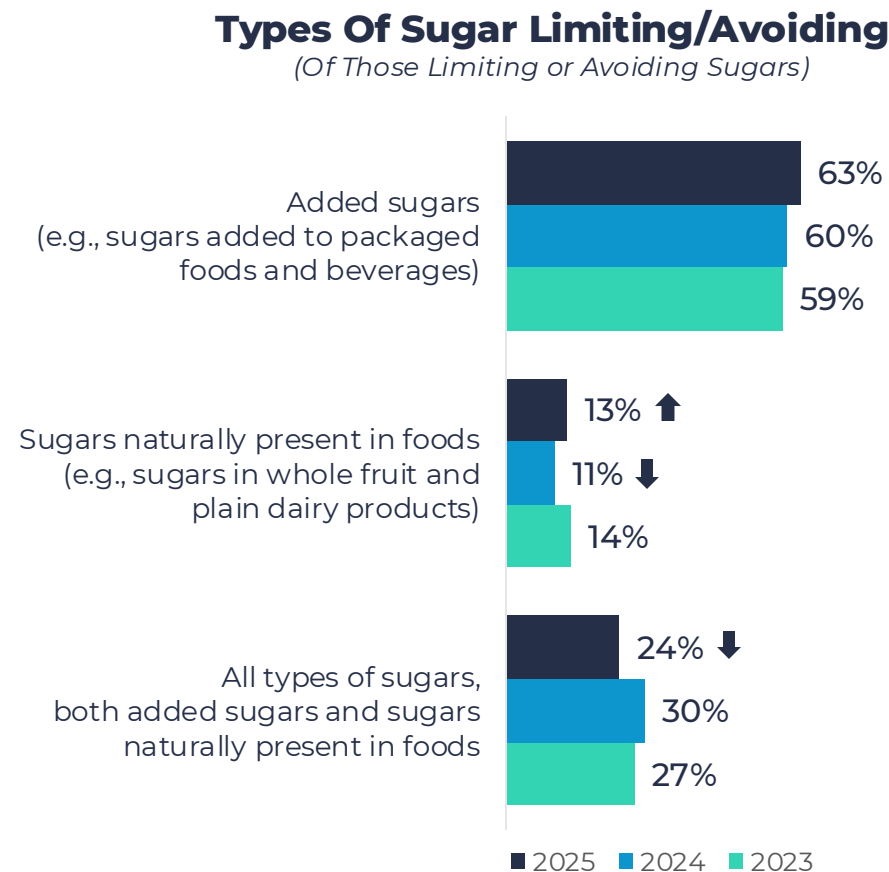
Six in ten (63%) say they limit or avoid added sugars, somewhat consistent with 2023 and 2024. More than one in ten (13%) limit or avoid natural sugars, up from 11% in 2024 yet similar to the 14% reported in 2023. Nearly one in four (24%) limit or avoid all types of sugars, down from 30% in 2024.



63%
Are trying to limit or avoid added sugars in their diet
60% in 2024
59% in 2023

