




INTERNATIONAL FOOD INFORMATION COUNCIL FOUNDATION

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2012 Food & Health Survey

Consumer Attitudes Toward Food Safety, Nutrition & Health

May 2012

METHODOLOGY

An online survey was conducted with 1,057 Americans about their health, diet, influences on food selection, and related knowledge and beliefs.

Methodology	Web Survey
Conducted By	Mathew Greenwald & Associates (Washington, DC), using Research Now's consumer panel.
Population*	The results were weighted to ensure that they are as reflective as possible of the American population ages 18 to 80, as seen in the 2011 Current Population survey. Specifically, they were weighted by age, education, gender, race/ethnicity, and region.
Data Collection Period	April 3 to April 13, 2012
Sample Size (Error)	1,057 Americans ages 18 to 80

*Weighting is a widely accepted statistical technique that is used to ensure that the distribution of the sample reflects that of the population on key demographics. With any data collection method, even when the outgoing sample is balanced to the Census, some populations are more likely than others to respond.

NOTES:

- Respondents who completed the survey in less than seven minutes were not included in the final sample.
- Percentages may not add to 100% or to totals shown due to rounding.

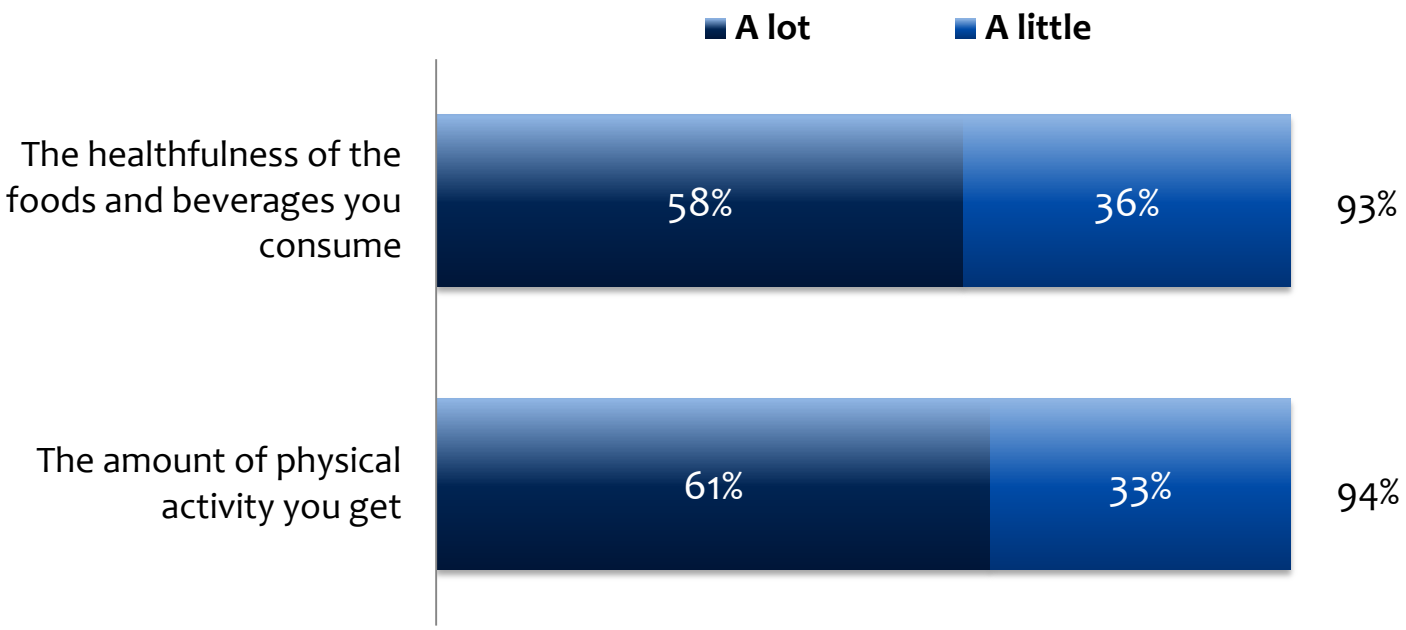
1 HEALTH AND DIET

HEALTHFULNESS OF DIET AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Six out of ten Americans have given *a lot* of thought to their diet and exercise.

Over the past year, how much thought have you given to the following issues?

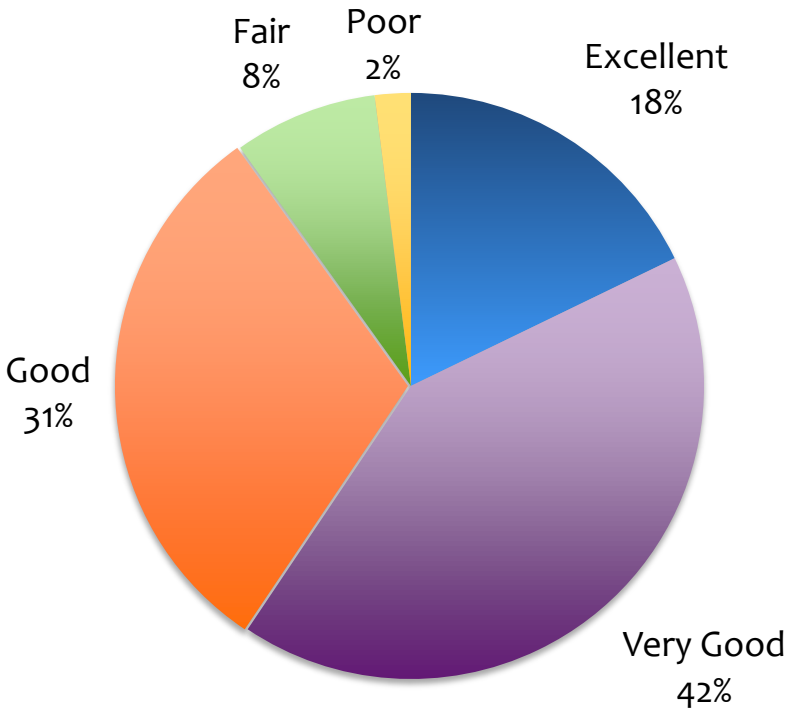
All (n=1,057)



Nine out of ten respondents describe their health as *good* or better.

How would you describe your own health in general?

All (n=1,057)

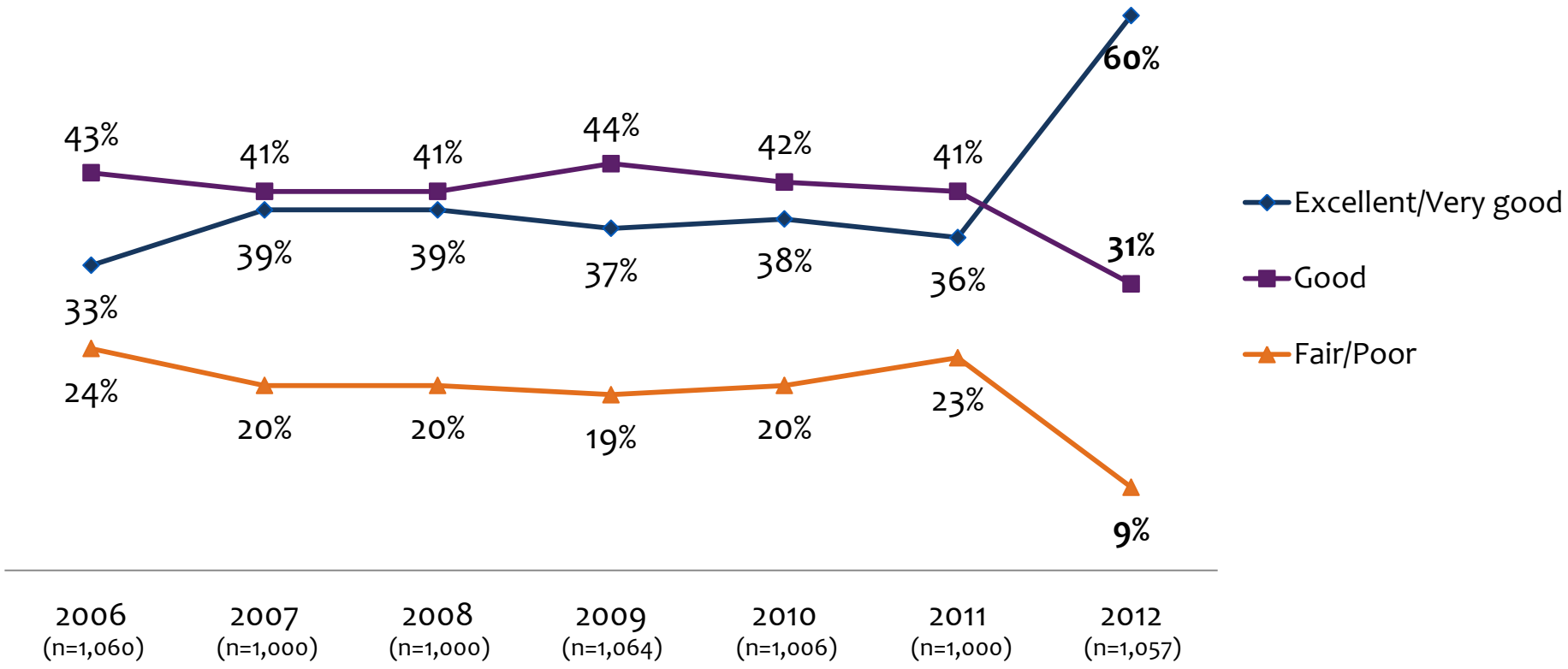


91% are in *good*, *very good*, or *excellent* health.

Respondents to the 2012 survey are more likely to believe they are in very good or excellent health than those of past years.

Trend

How would you describe your own health in general?



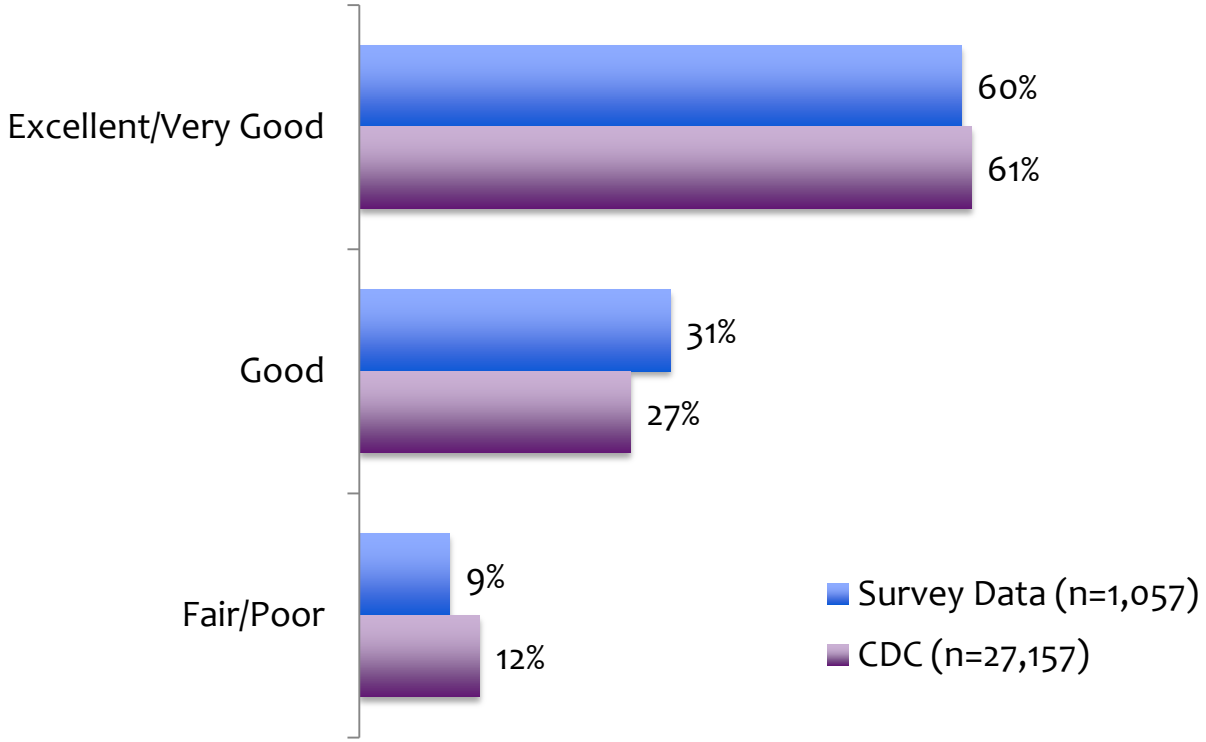
Bolded 2012 figures are significantly different than 2011 percentages.

In previous years, the question was phrased: "Which of the following best describes your overall health status?"

Respondents' perceived health reflects the actual health of the nation.

All

How would you describe your own health in general?



Comparison source: Centers for Disease Control, 2010 National Health Interview Survey (Adults 18+)

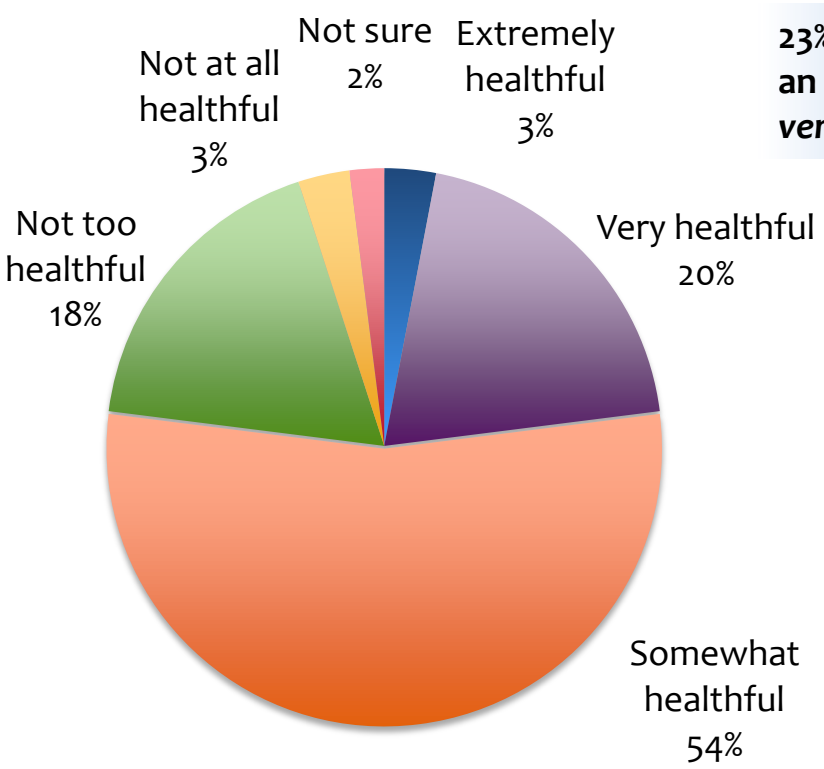
Despite the common belief that they are in good health, many Americans feel there is room to improve their diet.

Only about one in four consider their diet to be *very* or *extremely* healthful. This proportion rises with age.

How would you rate the healthfulness of your overall diet?

By "diet," we mean everything you eat or drink, including foods; beverages; and vitamins, minerals, and other dietary supplements.

All (n=1,057)



23% say they have an *extremely* or *very* healthful diet.

Healthfulness of Diet By Age

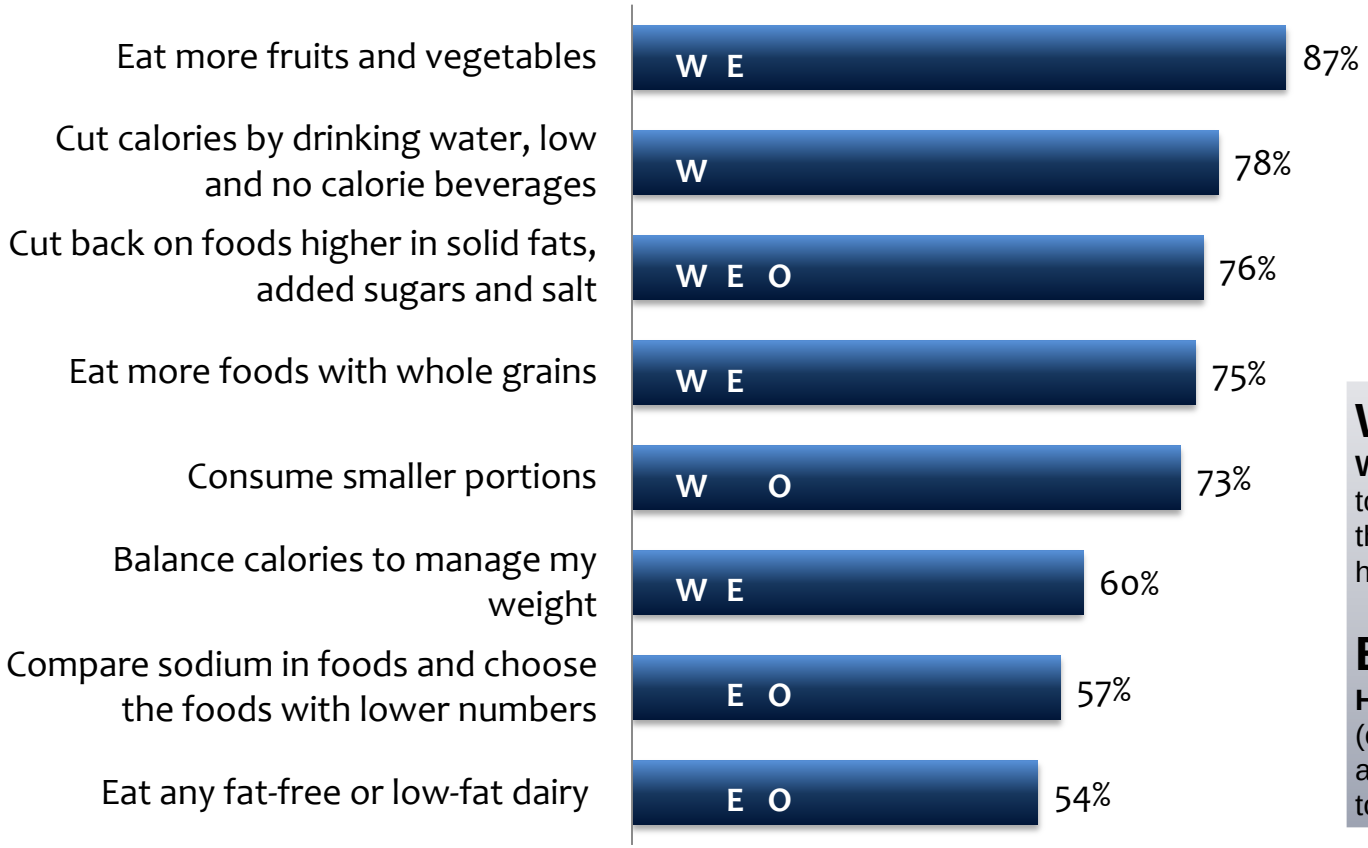
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65-80
Extremely/ Very	19%	20%	24%	**35%**
Somewhat	51%	53%	58%	55%
Not too/ Not at all	**27%**	24%	18%	10%

Bolded figures are significantly higher than one or more counterpart groups.

Nearly all Americans are trying to improve at least one aspect of their eating habits. Nearly nine in ten have tried to eat more fruits and vegetables.

Over the past year, which of the following, if any, have you made an effort to do?

All (n=1,057)



W

Women are more apt than men to be working on nearly all of these aspects of their eating habits.

E, O

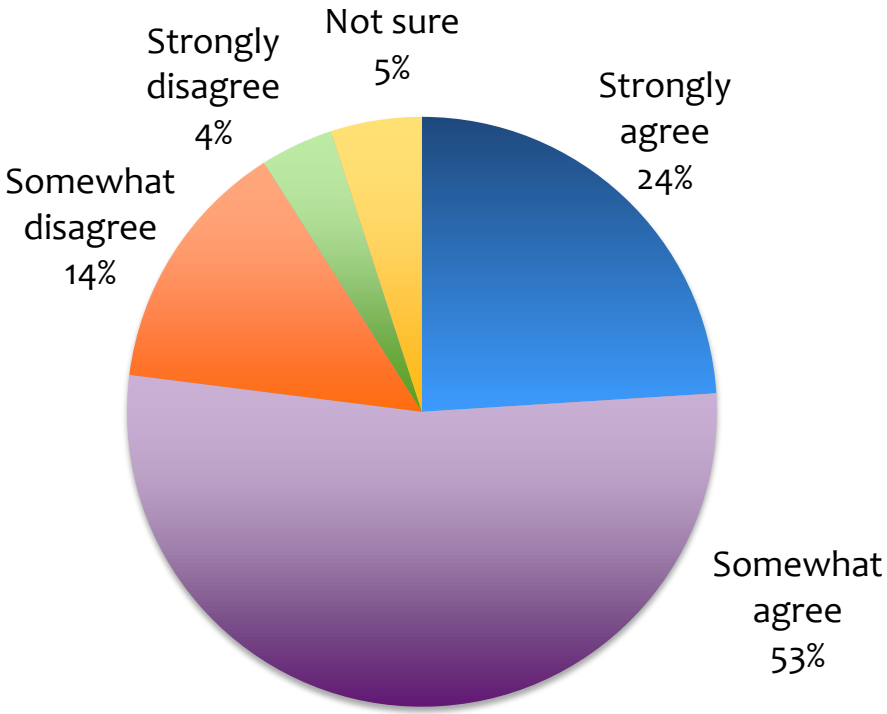
Highly-educated consumers (college grads) and those who are **older** (ages 65-80) also tend to be more likely to make efforts.

Three out of four consumers feel that changes in nutritional guidance makes it hard to know what to believe.

Obese consumers (BMI 30+), older consumers (65-80), and women are all more likely than their counterparts to believe that changing information makes it hard to know what to believe.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
Because nutrition information seems to keep changing, it's hard to know what to believe.

All (n=1,057)



76% *strongly* or *somewhat* agree that changing information makes it hard to know what to believe.

One in four consumers verify new food/health information before trusting it, and a similar share say that their trust depends on the source of the information.

If you read or heard new information about food and health, how would you decide whether or not to believe it?
(Top Responses)

All (n=1,057)

Research it myself further using different/multiple sources	26%		
Depends on the source, if it is supported/endorsed by an organization I trust	24%	E	
Use own judgment, do not believe it if it is too good to be true	14%		
Check internet/websites/Google (general)	11%		
Scientific research: research and testing, trials and reviews, facts, supporting data	9%	E	
Medical source: ask a doctor, Dr. Oz, Mayo clinic website, health websites	9%		W
Talk to family, friend, co-worker: ask their opinion, see if they tried it	5%		
Try it out, see how I feel after trying	3%		
FDA endorsement	2%		
Consult with an expert (not doctor)	2%		
Depends on the information, what it's about	2%		

E Highly **educated** consumers (college grads) are more likely than others to say it depends on the source or to believe scientific research.

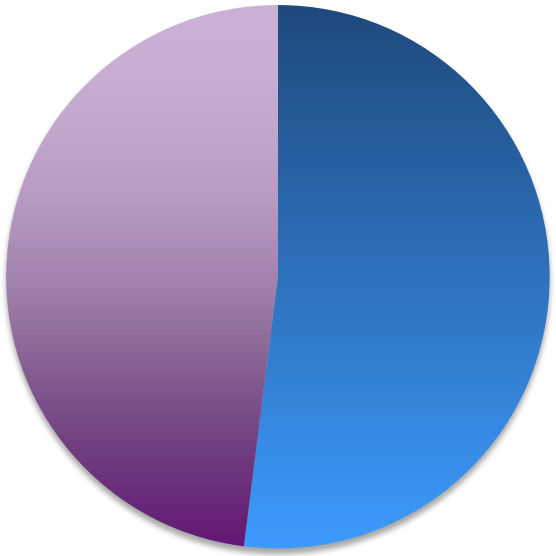
W **Women** are more likely than men to trust medical sources.

Half believe it is easier to do their own taxes than to figure out how to eat healthfully.

Those most in need of learning how to eat healthfully—those with high BMI, heart disease or cholesterol issues, or high blood pressure—are more apt to find it difficult.

Which do you think is harder to do well?

All (n=1,057)



Groups More Likely to Say Figuring Out What to Eat Is Harder

Men (55%, vs. 48% of women)

No college degree (56%, vs. 40% of college grads)

BMI in the obese or overweight range (60%, 54%) compared to low BMI (42%)

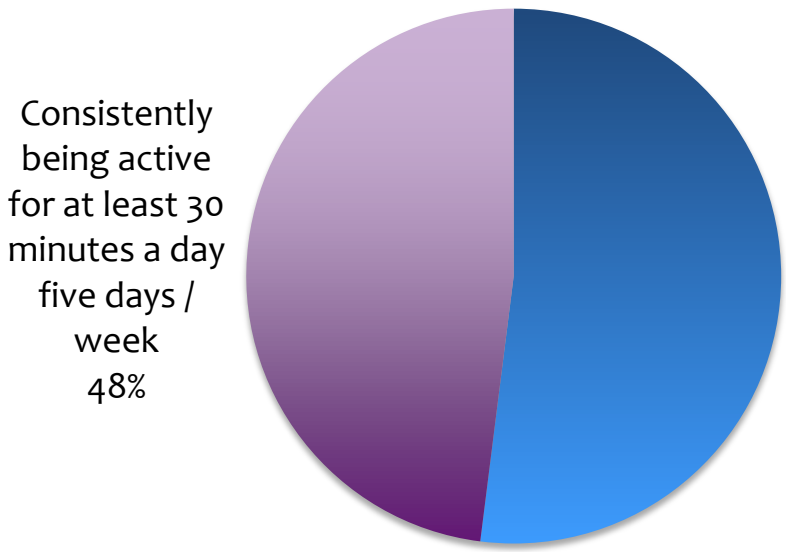
Heart disease or high cholesterol (59%) and **high blood pressure** (57%) vs. 48% with no health conditions

Americans are evenly split in whether they believe it is more difficult to consistently eat well or exercise.

Men are far more likely to be challenged by consistently eating healthfully (60%) than remaining active (40%). The opposite is true for women (44%, 56%).

Which do you think is harder to do well?

All (n=1,057)



Groups More Likely to Say Eating a Healthful Diet Is Harder

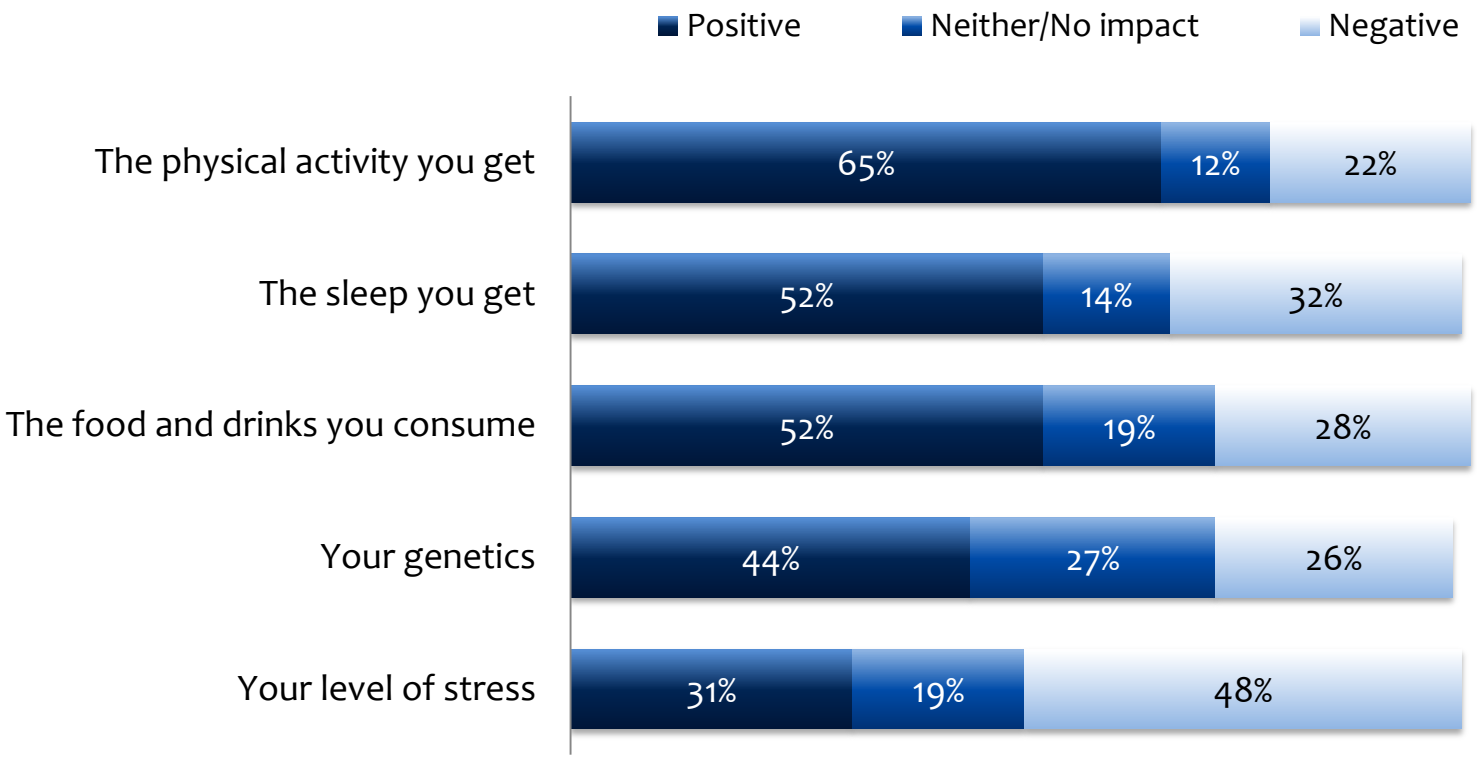
Men (60%, vs. 44% of women)

No college degree (54%) compared to 46% of college grads

Americans believe their physical activity and sleep have more of an impact on their health than their diet.

Overall, what type of impact, if any, do you think the following have on your own health?

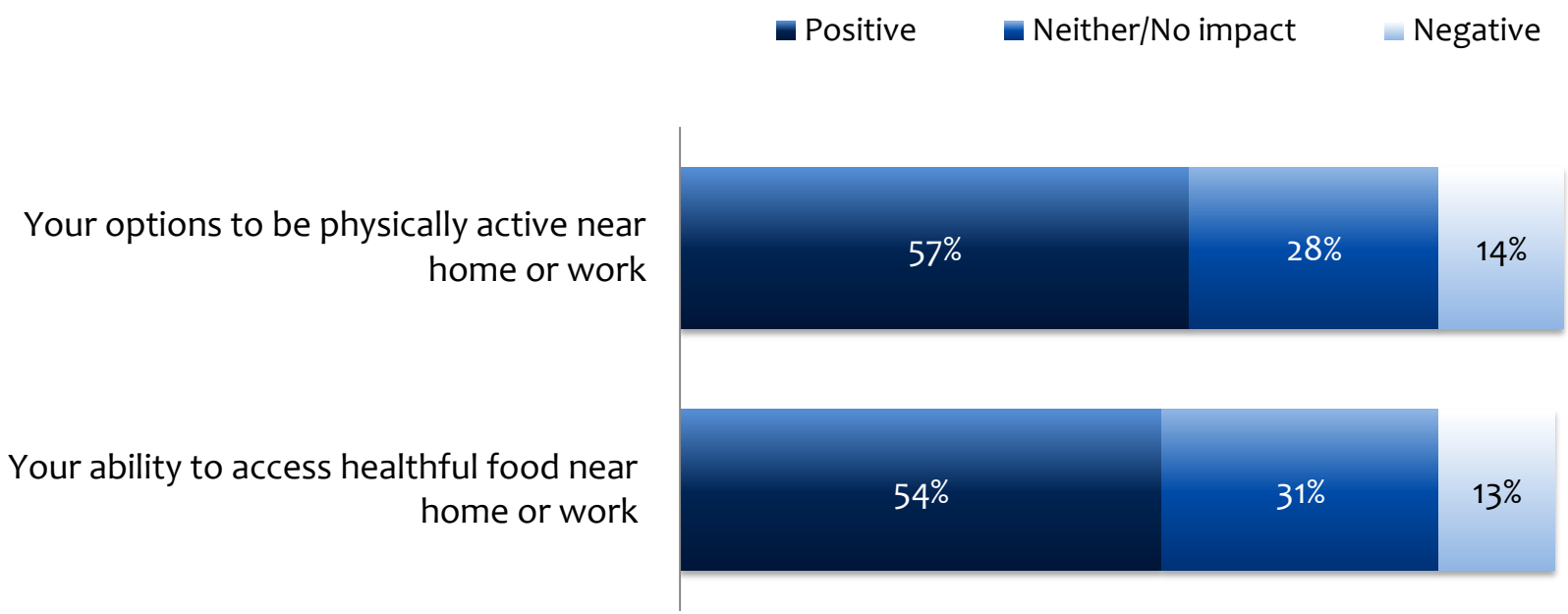
All (n=1,057)



Bare majorities believe their level of access to healthy food or activity affects their health positively, while one in seven feel it hinders theirs.

Overall, what type of impact, if any, do you think the following have on your own health?

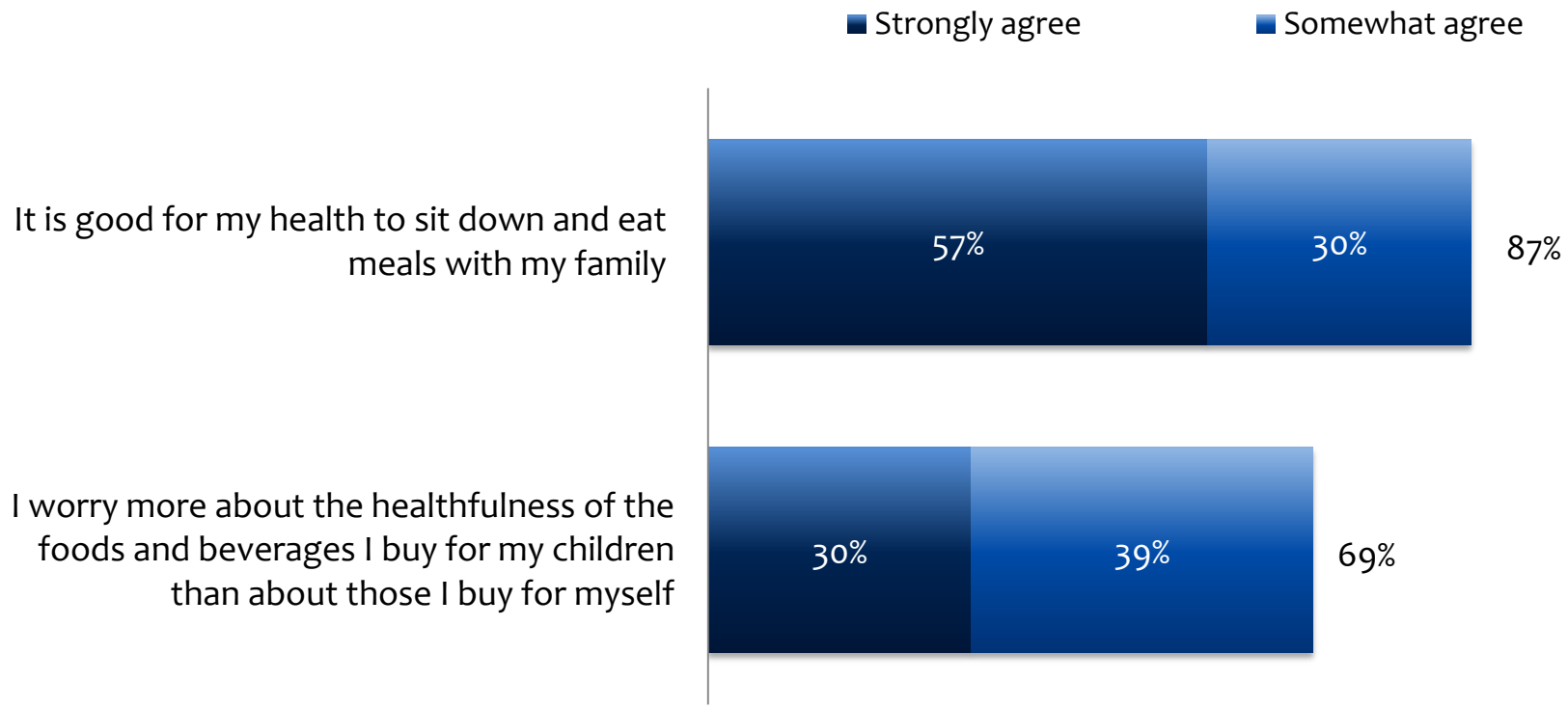
All (n=1,057)



Two-thirds of parents worry more about the healthfulness of their children's diets than their own. Family meals are seen as having health benefits.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

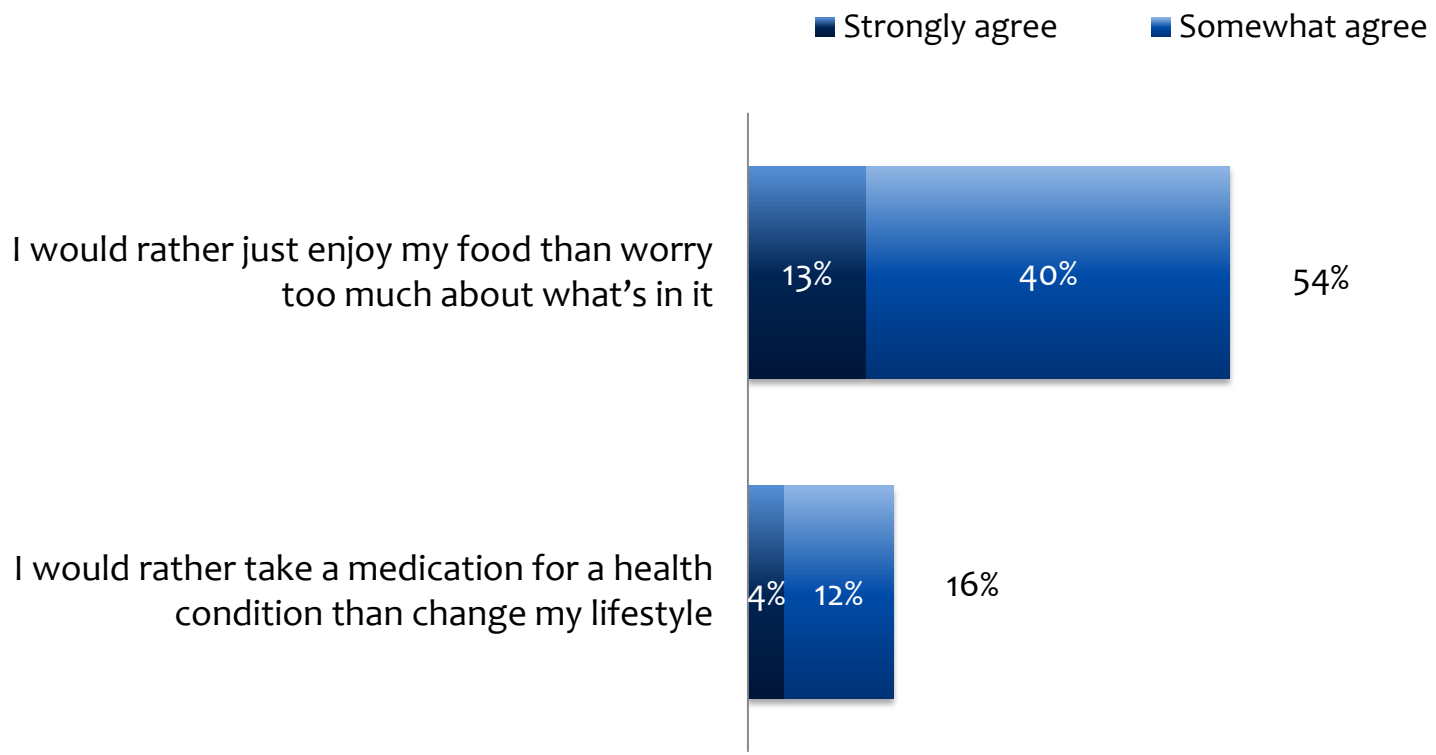
Have children in the household (n=309)



Half of Americans feel that enjoying their food is more important than worrying about what's in it.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

All (n=1,057)



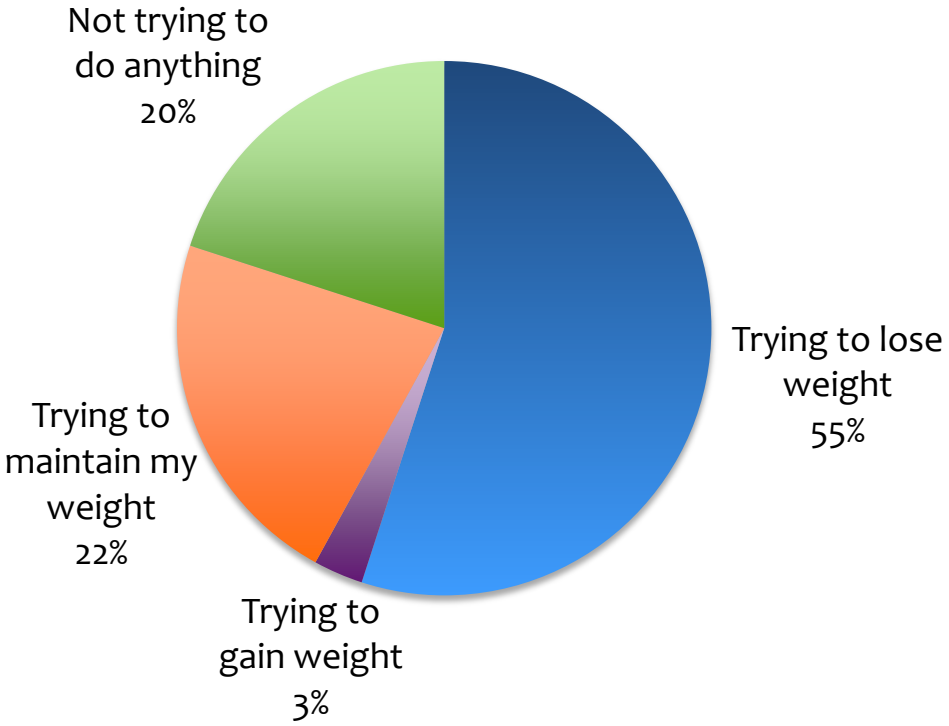
WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

More than half of Americans are trying to lose weight.

The proportion of Americans trying to lose weight increases with BMI, from 32% of those with low to normal BMI, to 57% of those who are overweight, and 76% of those who are obese. Looked at from the other side, this means that 24% of obese Americans are not trying to lose weight.

Which of the following best describes what you are currently doing regarding your weight?