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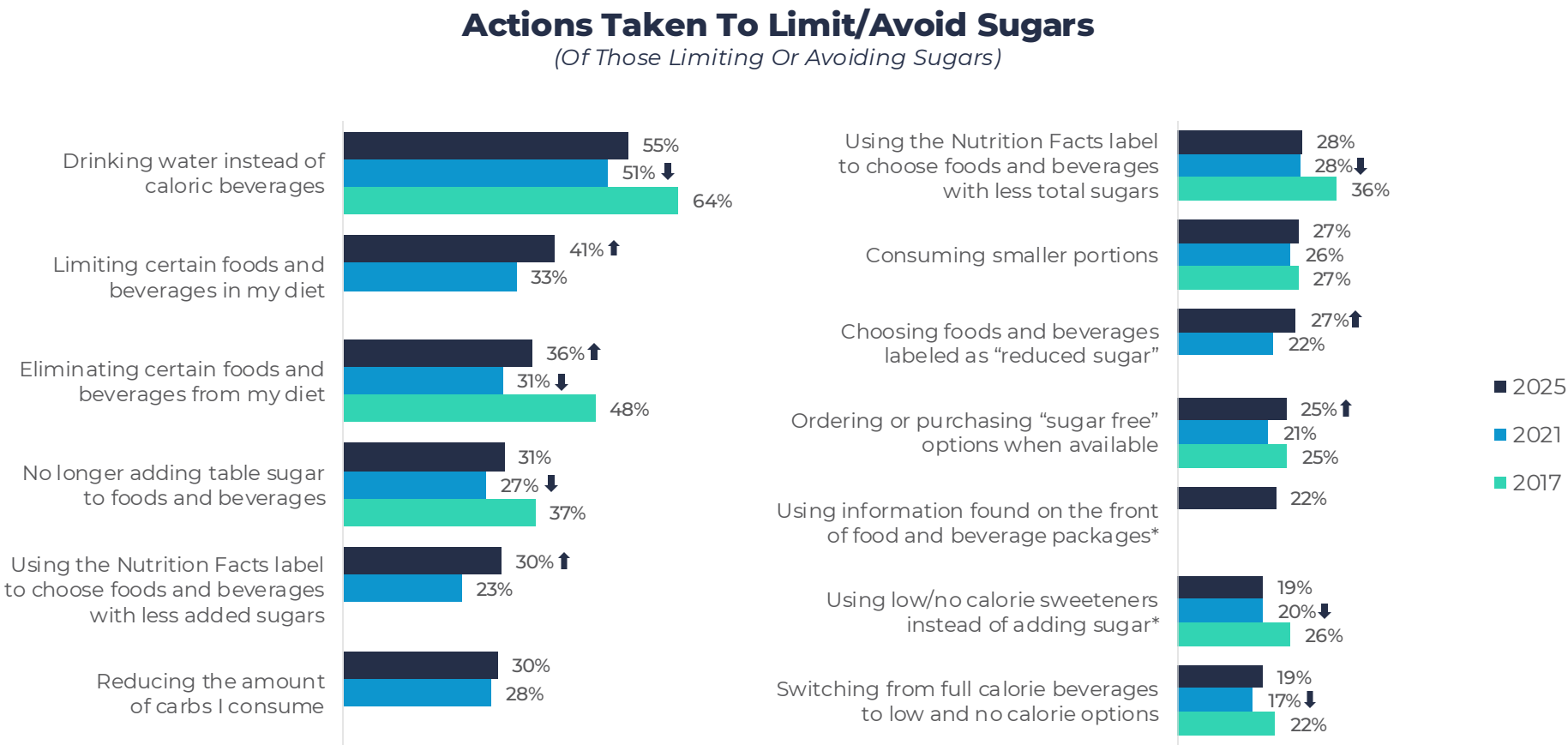
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63%
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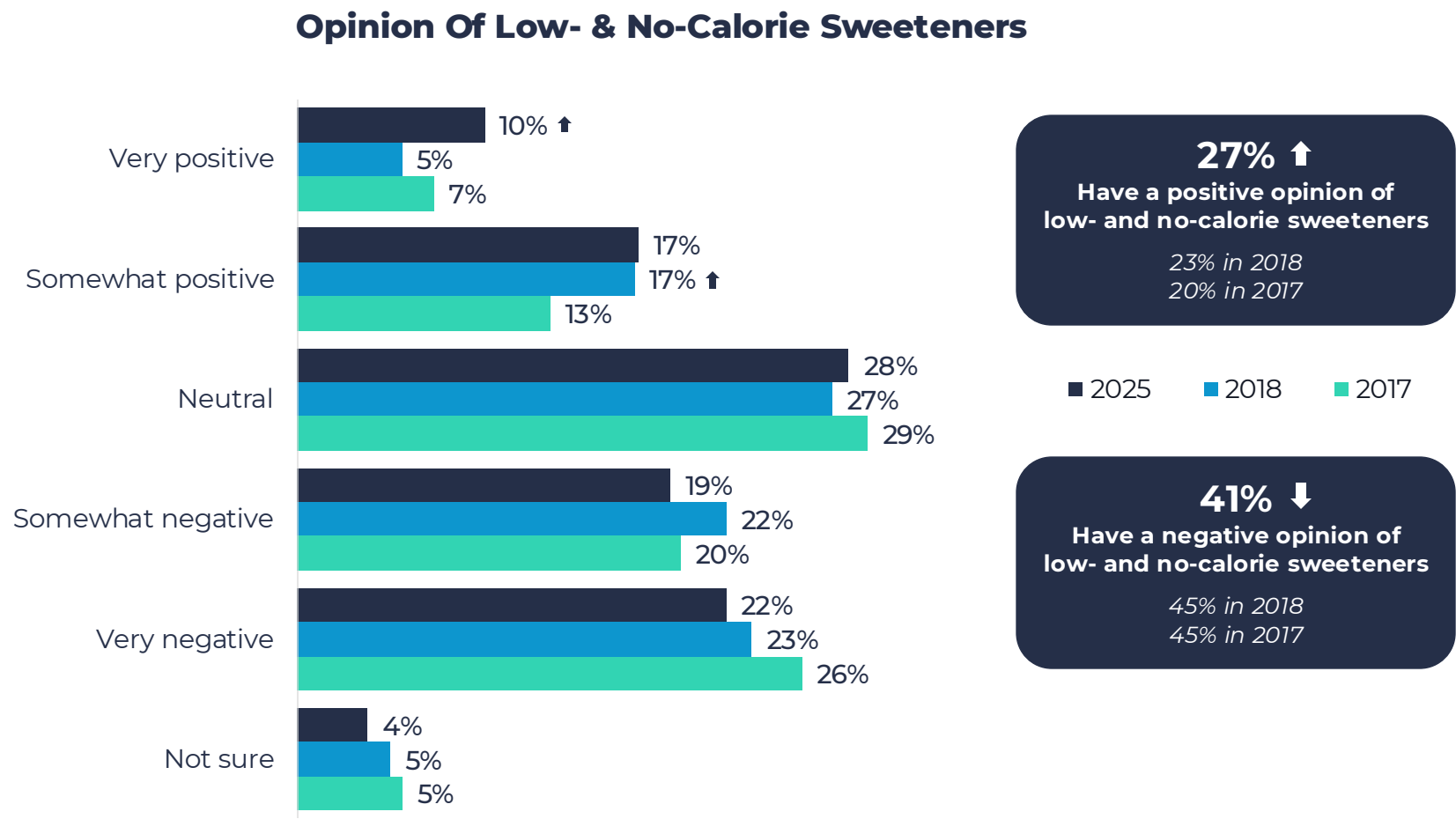
Among those trying to limit or avoid sugars in their diet, the most common action taken remains choosing water over caloric beverages.