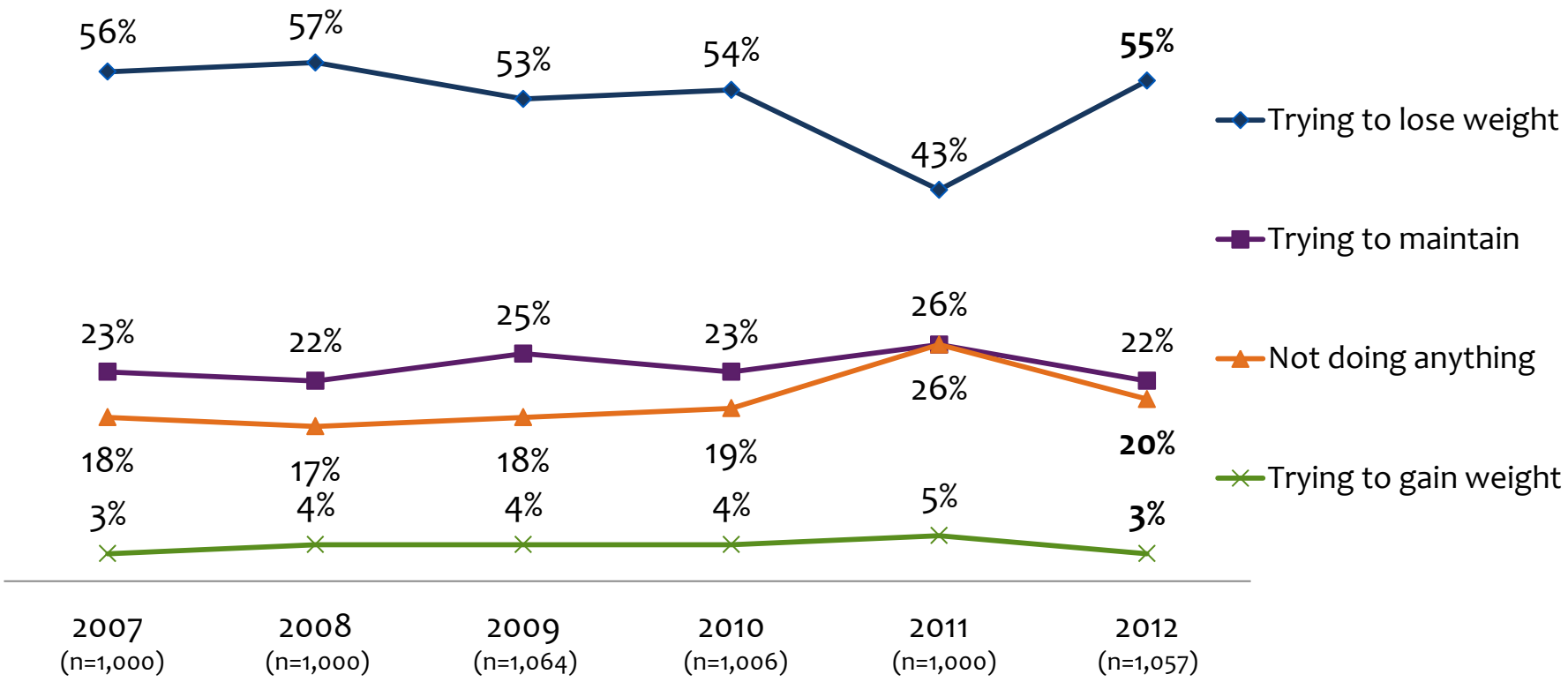
All (n=1,057)



The proportion of Americans trying to lose weight has returned to historical norms.

Trend

Which of the following best describes what you are currently doing regarding your weight?



Bolded 2012 figures are significantly different than 2011 percentages.

Many Americans are unsure about how many calories they consume and burn.

As far as you know, how many calories should you consume per day to maintain your current weight, given your age, height, and physical activity?

On average, how many calories do you think you "burn"/use per day?

	Consumed (n=1,039)	Burned (n=960)
1,000 or less	3%	19%
1,001 to 1,500	26%	10%
1,501 to 2,000	27%	11%
2,001 to 2,500	9%	6%
2,501 or more	5%	3%
Average	1,788	1,500
Unsure	30%	52%

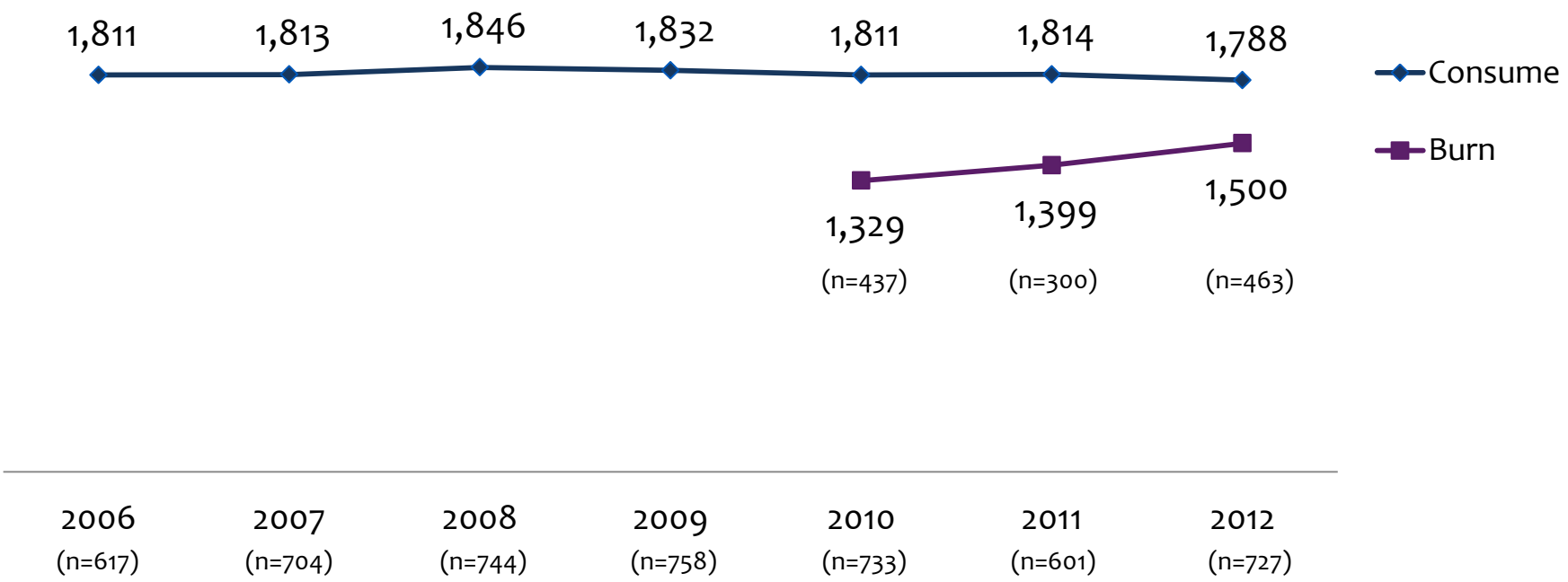
Analysis excludes outliers (below 500 calories or greater than 5,000).

The estimates of calories consumed or burned have not changed significantly in recent years.

Trend

As far as you know, how many calories should you consume per day to maintain your current weight, given your age, height, and physical activity?

On average, how many calories do you think you "burn"/use per day?

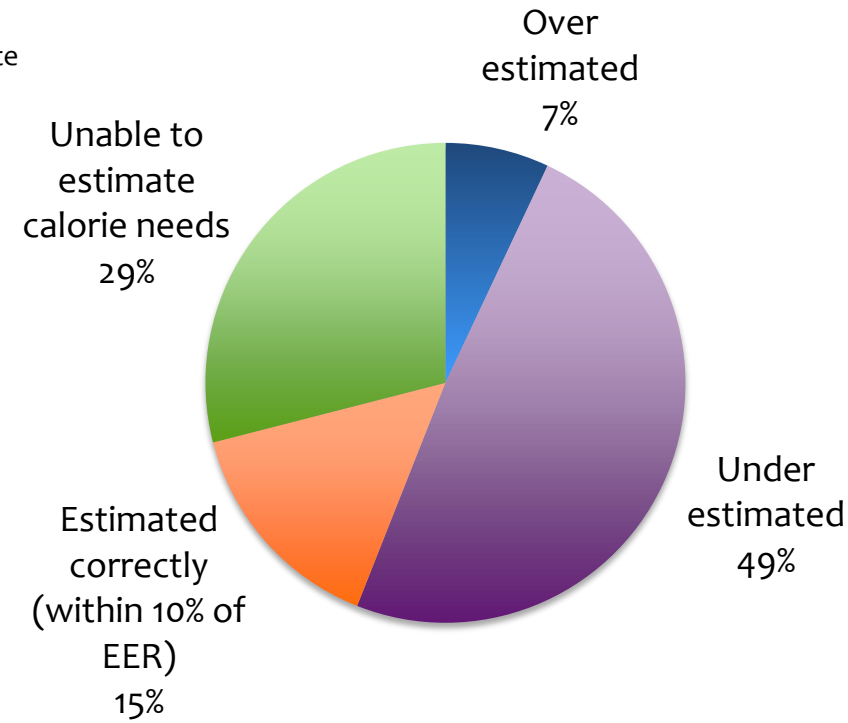


Analysis excludes outliers (below 500 calories or greater than 5,000).

About one in seven Americans correctly estimate the number of calories they need to maintain their weight.

How Close Estimates of Daily Calorie Needs Compare to EER—Estimated Energy Requirements

Provided age, weight, height and excluding outliers for calorie estimate (n=997)



64% responded but estimated incorrectly

Formulas used for EER:

Men: 662 - ((9.53 * age) + PA * (15.91 * weight in kilos + 539.6 * height in meters)). PA (physical activity) =1.00 for sedentary, 1.11 moderate, 1.25 vigorous.

Women: 354 - ((6.91 * age) + PA * (9.36 * weight in kilos + 726 * height in meters)). PA (physical activity) =1.00 for sedentary, 1.12 moderate, 1.27 vigorous.

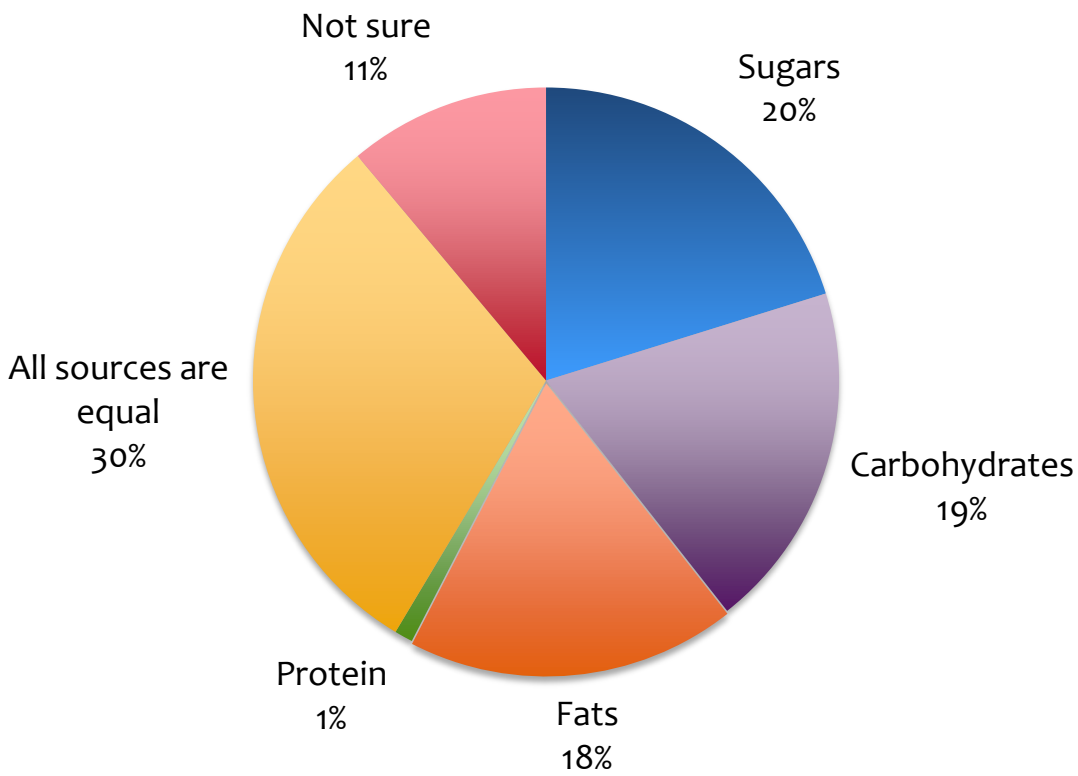
Analysis excludes outliers estimating they need fewer than 500 calories per day to maintain their weight.

Only three in ten Americans correctly believe that all sources of calories play an equal role in weight gain.

Americans tend to believe that sugars, carbohydrates, and fats are most likely to cause weight gain.

What source of calories are the most likely to cause weight gain?

All (n=1,057)



Beliefs about what causes weight gain have returned to historical norms.

Trend

What source of calories are the most likely to cause weight gain?

	2006 (n=1,060)	2007 (n=1,000)	2008 (n=1,000)	2009 (n=1,064)	2010 (n=1,006)	2011 (n=1,000)	2012 (n=1,057)
Calories from sugars	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	11%	**20%**
Calories from carbohydrates	20%	18%	18%	18%	21%	9%	**19%**
Calories from fats	26%	29%	33%	34%	28%	14%	**18%**
Calories from protein	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%
Calories from all sources have the same impact on weight gain*	29%	31%	31%	30%	31%	40%	**30%**
Not sure	22%	20%	18%	17%	19%	24%	**11%**

Bolded 2012 figures are significantly different than 2011 percentages.

* In previous years, this category was phrased as follows: "Calories consumed being greater than calories burned is what causes weight gain."

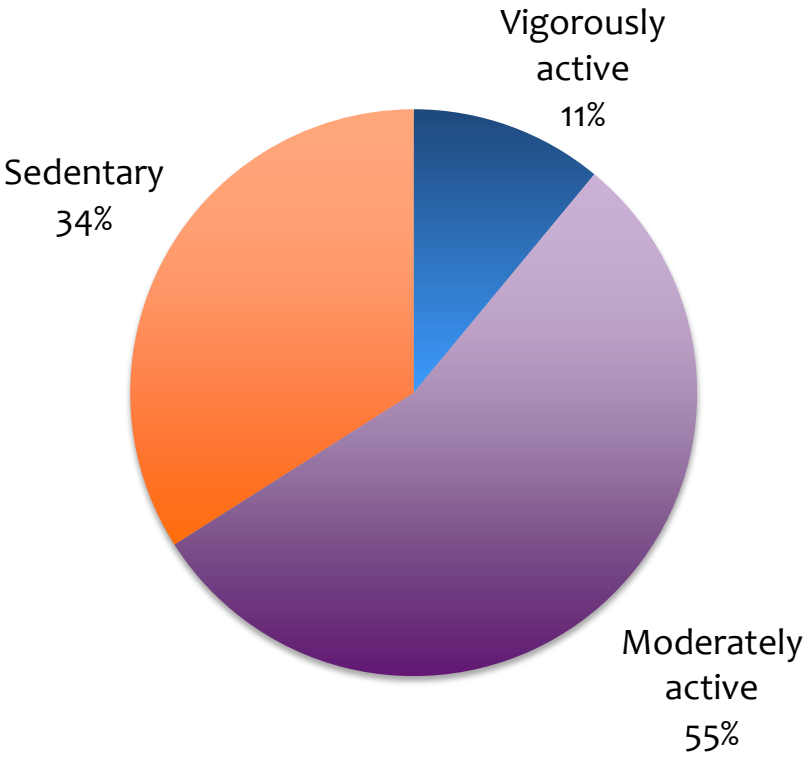
N/A indicates not asked in previous years.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Two out of three Americans are active, though only a few consider themselves vigorously active.

On average, which of the following best describes your level of physical activity? Please keep in mind that physical activity can include a range of activities from running and basketball to gardening, playing golf, and dancing.

All (n=1,057)

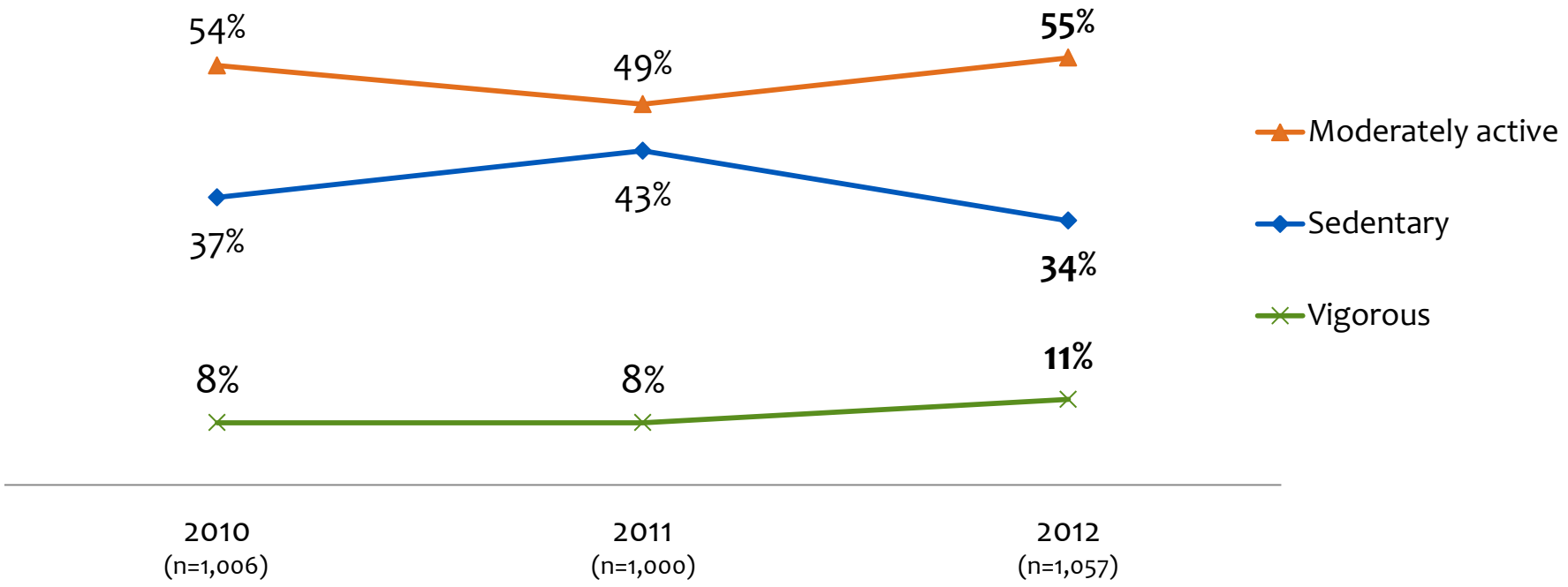


66% consider themselves active.

Americans' activity level has remained relatively steady.

Trend

On average, which of the following best describes your level of physical activity? Please keep in mind that physical activity can include a range of activities from running and basketball to gardening, playing golf, and dancing.

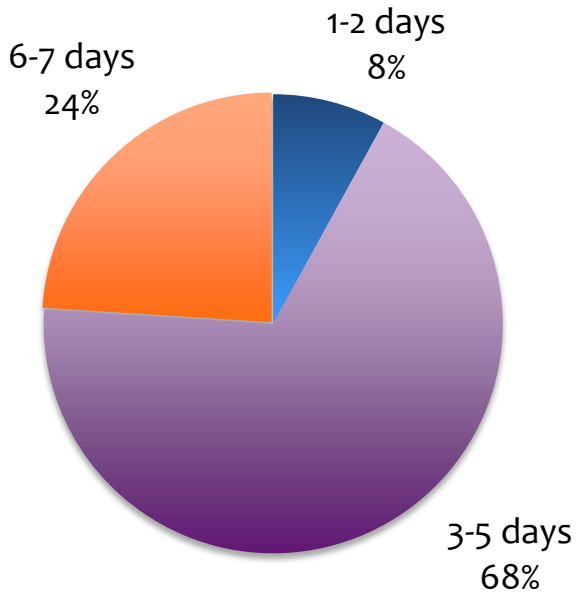


Bolded 2012 figures are significantly different than 2011 percentages.

Nearly all of those who are active are active at least three days a week. The typical duration of physical activity is 45 minutes per day.

On average, how many days per week are you physically active?

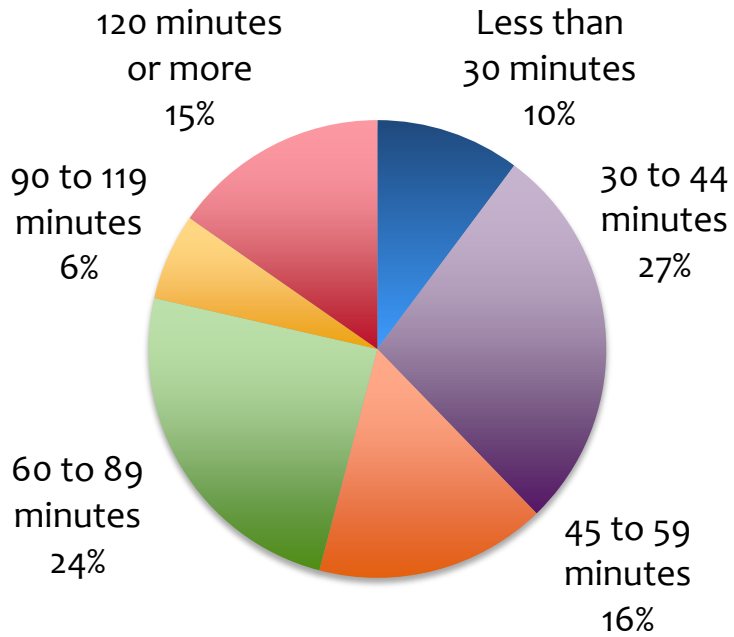
Moderate/vigorous level of activity (n=697)



Median: 4.8 days/week

On days when you are physically active, for how many minutes are you active, on average?