Compared with 2021, more Americans say they use Nutrition Facts labels to choose items with less added sugar, limit or eliminate certain foods and beverages, select “reduced sugar” products, and buy “sugar-free” options when available. However, compared with 2017, fewer Americans report taking each of these actions, except for consuming smaller portions.



More than one in four Americans have a positive opinion of low- and no-calorie sweeteners, up from 2017 and 2018.

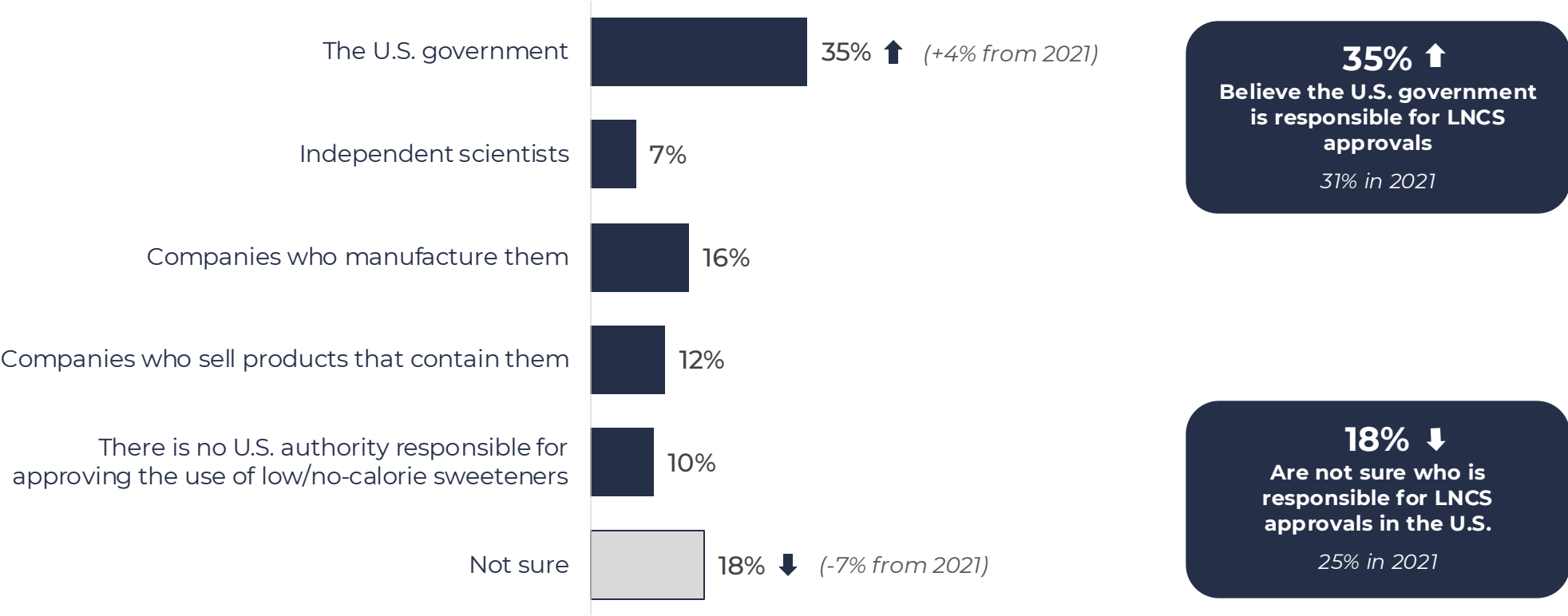
The increase in positive sentiment is driven by the increase in very positive sentiment, up to 10% from 5% in 2018 and 7% in 2017.



More than one-third of Americans believe the U.S. government is responsible for approving the use of low- and no-calorie sweeteners.

Compared to 2021, more Americans now believe the government is responsible for approving the use of low- and no-calorie sweeteners in the U.S. (35%), and fewer are not sure who is responsible (18%).