Moderate/vigorous level of activity, excluding outliers with more than 500 minutes per active day (n=695)



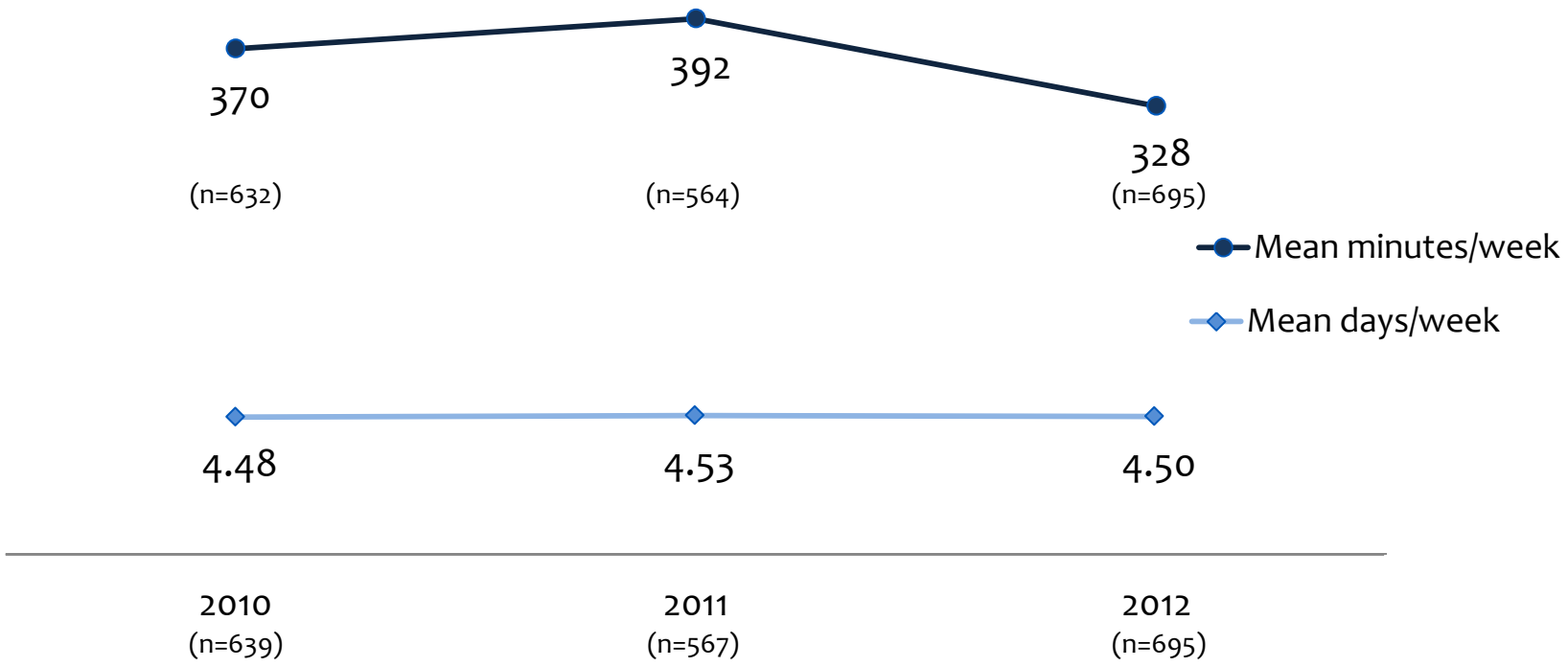
Median: 45 minutes per active day

The amount of time that Americans are active has not changed significantly.

Trend

On average, how many days per week are you physically active?
On days when you are physically active, for how many minutes are you active, on average?
(Converted to minutes/week)

Moderate/vigorous level of activity

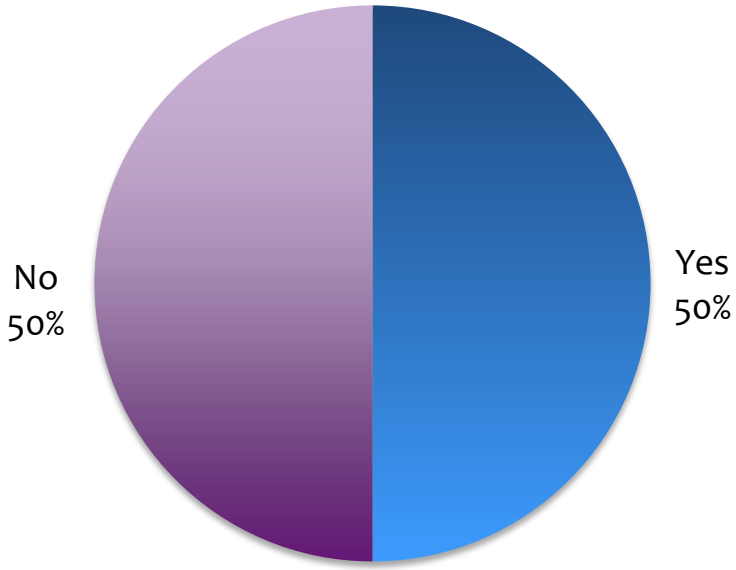


Analysis excludes outliers (above 500 minutes per active day).

Half of physically active Americans engage in some form of strength training.

Does your physical activity include any strength training—that is, exercise specifically designed to strengthen muscles and bones such as push-ups, lifting weights, etc.?

Moderate/vigorous level of activity (n=697)



If yes, how many days per week?

(n=344)

1 day	11%
2 days	25%
3 days	32%
4 days	15%
5 days	11%
6 to 7 days	7%

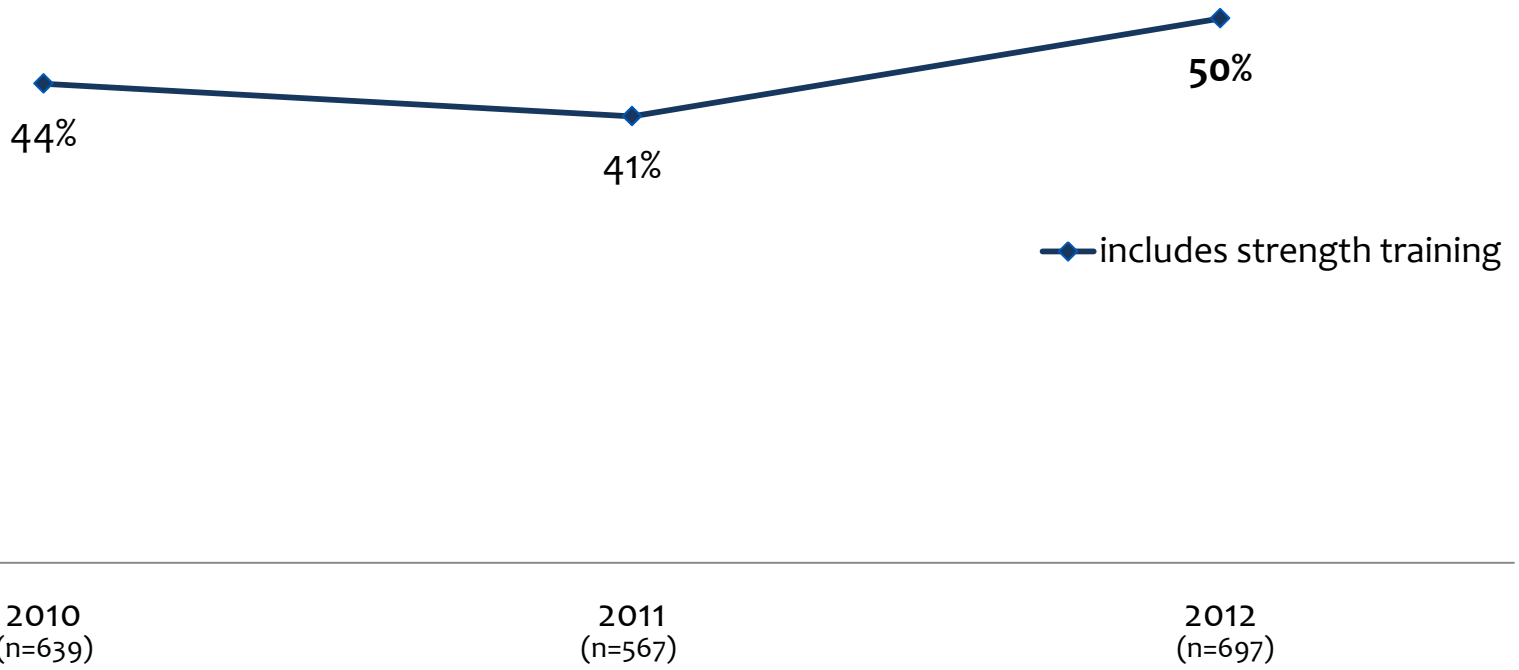
Average: 3.1 days/week

The proportion of active Americans who engage in some form of strength training has increased.

Trend

Does your physical activity include any strength training—that is, exercise specifically designed to strengthen muscles and bones such as push-ups, lifting weights, etc.?

Moderate/vigorous level of activity



Bolded 2012 figures are significantly different than 2011 percentages.

Two-thirds of moderately active Americans meet government recommendations for weekly activity duration. Nearly all of those vigorously active do.

Weekly Duration of Physical Activity and Comparison to Government Recommendations

Moderate/vigorous level of activity (n=695)

Duration of Physical Activity Per Week	
60 minutes or less	7%
61 to 120 minutes	20%
121 to 180 minutes	19%
181 to 240 minutes	14%
241 to 300 minutes	12%
300 minutes or more	28%
Average overall	328 minutes
Average among moderately active	319 minutes
Average among vigorously active	375 minutes

Percentage Meeting U.S. Government Recommendations For Minutes of Weekly Activity

Moderately Active

65%
150 or more minutes per week

Vigorously Active

97%
75 or more minutes per week

Analysis excludes outliers with less than 1 minute or more than 500 minutes of activity per active day.

Roughly one in four Americans meet U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' physical activity guidelines.

Percentages Meeting HHS Physical Activity Guidelines

All except outliers (n=1,053)

Meets HHS Guidelines (net)	23%
Moderately active	14%
Vigorously active	8%
Does Not Meet HHS Guidelines (net)	77%
Sedentary	34%
Moderately active	40%
Vigorously active	3%

To meet the Department of Health and Human Services' 2008 physical activity guidelines:

If moderately active: 150 or more minutes per week, with strength training at least two times per week

If vigorously active: 75 or more minutes per week, with strength training at least two times per week

Analysis excludes outliers with less than 1 minute or more than 500 minutes of activity per active day.

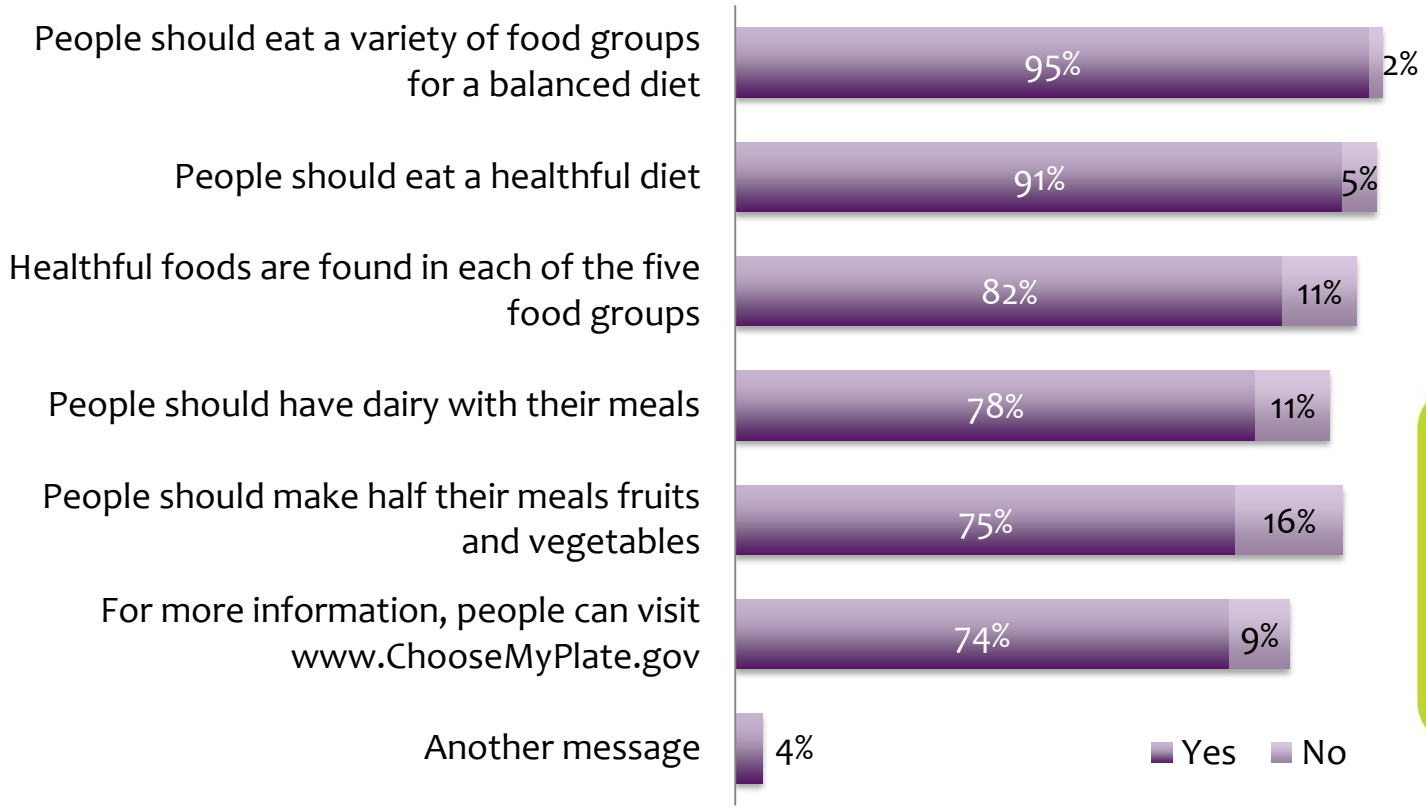
2 INFORMATION SOURCES & INFLUENCES

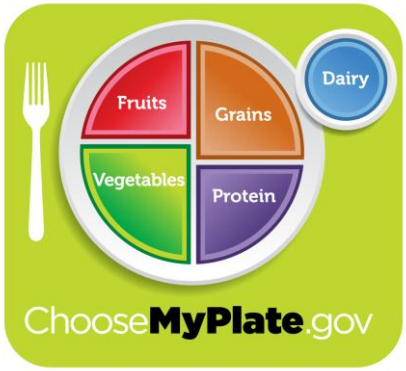
DIETARY GUIDELINES

The MyPlate graphic is effective in conveying the desired messages.

Which of the following messages, if any, are conveyed by the [My Plate] graphic you saw on the previous screen?

All (n=1,057)



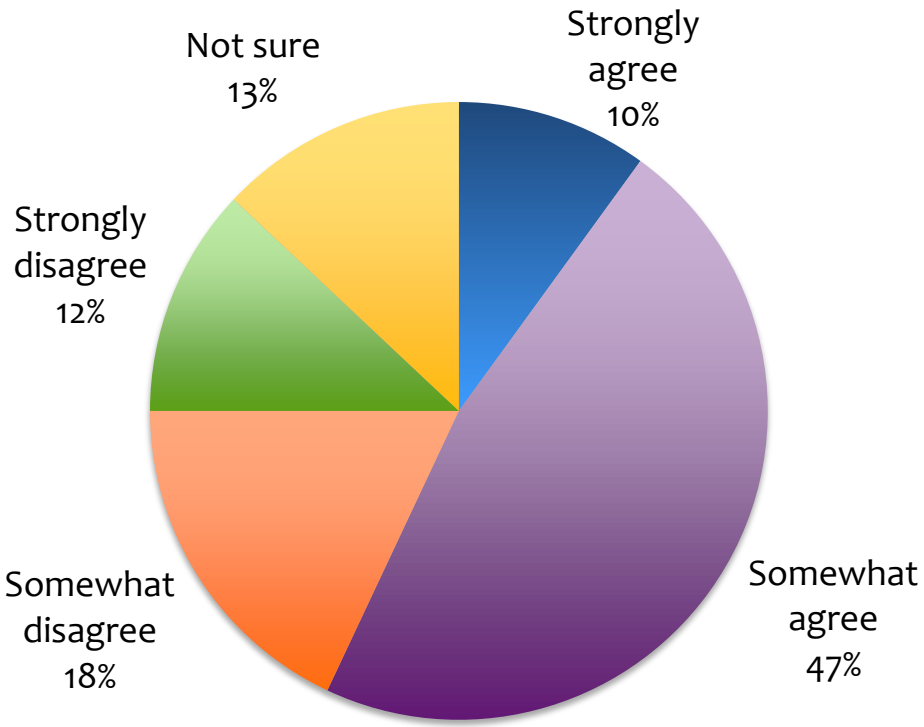


Nearly six in ten Americans believe that online and mobile tools can help them live healthier lifestyles.

Even though younger consumers are most receptive to these tools (64% of those ages 18-49), about half of those who are 50+ are as well (49%). African Americans are particularly likely to feel these technology tools would be helpful (66%).

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
Online tools and mobile apps can help me improve my diet and physical activity.

All (n=1,057)



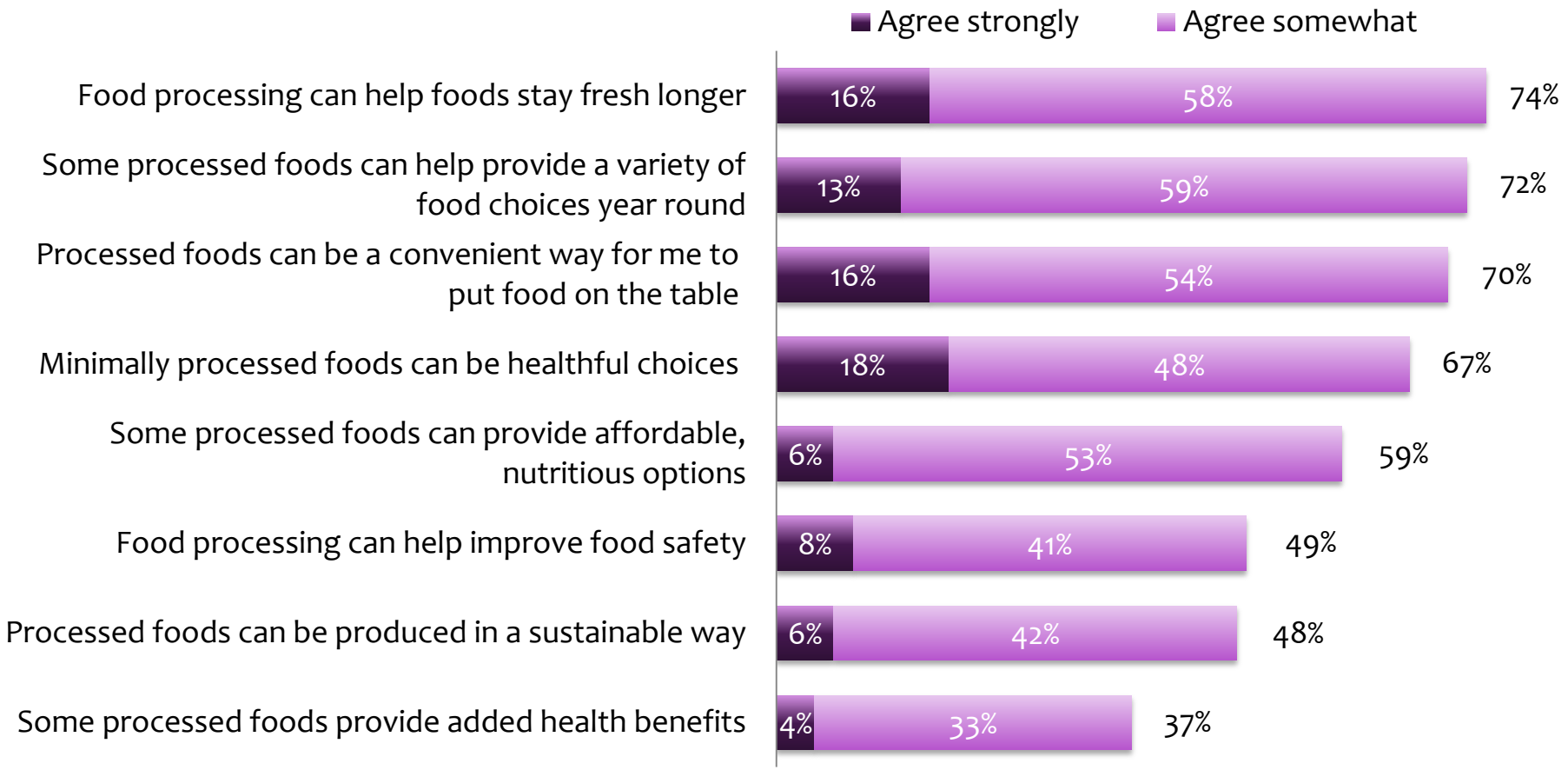
57% *strongly* or *somewhat* agree that online tools and mobile aps can help them improve their lifestyles.

FOOD PROCESSING

Substantial majorities believe in the benefits of food processing, most notably its ability to keep foods fresh and provide convenient choices year-round.

In general, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about processed foods?

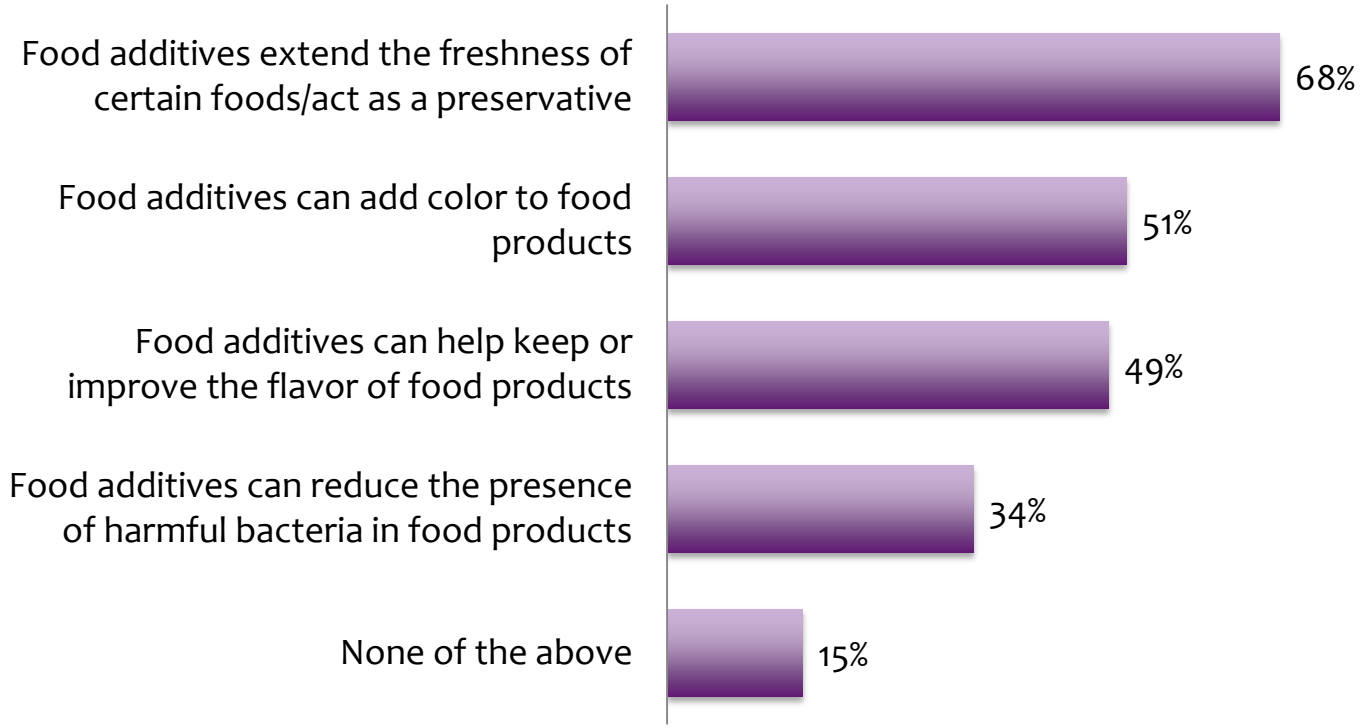
All (n=1,057)



Most Americans believe food additives extend freshness, add color, or maintain flavor. Fewer are aware of their anti-bacterial properties.

As far as you know, which of the following statements, if any, accurately describe the function(s) of food additives?

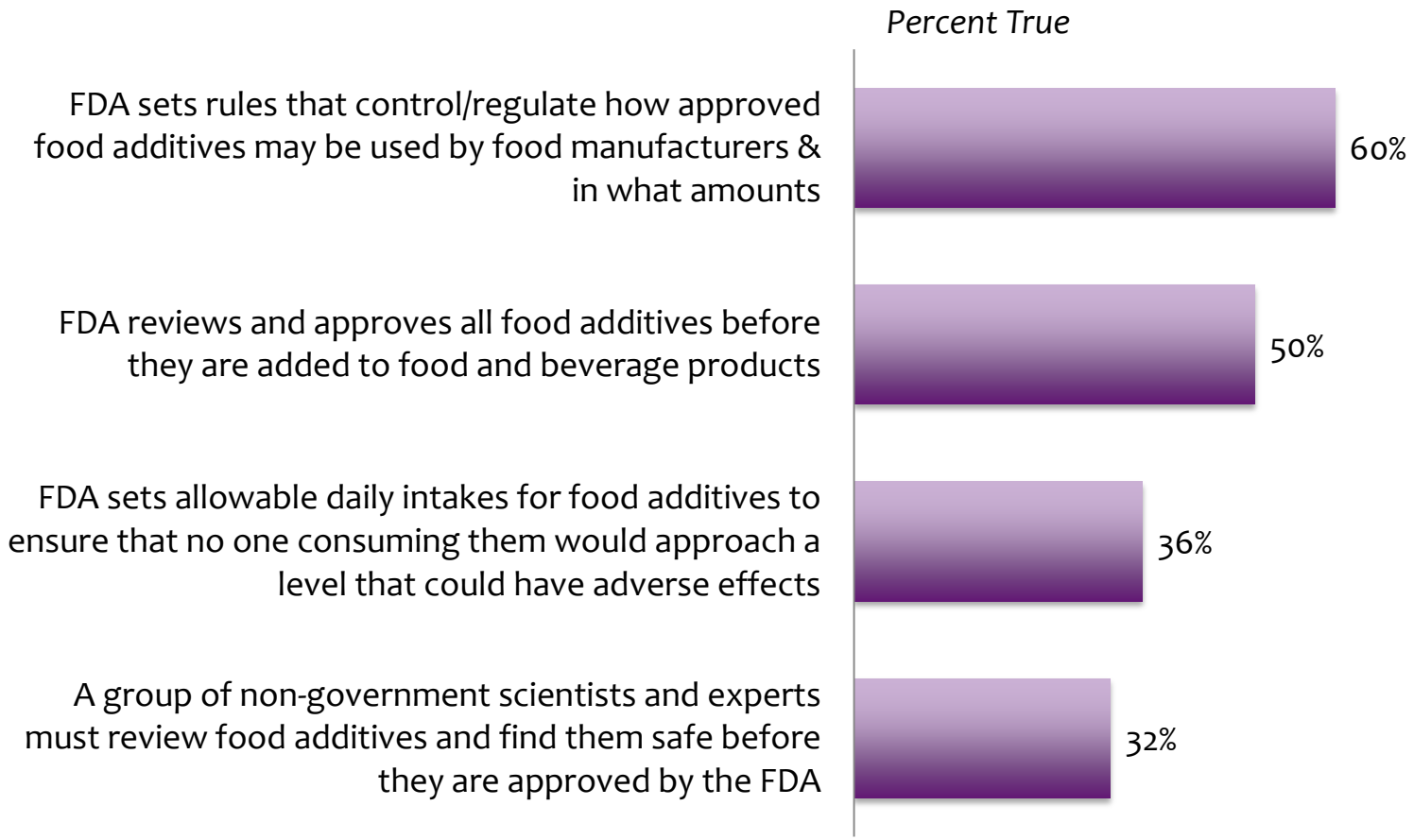
All (n=1,057)



Six in ten believe the FDA regulates how food additives may be used; half or less realize the FDA approves or sets daily intake limits for food additives.

Are the following statements about the regulation of food additives true or false, to the best of your knowledge?

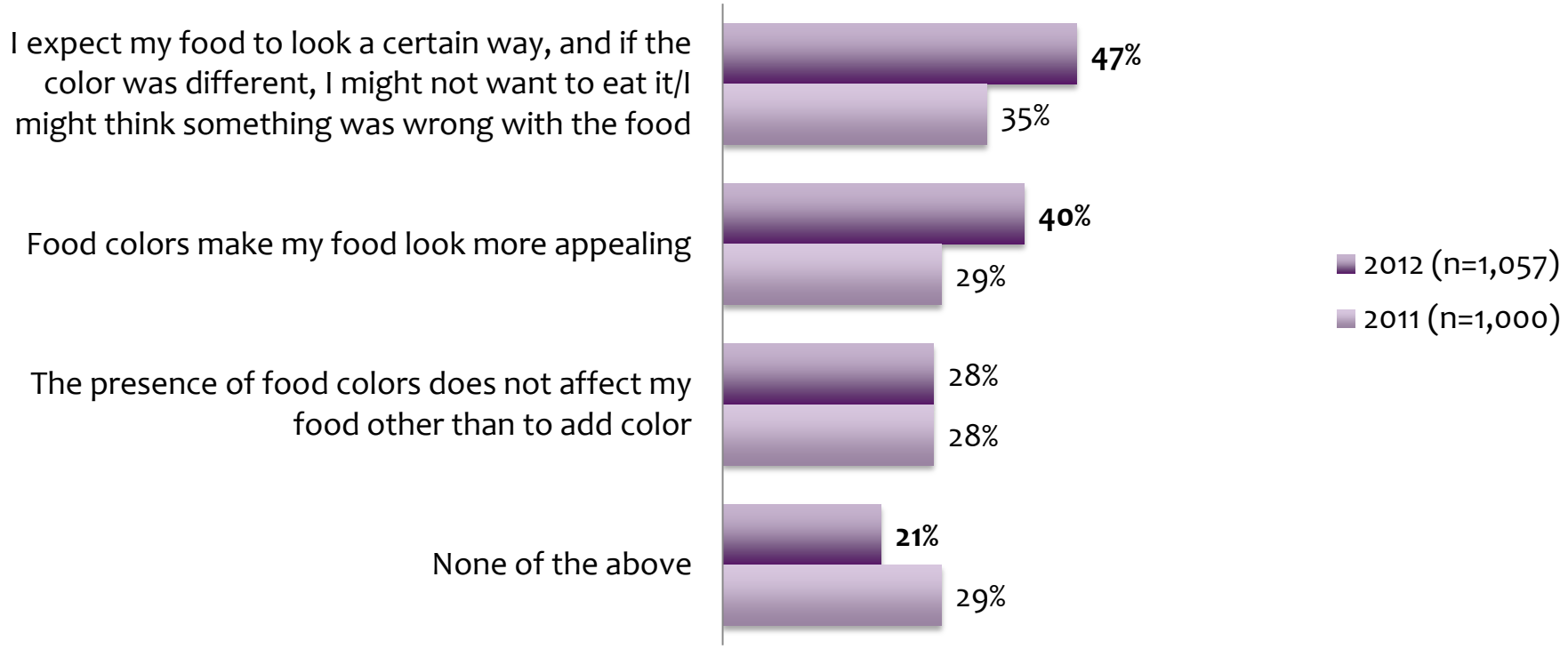
All (n=1,057)



Receptivity toward food coloring is higher in 2012 than in 2011.

Trend

Which of the following statements, if any, do you agree with regarding food colors?

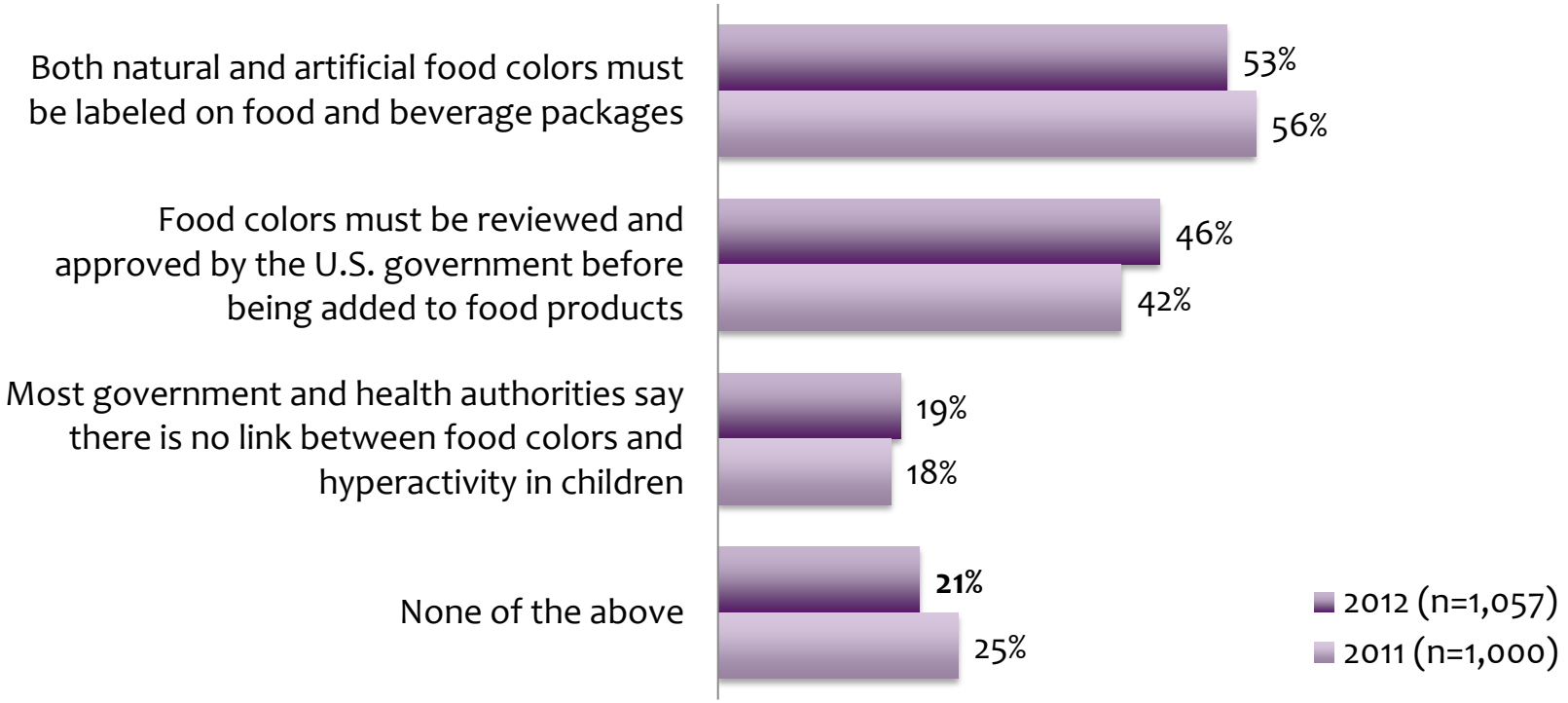


Bolded 2012 figures are significantly different than 2011 percentages.

Beliefs about the regulation of food colors are unchanged from last year.

Trend

Which of the following statements, if any, do you believe are true regarding food colors?



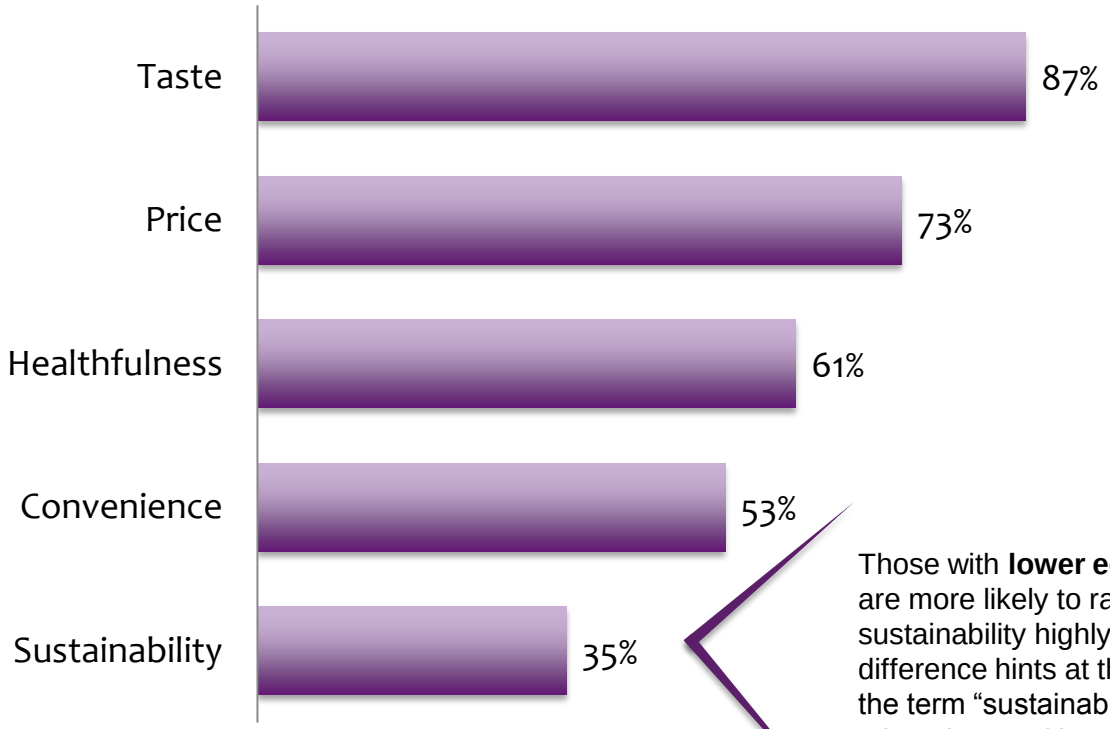
Bolded 2012 figures are significantly different than 2011 percentages.

LABELING AND OTHER FACTORS INFLUENCING FOOD CHOICES

Taste and price drive food and beverage choices more often than healthfulness.

How much of an impact do the following have on your decision to buy foods and beverages?
(% Rating 4 to 5 on 5-point scale, from "No impact" to "A great impact")

All (n=1,057)



Those with **lower education** levels are more likely to rate the impact of sustainability highly. This unexpected difference hints at the possibility that the term "sustainability" may be misunderstood by many.

Older Americans are more likely than those who are younger to say healthfulness, taste, and sustainability impact their food selection.

Price is more important for consumers younger than 50.

How much of an impact do the following have on your decision to buy foods and beverages?
(% Rating 4 to 5 on 5-point scale, from "No impact" to "A great impact")

All (n=1,057)

% High Impact
By Age

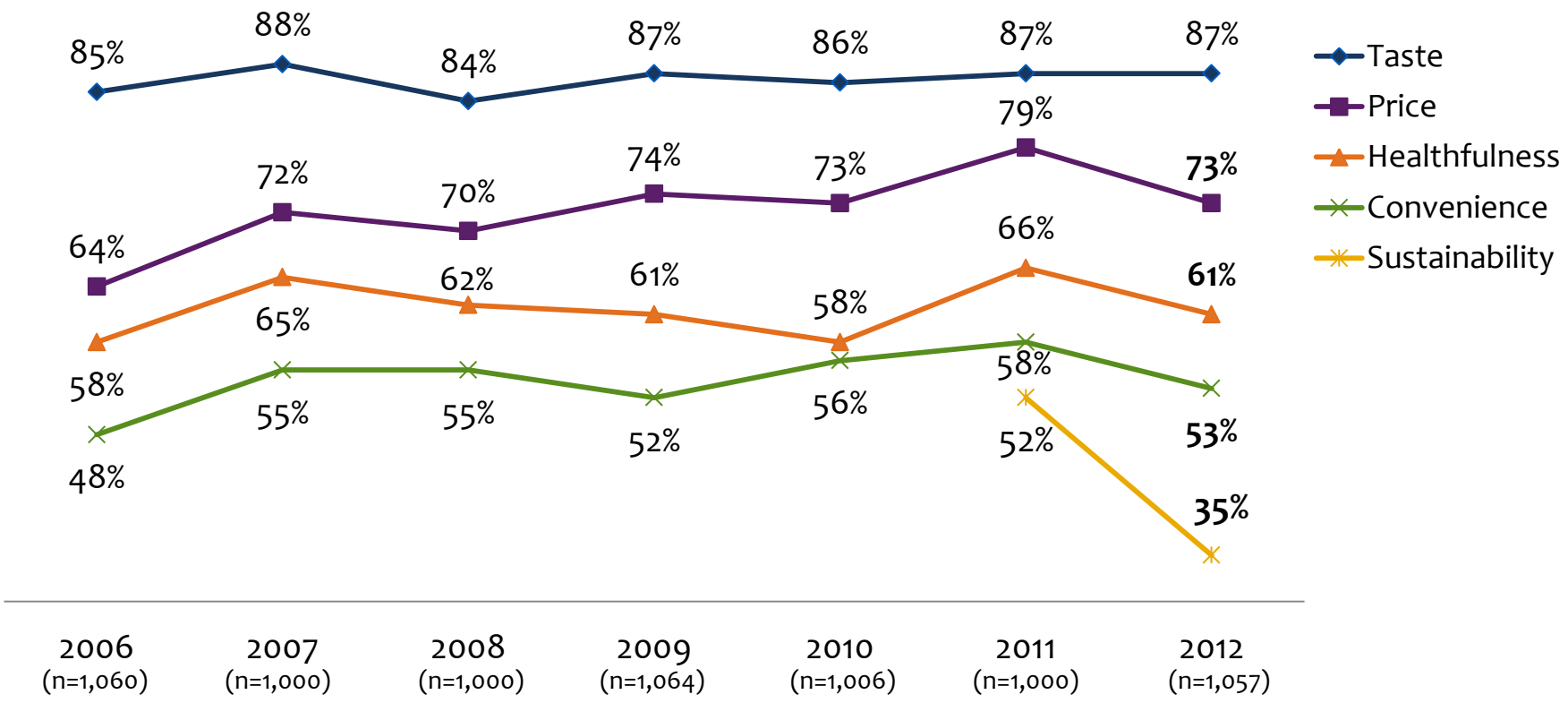
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65-80
Taste	83%	85%	88%	**92%**
Price	**77%**	**78%**	69%	62%
Healthfulness	58%	60%	59%	**74%**
Convenience	59%	54%	46%	52%
Sustainability	33%	33%	34%	**44%**

Bolded figures are significantly higher than counterpart groups.

The impact of taste on food choices has remained steady. However, price, healthfulness, and sustainability dropped from peaks in 2011.