Perceived Responsibility For Approving Low- & No-Calorie Sweeteners In The U.S.



DEMOGRAPHICS

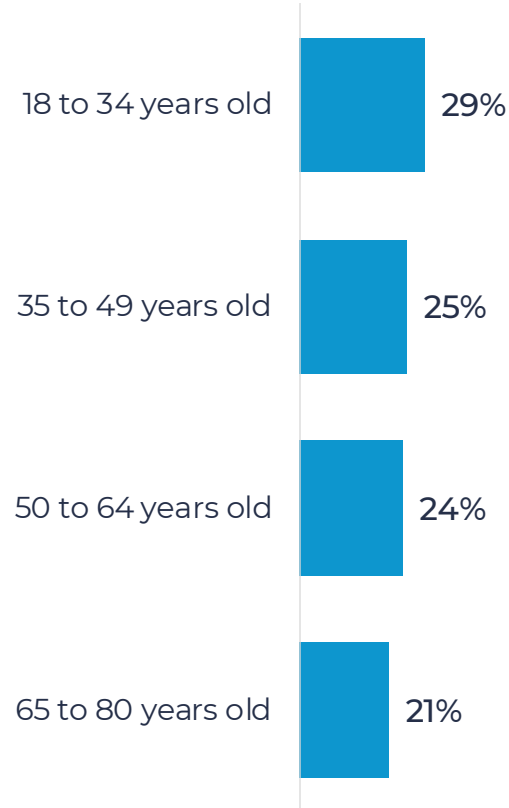


FOOD & HEALTH
SURVEY

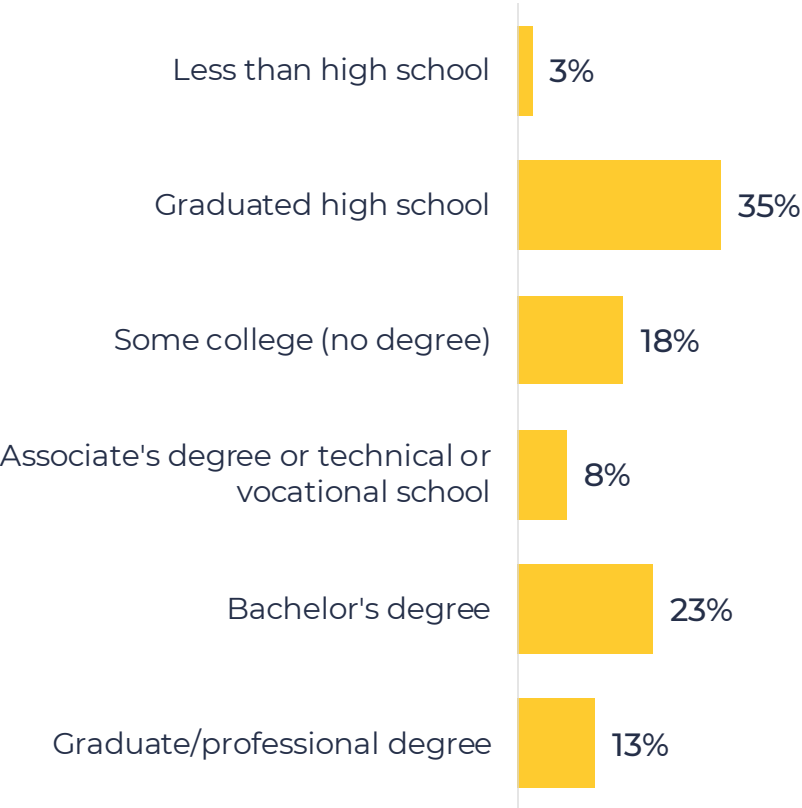
2025