Trend

How much of an impact do the following have on your decision to buy foods and beverages?
(% Rating 4 to 5 on 5-point scale, from "No impact" to "A great impact")

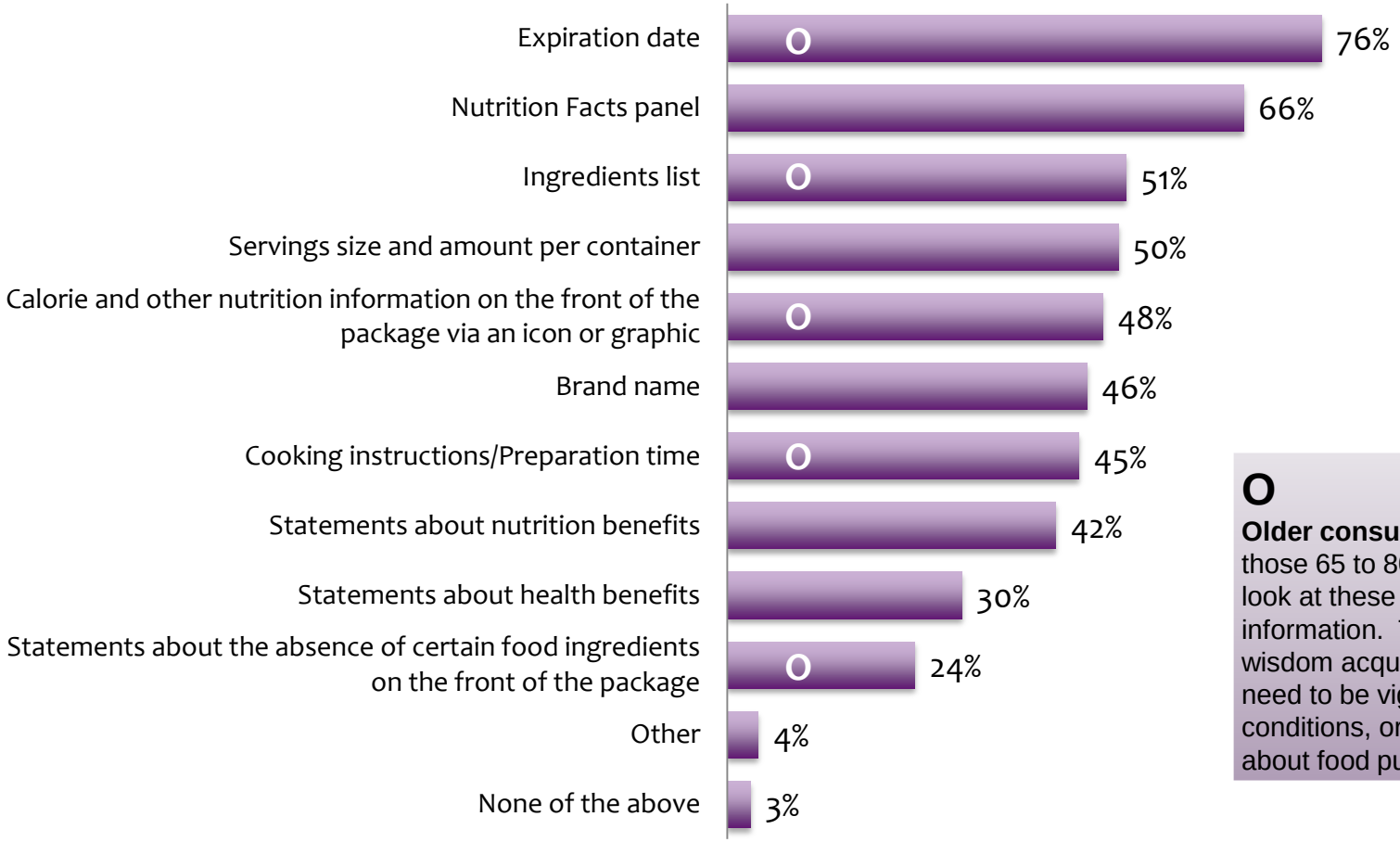


Bolded 2012 figures are significantly different than 2011 percentages.

Packaging information most commonly used include the expiration date and the Nutrition Facts panel.

What information do you look at on the food or beverage package when deciding to purchase or eat a food or beverage?

All (n=1,057)



O

Older consumers, especially those 65 to 80, are more likely to look at these types of information. This may be due to wisdom acquired over time, the need to be vigilant about health conditions, or more time to think about food purchases.

Use of the expiration date on the packaging rose, as did reading of statements about health and nutrition benefits and cooking information.

Trend

What information do you look at on the food or beverage package when deciding to purchase or eat a food or beverage?

	2006 (n=1,060)	2007 (n=1,000)	2008 (n=1,000)	2009 (n=1,064)	2010 (n=1,006)	2011 (n=1,000)	2012 (n=1,057)
Expiration date	65%	69%	69%	67%	66%	63%	**76%**
Nutrition Facts panel	58%	66%	63%	69%	68%	68%	66%
Ingredients list	57%	59%	51%	49%	47%	49%	51%
Brand name	38%	44%	40%	50%	50%	50%	46%
Cooking instructions/preparation time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	33%	**45%**
Statements about nutrition benefits	48%	44%	43%	29%	29%	31%	**42%**
Statements about health benefits	30%	28%	27%	20%	22%	24%	**30%**

"Preparation time" was added to the cooking instructions item in 2012.

Bolded 2012 figures are significantly different than 2011 percentages.

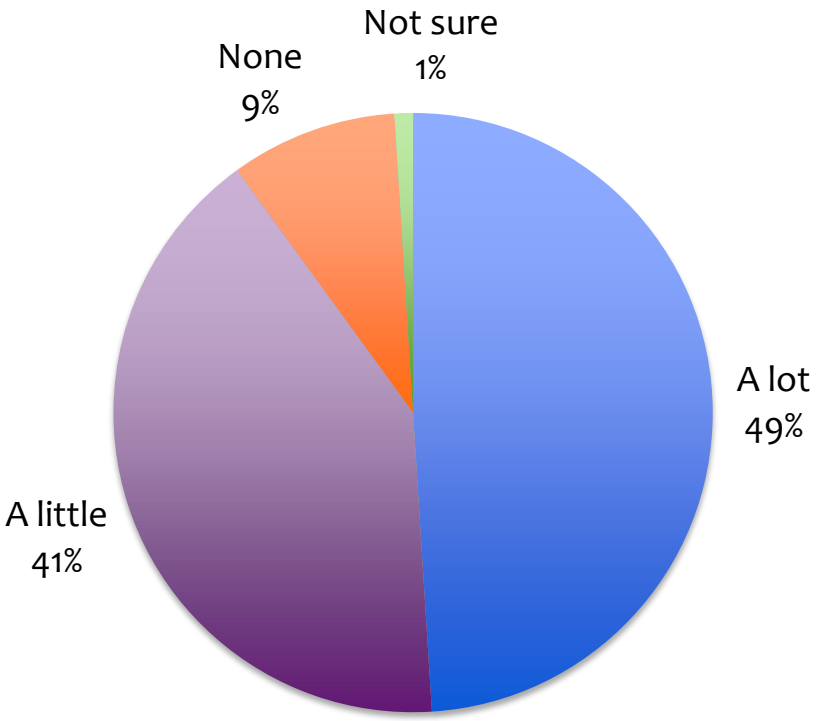
N/A indicates not asked in previous years.

3 DIETARY COMPONENTS

Nine out of ten Americans have given at least *a little* thought to the ingredients in their food or beverages.

Over the past year, how much thought have you given to the ingredients in your foods and beverages?

All (n=1,057)

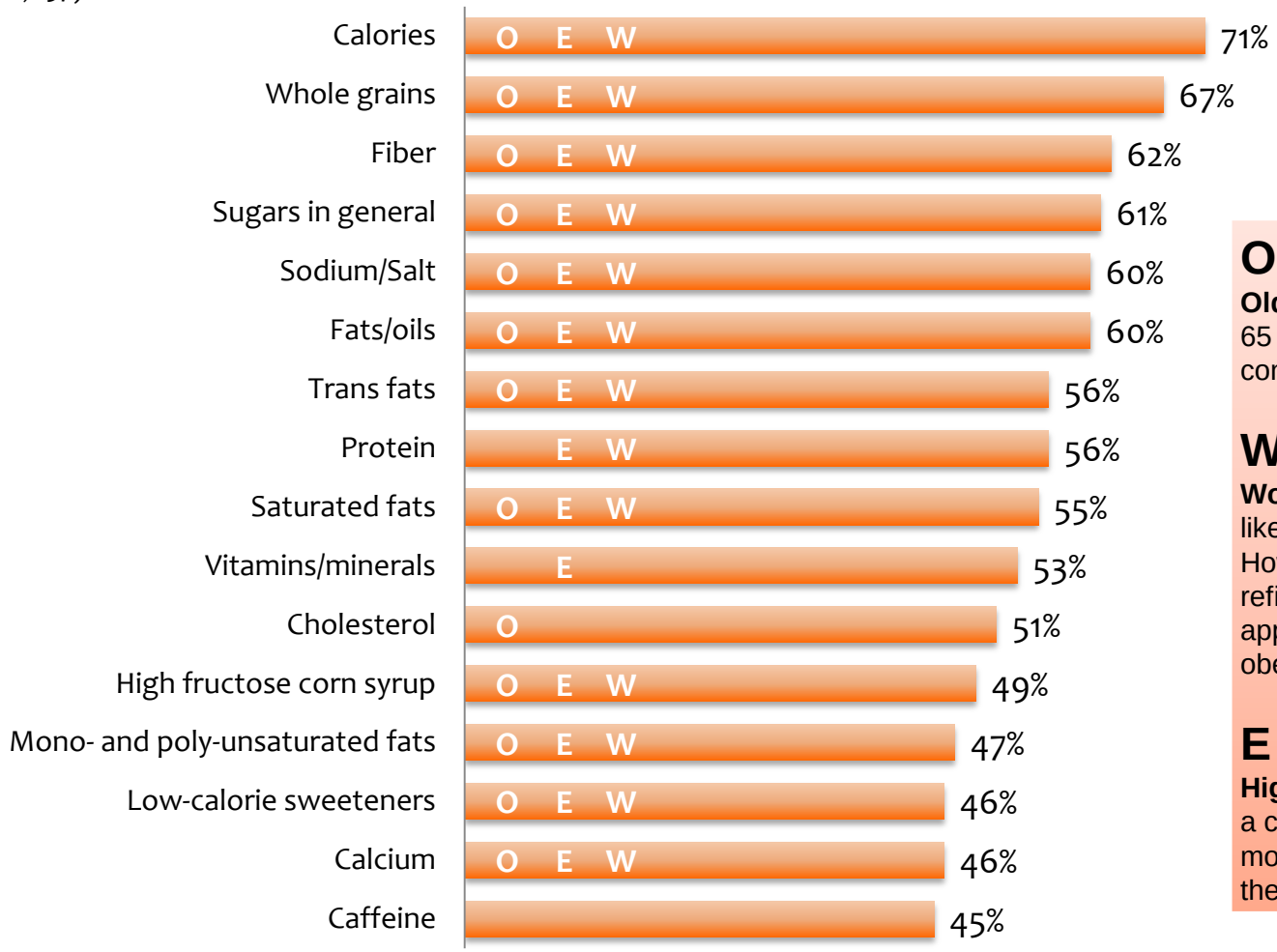


90% have given *a little* or *a lot* of thought to the ingredients in their foods and beverages.

At least six in ten consider calories, whole grains, fiber, sugars, sodium, and/or fats when buying packaged foods and beverages.

Over the past year, when making decisions about buying packaged food or beverages, have you ever considered whether or not they contain the following?

All (n=1,057)



O

Older consumers, especially those 65 to 80, are more likely to consider these food components.

W

Women are also generally more likely than men to consider them. However, for fats, sugars, and refined carbohydrates, there is no apparent gender difference among obese consumers.

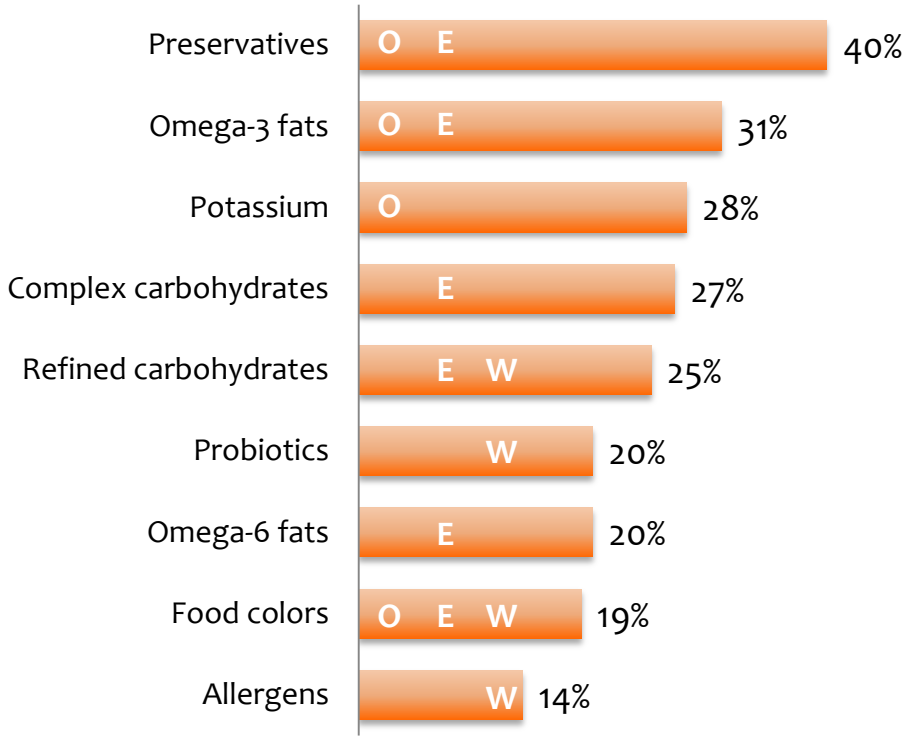
E

Highly-educated consumers (with a college degree or more) are also more apt to consider almost all of these ingredients.

Only one in four consider specific types of carbs, even though two-thirds consider whole grains.

Over the past year, when you're making decisions about buying packaged food or beverages, have you ever considered whether or not they contain the following? (continued)

All (n=1,057)



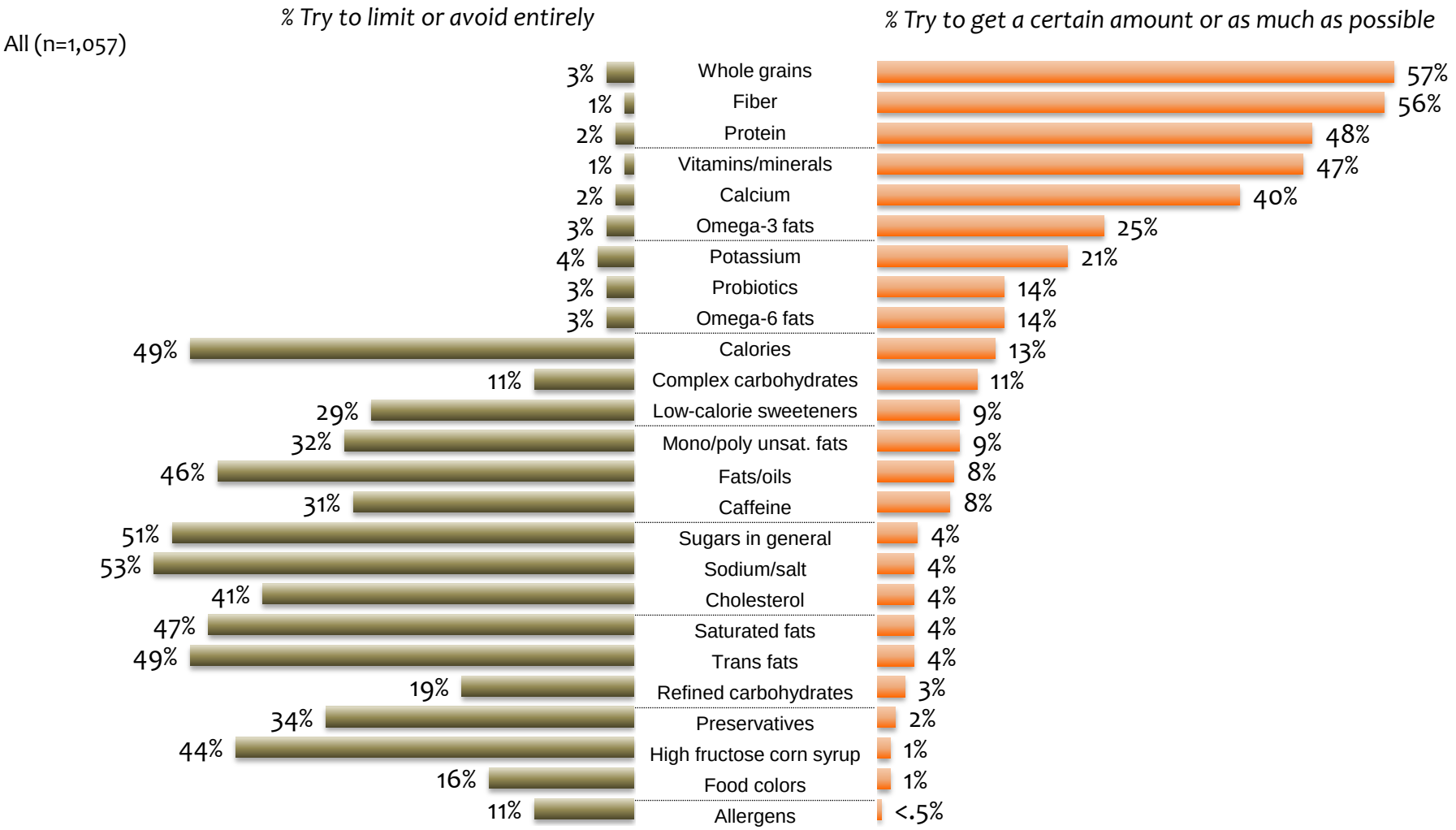
O
Older consumers, especially those 65 to 80, are more likely to consider these food components.

W
Women are also more likely than men to consider them.

E
Highly-educated consumers (with a college degree or more) are also more apt to consider these ingredients.

Consumers tend to seek whole grains and fiber. At least four in ten try to limit/avoid calories, fats, sugars, and salt.

To what extent do you try to consume or avoid the following?



PROTEIN

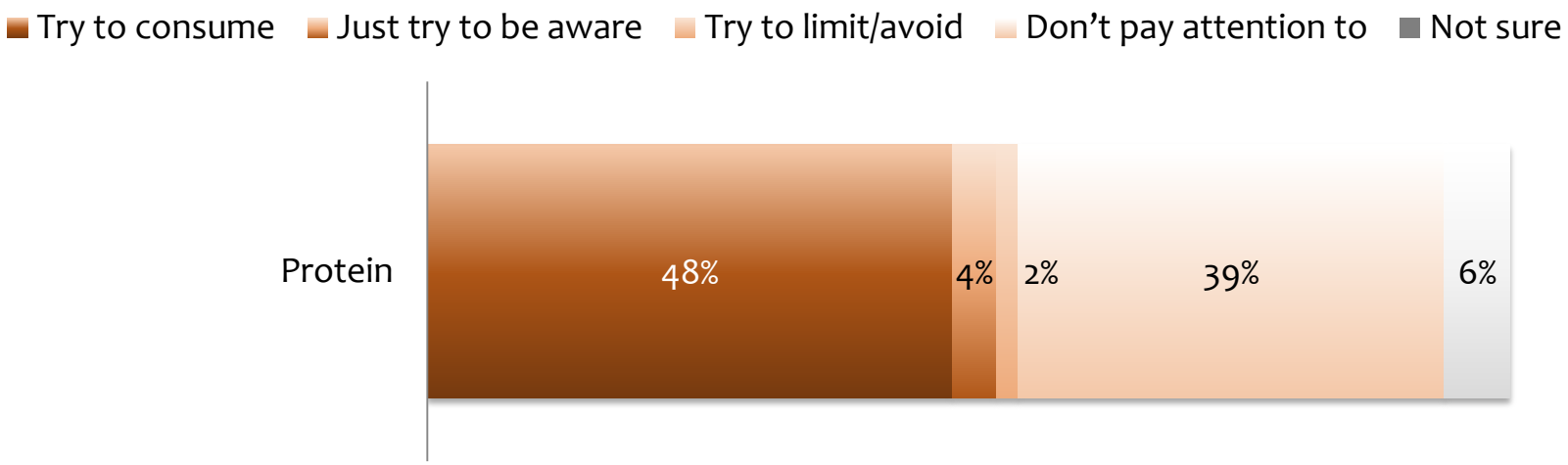

REMOVE FOIL SEAL UNDER CAP
Low Sodium • No Caffeine
Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 8 fl oz (240ml)
Servings Per Container 2.5
Amount Per Serving
Calories 50
Total Fat 0g
Sodium 110mg
Potassium 30mg
Total Carbohydrate 14g
Sugars 14g
Protein 0g
% Daily Value*
0%
5%
1%
5%
Not a significant source of Calories From Fat, Saturated Fat, Cholesterol, Dietary Fiber, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Calcium, Iron.
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.
Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 1 meal
Servings Per Container 1
Amount Per Serving
Calories 380
Total Fat 11g
Saturated Fat 5g
Cholesterol 15mg
Total Carbohydrate 55g
Dietary Fiber 9g
Sugars 7g
Protein 15g
Vitamin A 15%
Calcium 15%
Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 1 oz. (28g/about 13 chips)
Servings Per Container about 2
Amount Per Serving
Calories 140
Total Fat 9g
Saturated Fat
Calories 150
Total Fat 7g
Saturated Fat 1.5g
Fiber 1g
Sugars 1g
Protein 2g
Calcium 4%
Calories:
Less than
2,000

Nearly six out of ten Americans consider protein in their food selection. Almost all of these are trying to get more.