Demographics

AGE

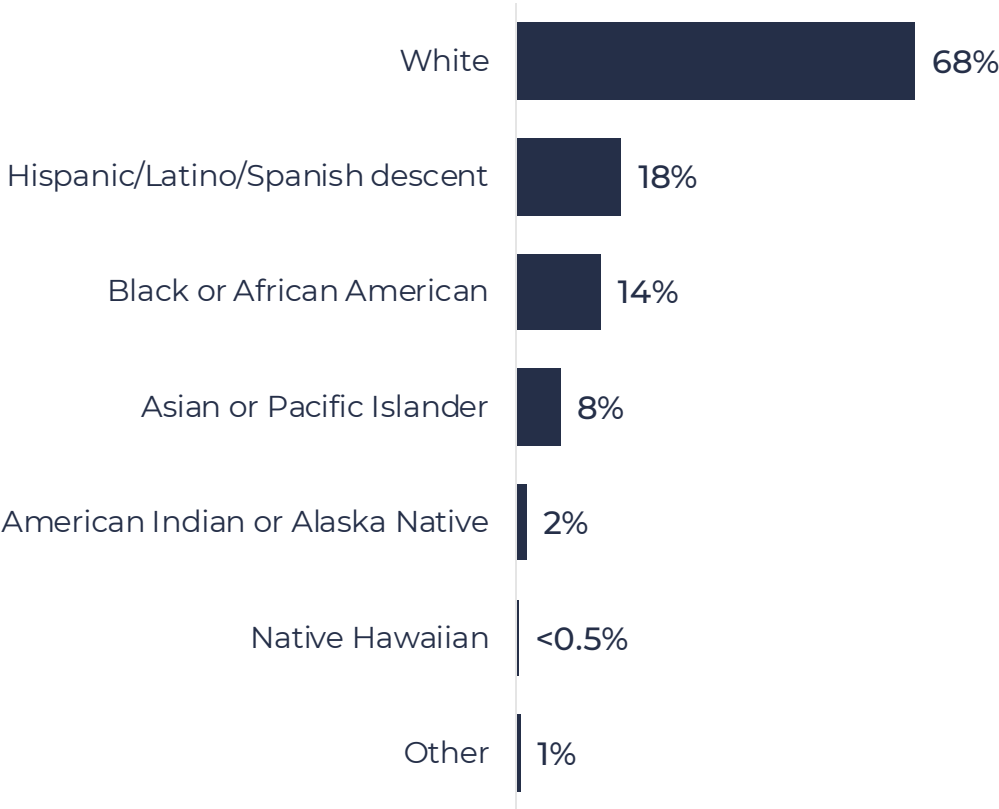


EDUCATION

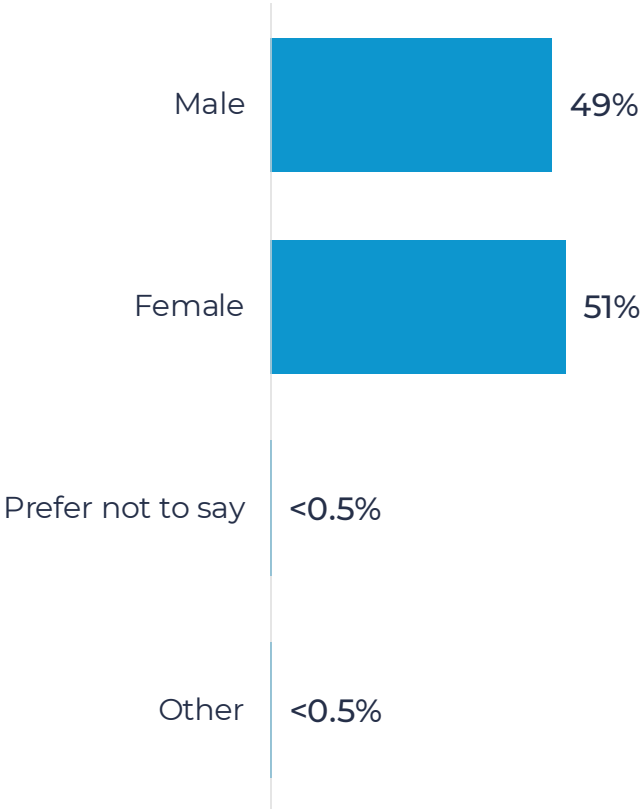


Demographics

RACE/ETHNICITY

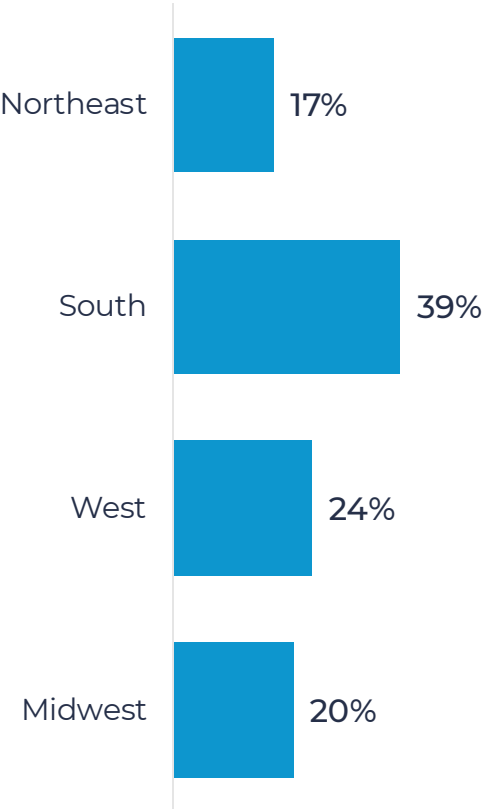


GENDER

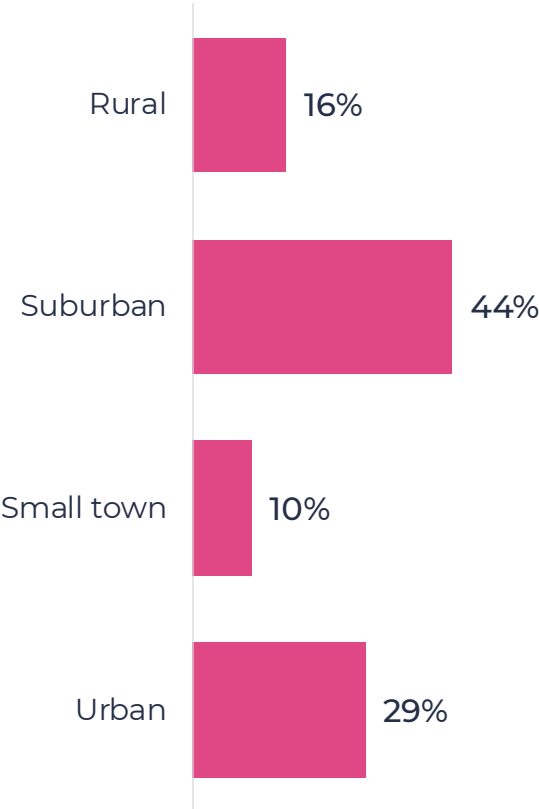


Demographics

REGION

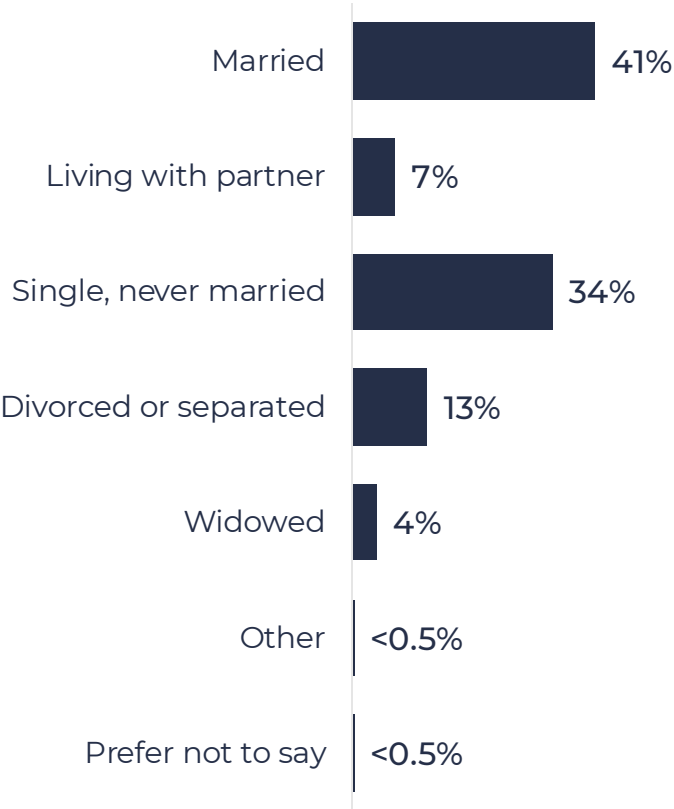


COMMUNITY

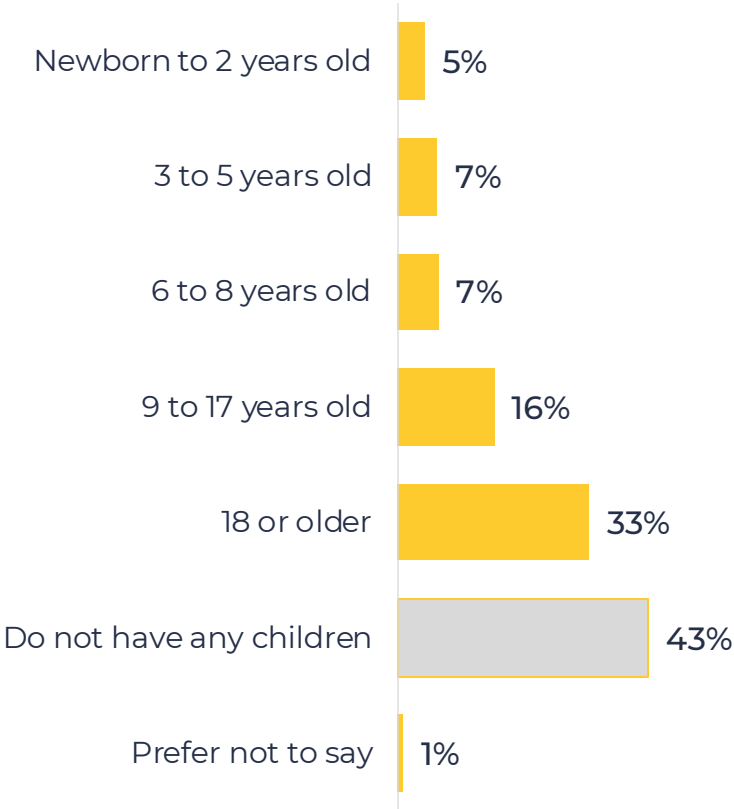


Demographics

MARITAL STATUS

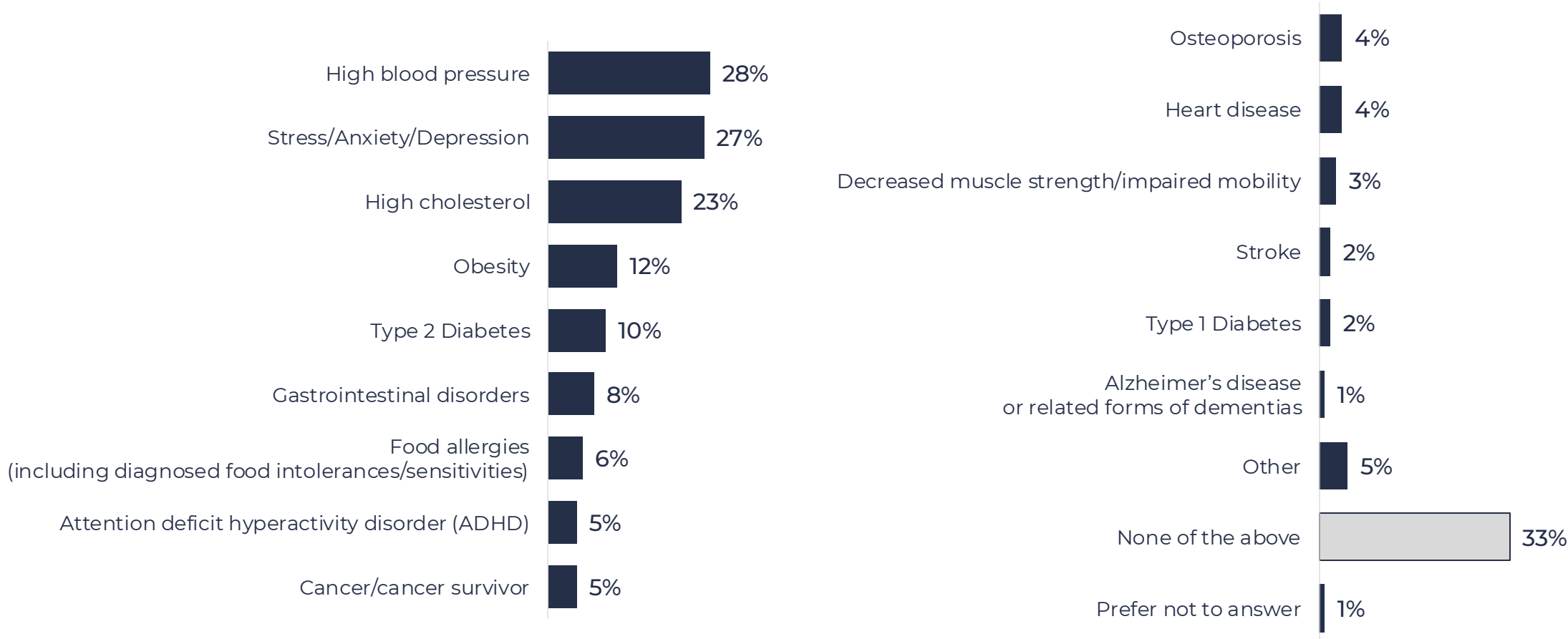