Over the past twelve months, when making decisions about buying packaged food or beverages, did you consider whether or not they contain the following?
To what extent do you try to consume or avoid the following?

All (n=1,057)

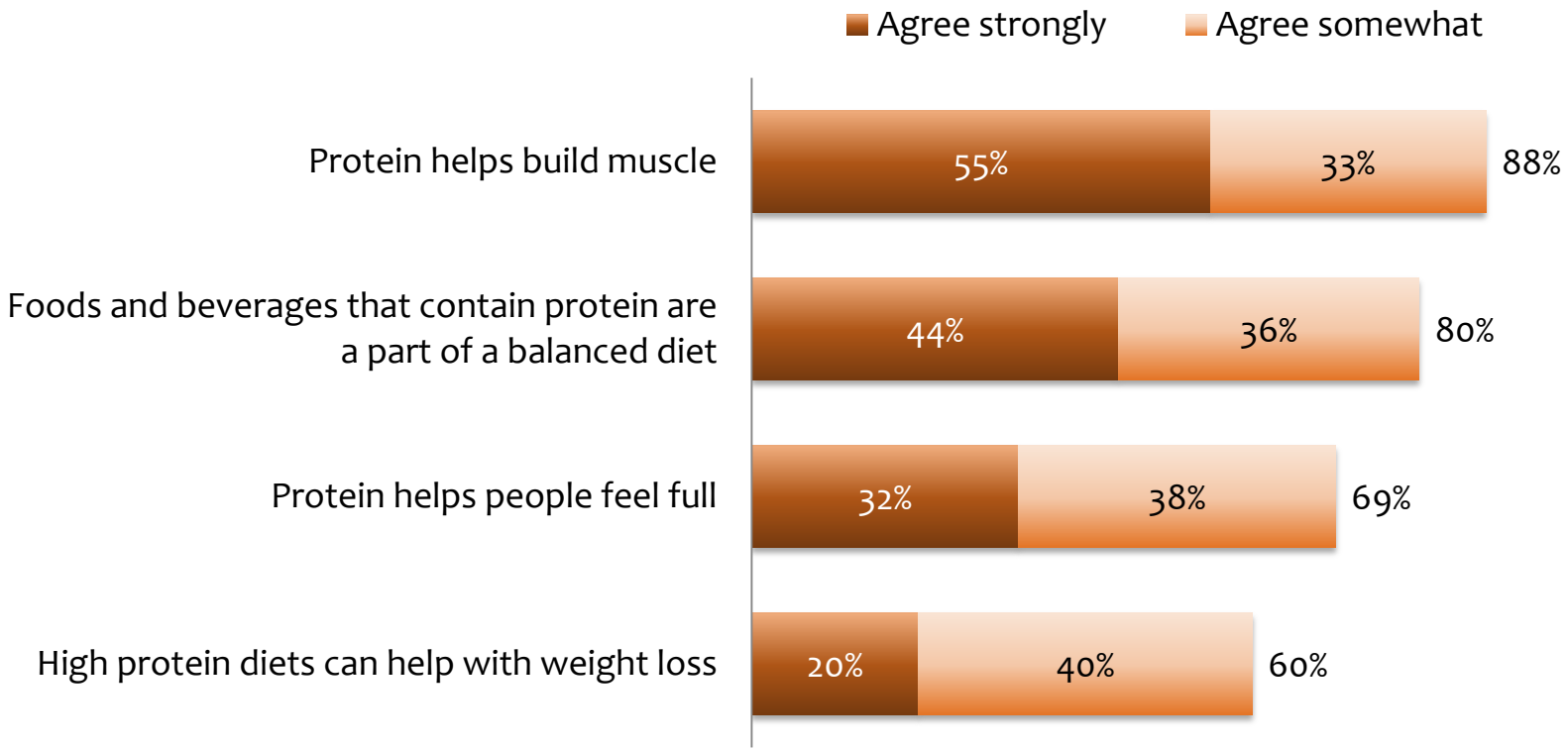
56% consider whether or not their packaged foods contain protein.



Most Americans understand the varied benefits of eating protein.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about protein?

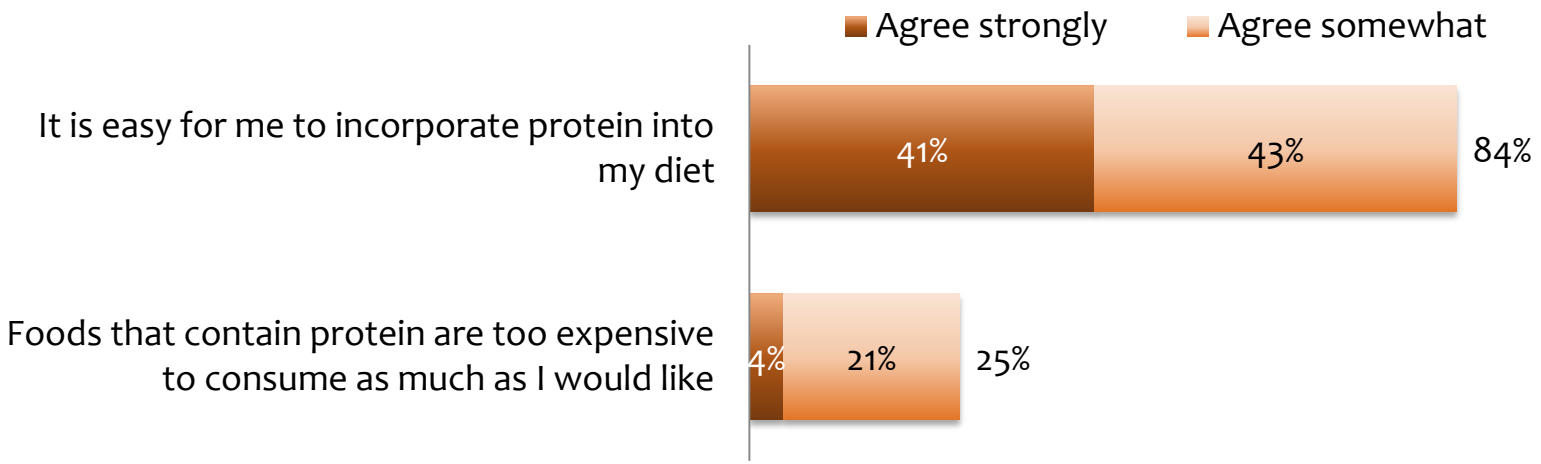
All (n=1,057)



Most find it easy to include protein in their diet, but one in four find it too expensive to eat as much as they would like.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about protein?

All (n=1,057)



Groups More Likely to Say Protein Is Too Expensive

Those with **low household income** are more likely to believe protein is too expensive, especially those with incomes under $35K (35%), but is still evident among those with at least $75K in household income (17%).

Younger consumers, ages 18 to 34, are twice as likely as the oldest—those 65 to 80—to feel protein is too expensive to eat as much as they would like (31% vs. 15%).

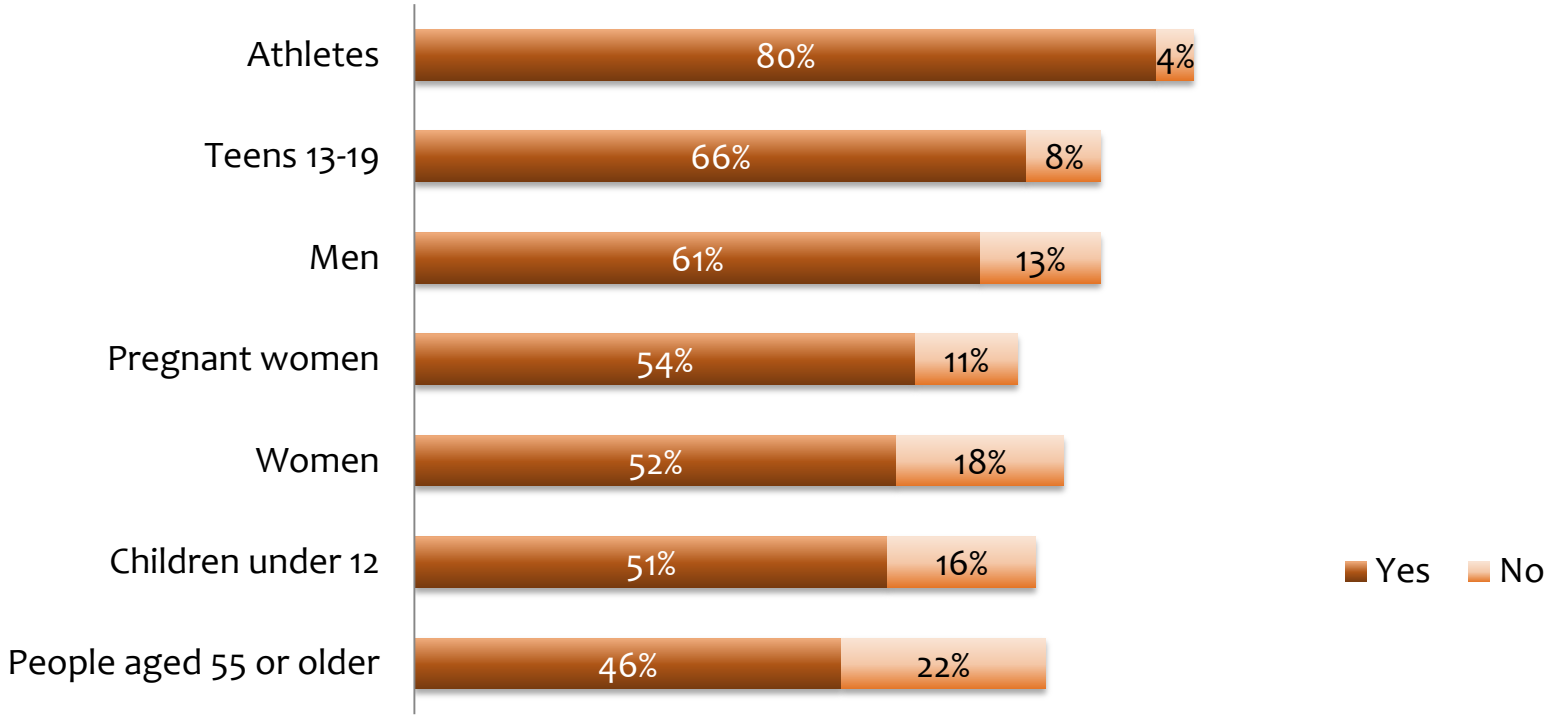
Hispanics are more likely than Whites or African Americans to feel price limited in their purchase of protein (33% vs. 24% and 22%, respectively).

Obese individuals are more likely than those who are less overweight or who have normal to low BMI to indicate their protein consumption is limited by its expense (31% vs. 23% and 22%, respectively).

Higher amounts of protein are seen as especially beneficial for athletes. High protein is also more commonly seen as helpful to teens than younger children.

Do you believe that consuming higher amounts of protein is especially beneficial for any of the following groups?

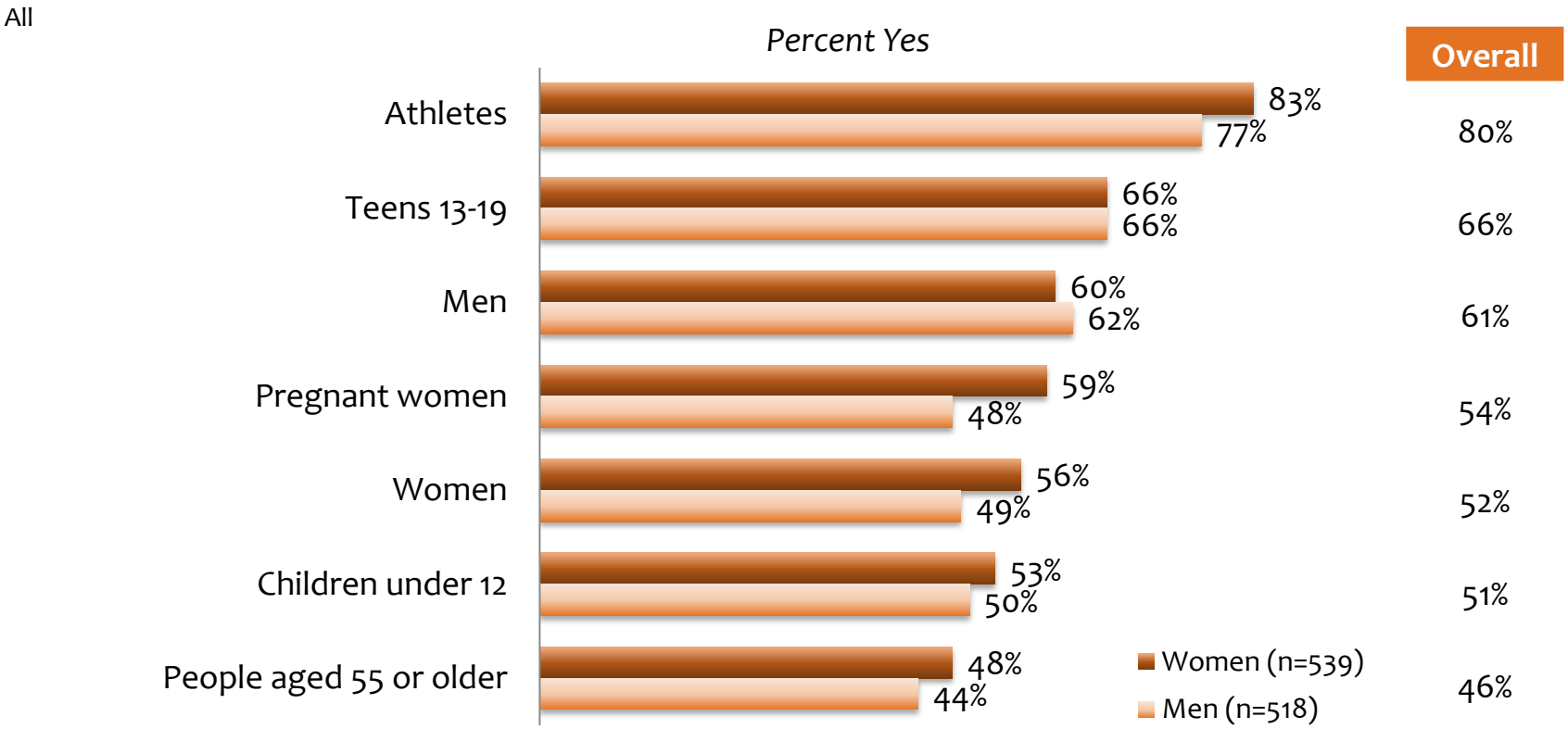
All (n=1,057)



Higher amounts of protein are seen as especially beneficial for athletes. High protein is more commonly seen as helpful to teens than younger children.

Women tend to feel that men, women, and pregnant women are about equally likely to benefit from high amounts of protein, whereas men are more apt to say that protein is especially beneficial for their own gender (62%) than for women (49%).

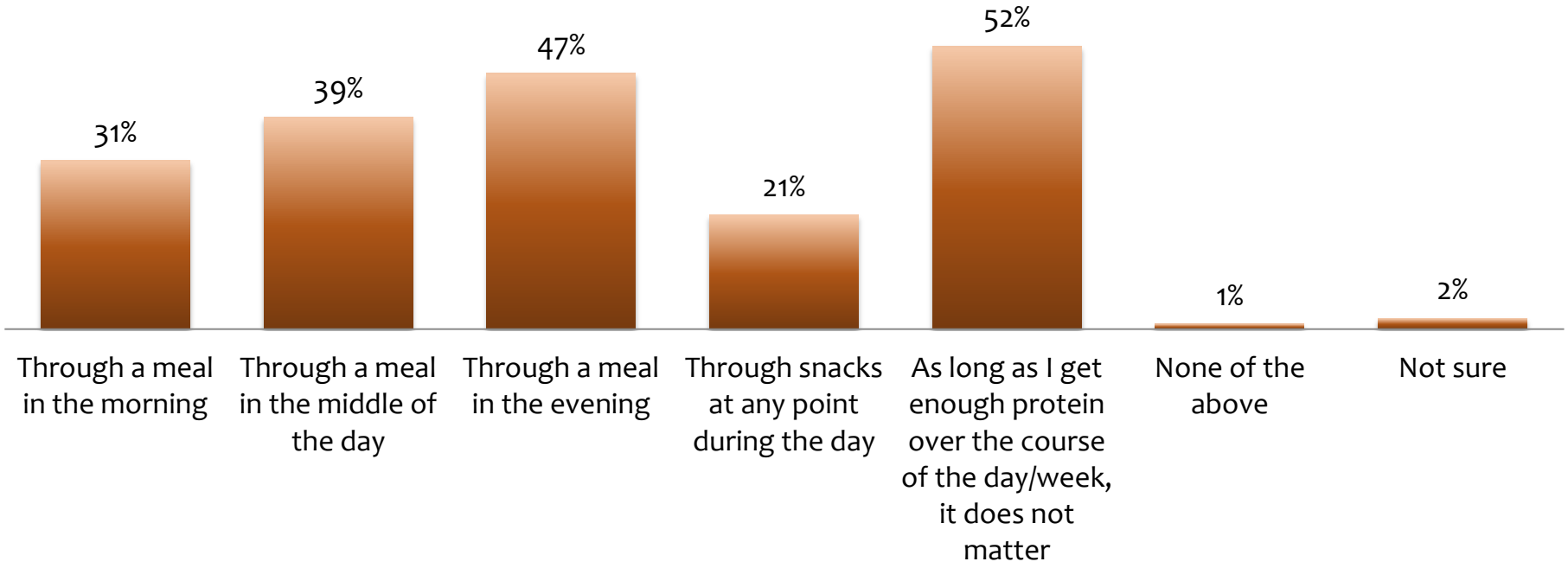
Do you believe that consuming higher amounts of protein is especially beneficial for any of the following groups?



More consumers try to eat protein during an evening meal than during other meals or snacks, although half simply try to get enough over the course of a day or week.

Which of the following describes when you prefer to eat protein?

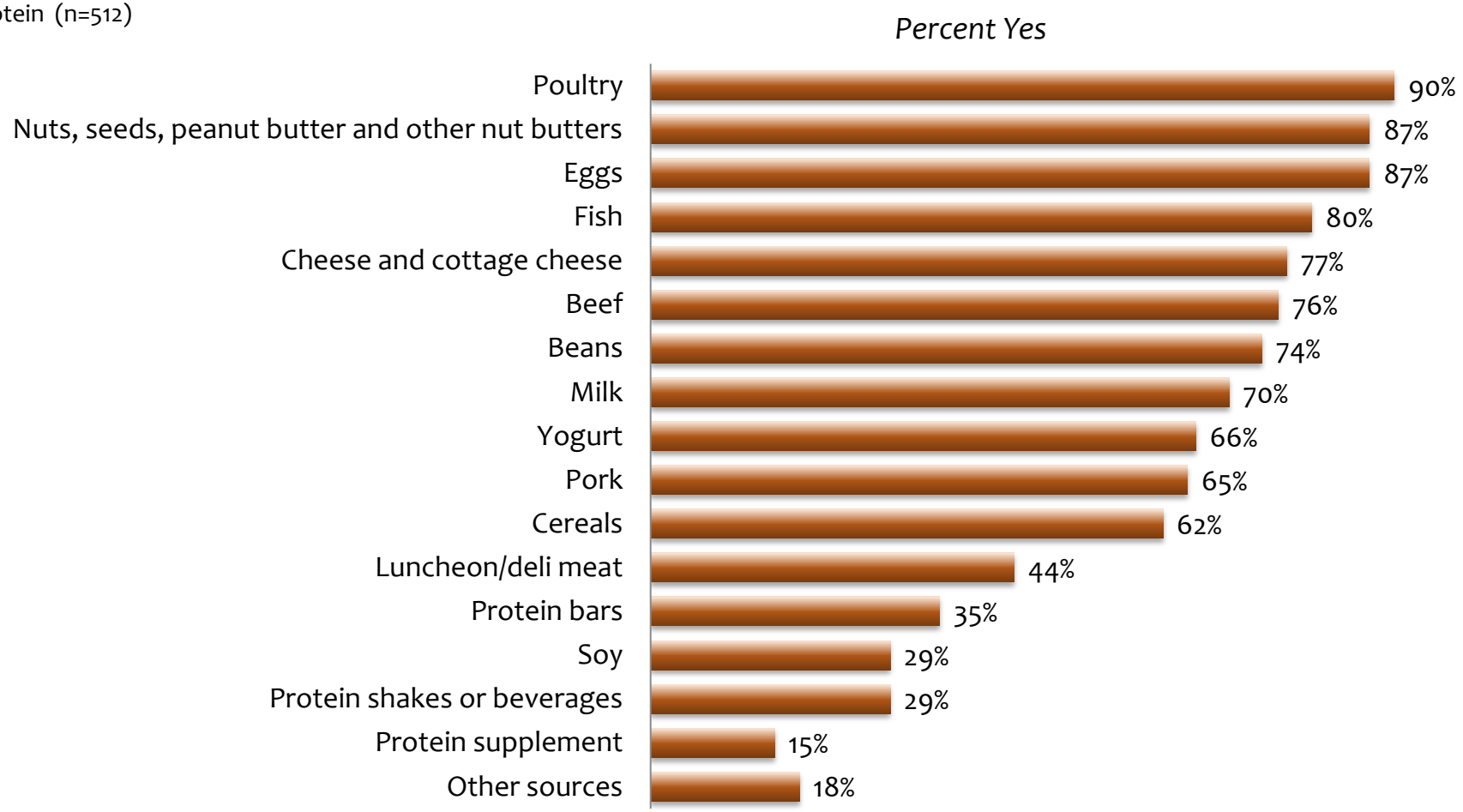
Seeking to consume at least a certain amount of protein (n=512)



Poultry, nuts/seeds, and eggs are the most popular forms of protein.