CHILDREN



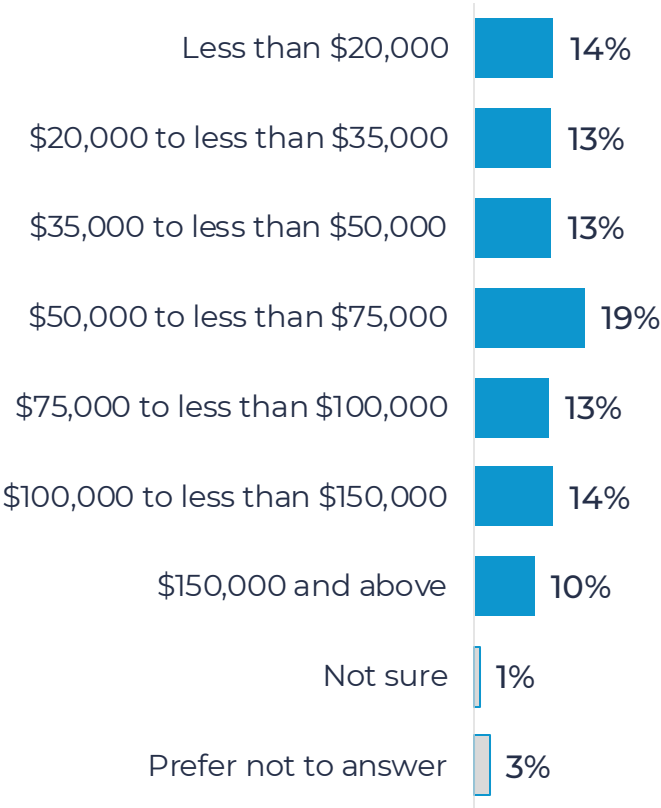
Demographics

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

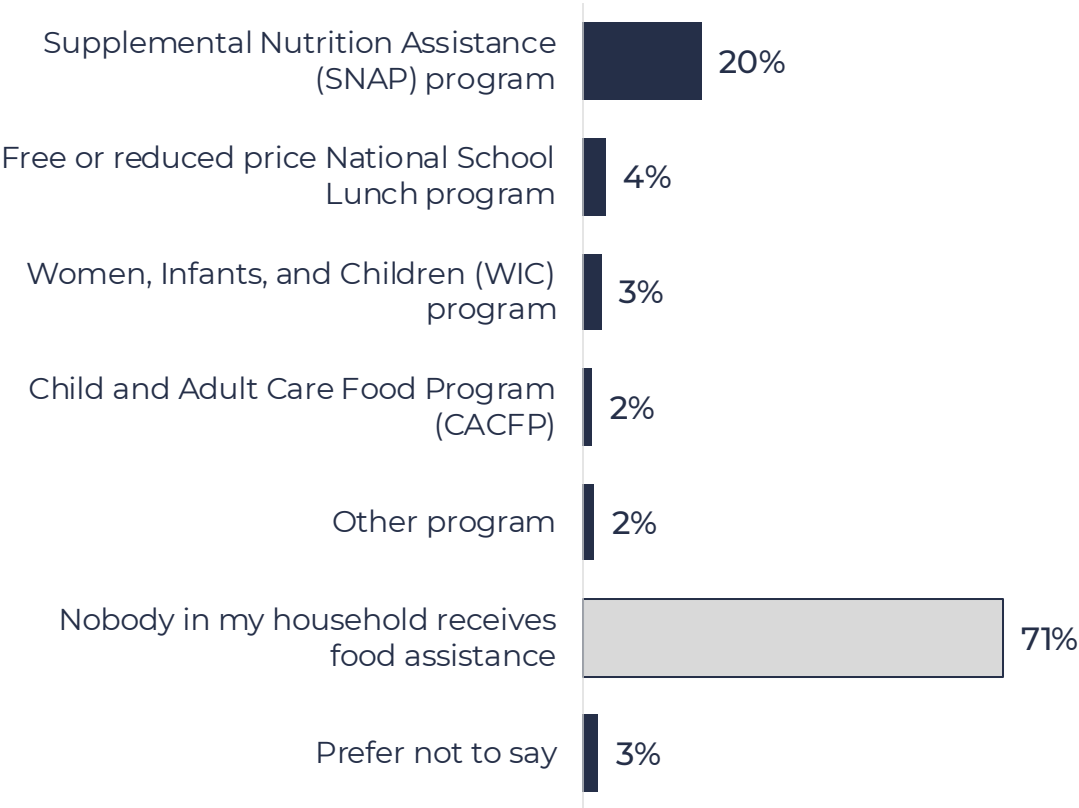


Demographics

INCOME

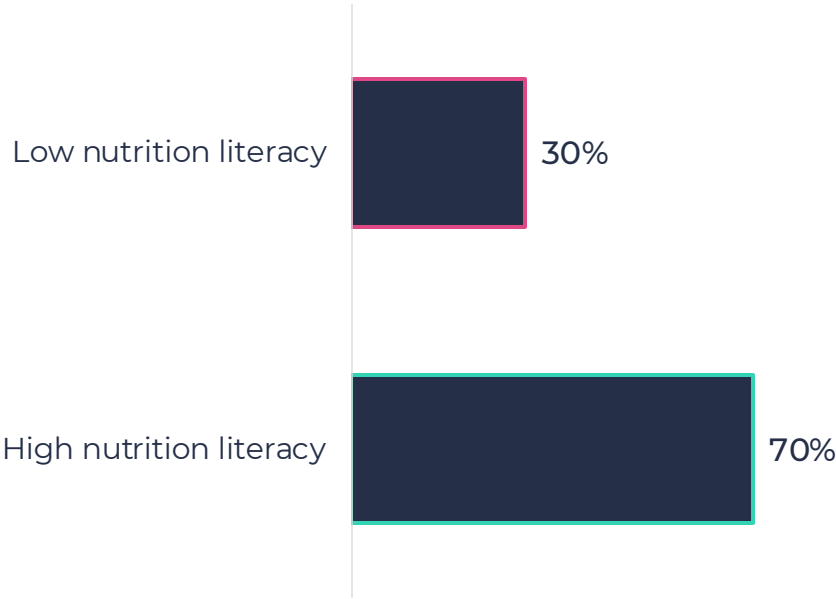


GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE



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



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