What sources of protein are you trying to consume?

Seeking to consume at least a certain amount of protein (n=512)

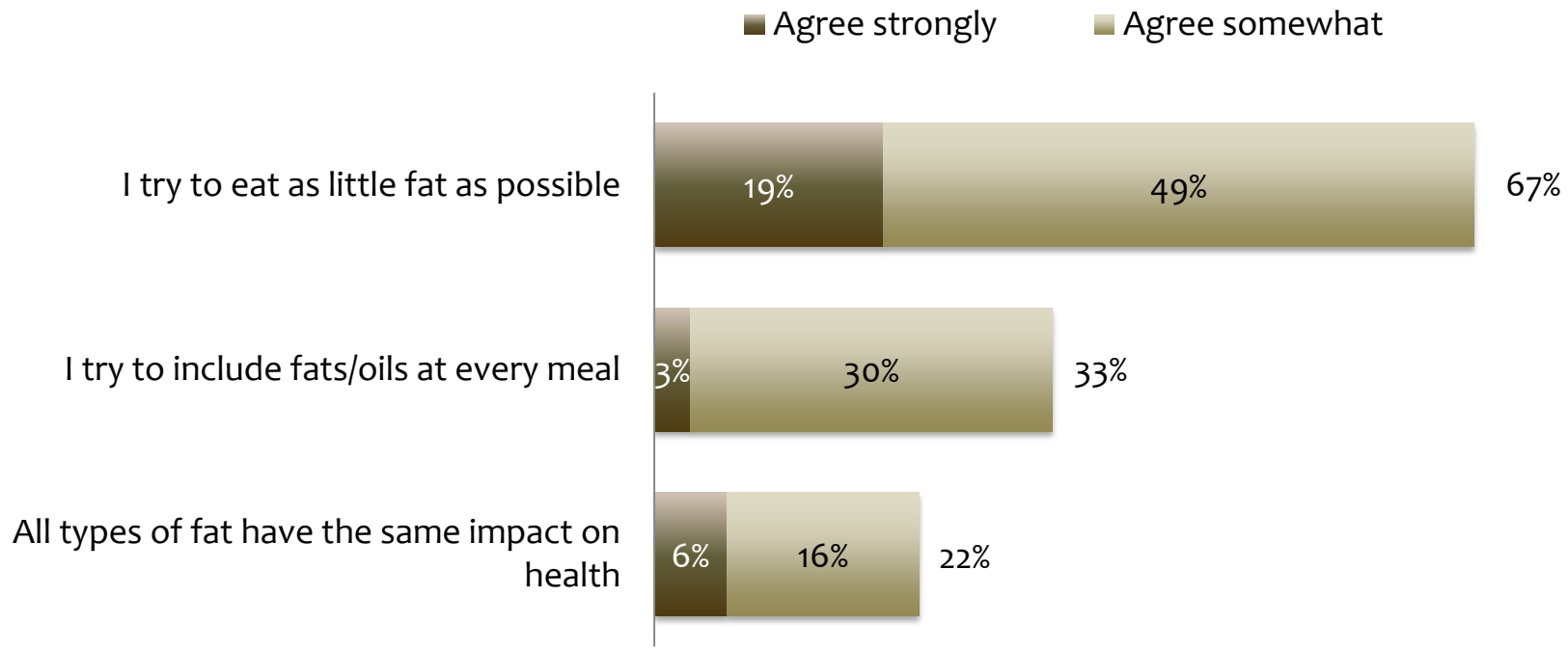


DIETARY FATS

Two out of three Americans say they try to eat as little fat as possible, even though a large majority understand that different fats can have different impacts on health.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following?

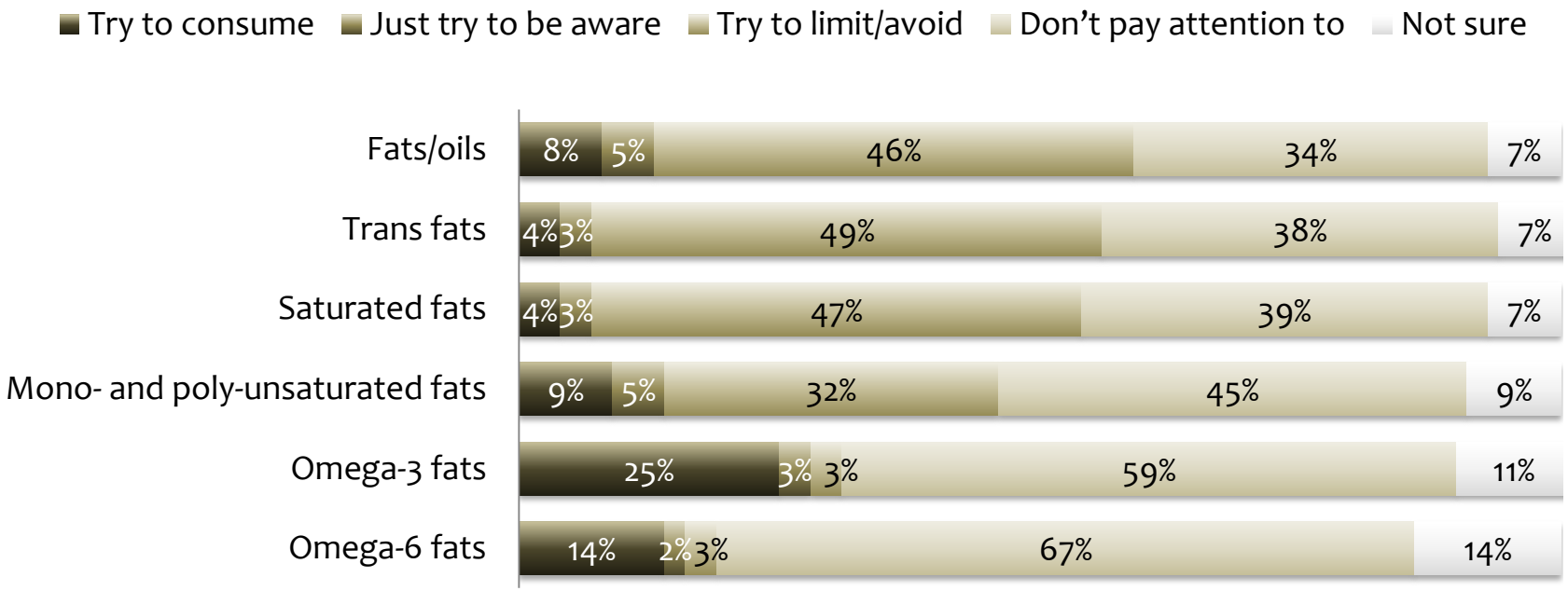
All (n=1,057)



Many are limiting/avoiding several types of fats, though some do seek to consume omega fats.

Over the past twelve months, when making decisions about buying packaged food or beverages, did you consider whether or not they contain the following?
To what extent do you try to consume or avoid the following?

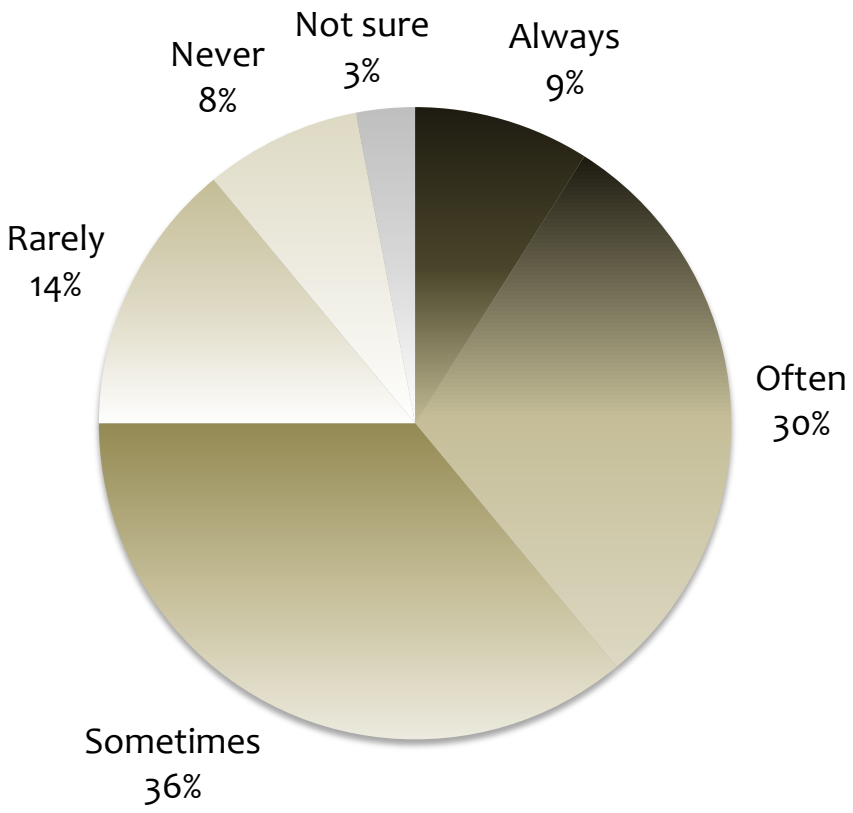
All (n=1,057)



Three out of four say they choose products that are lower in total fat at least *sometimes*.

When you are deciding whether or not to buy a particular food, how often, if ever, do you compare similar products and purchase the one lower in total fat?

All (n=1,057)

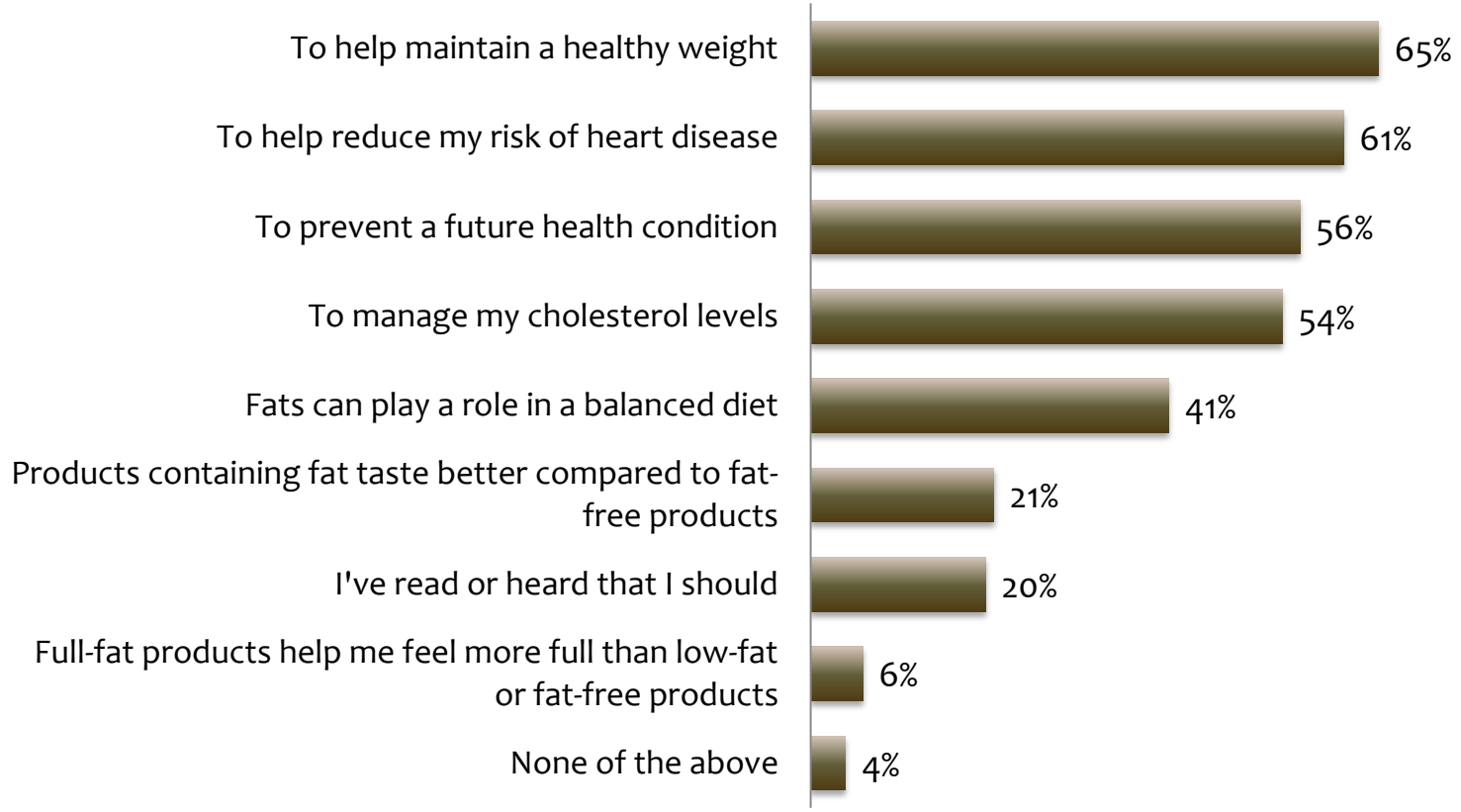


75% *always, often*, or *sometimes* compare similar products and choose the one lower in total fat.

Weight and health considerations are the main reasons for monitoring fat consumption.

Which of the following, if any, are reasons why you consider the fat content of the foods and beverages you buy?

Consider the presence of fats (n=748)



SODIUM

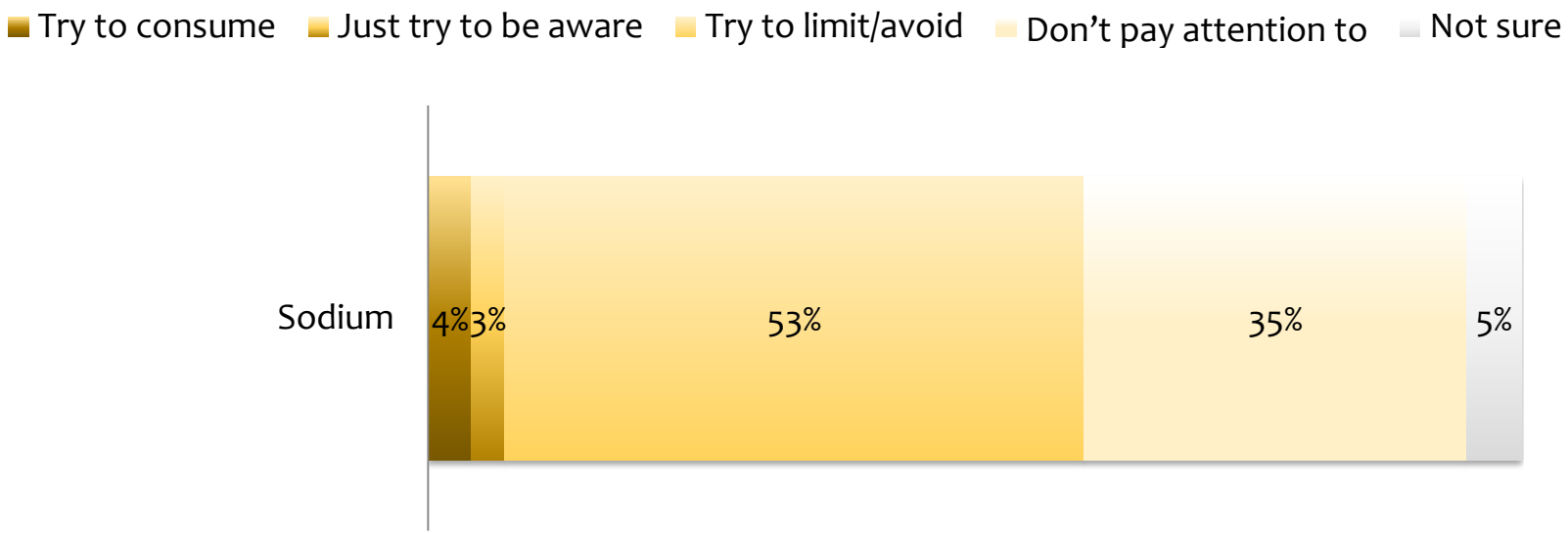

REMOVE FOIL SEAL UNDER CAP
Low Sodium • No Caffeine
Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 8 fl oz (240ml)
Servings Per Container 2.5
Amount Per Serving
Calories 50
% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0g
Sodium 110mg
Potassium 30mg
Total Carbohydrate 14g
Sugars 14g
Protein 0g
Not a significant source of Calories From Fat, Saturated Fat, Cholesterol, Dietary Fiber, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Calcium, Iron.
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.
Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 1 meal
Servings Per Container 1
Amount Per Serving
Calories 380
Total Fat 11g
Saturated Fat 5g
Cholesterol 15mg
Total Carbohydrate 55g
Dietary Fiber 9g
Sugars 7g
Protein 15g
Vitamin A 15%
Calcium 15%
Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 1 oz. (28g/about 13 chips)
Servings Per Container about 2
Amount Per Serving
Calories 140
Total Fat 9g
Saturated Fat
Cholesterol
Sodium
Calories 150
Total Fat 7g
Saturated Fat 1.5g
Sugars 1g
Protein 2g
Calcium 4%
Calories:
2,000

Six out of ten Americans consider the sodium content of packaged foods—almost always due to a desire to limit or avoid it entirely.

Over the past twelve months, when making decisions about buying packaged food or beverages, did you consider whether or not they contain the following?
To what extent do you try to consume or avoid the following?

All (n=1,057)

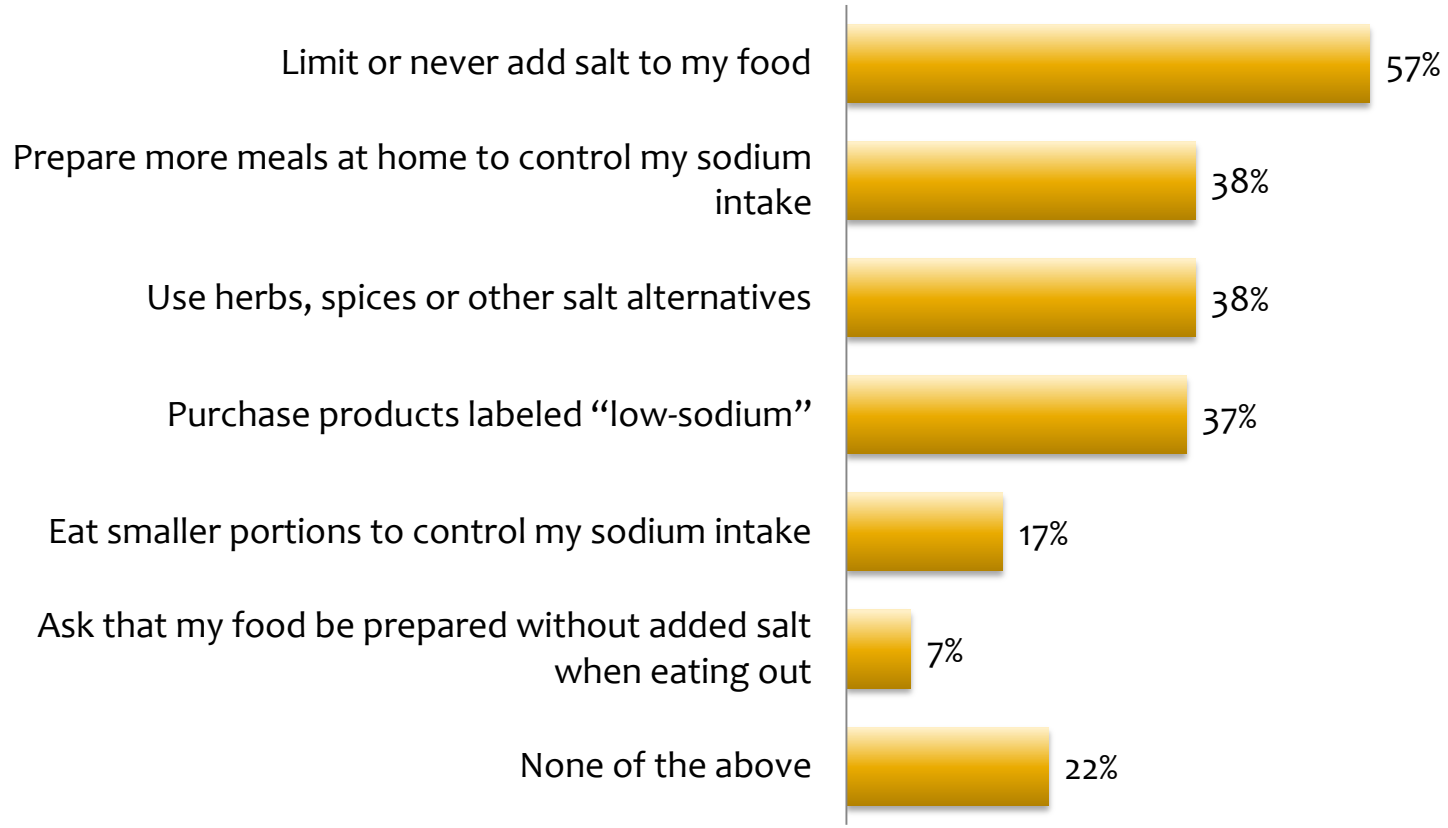
60% consider whether or not their packaged foods contain sodium or salt.



Eight out of ten Americans have taken at least one of six specified actions to limit their sodium consumption, most often limiting the amount of salt they add to their food.

Which of the following, if any, do you regularly do regarding your sodium consumption?

All (n=1,057)

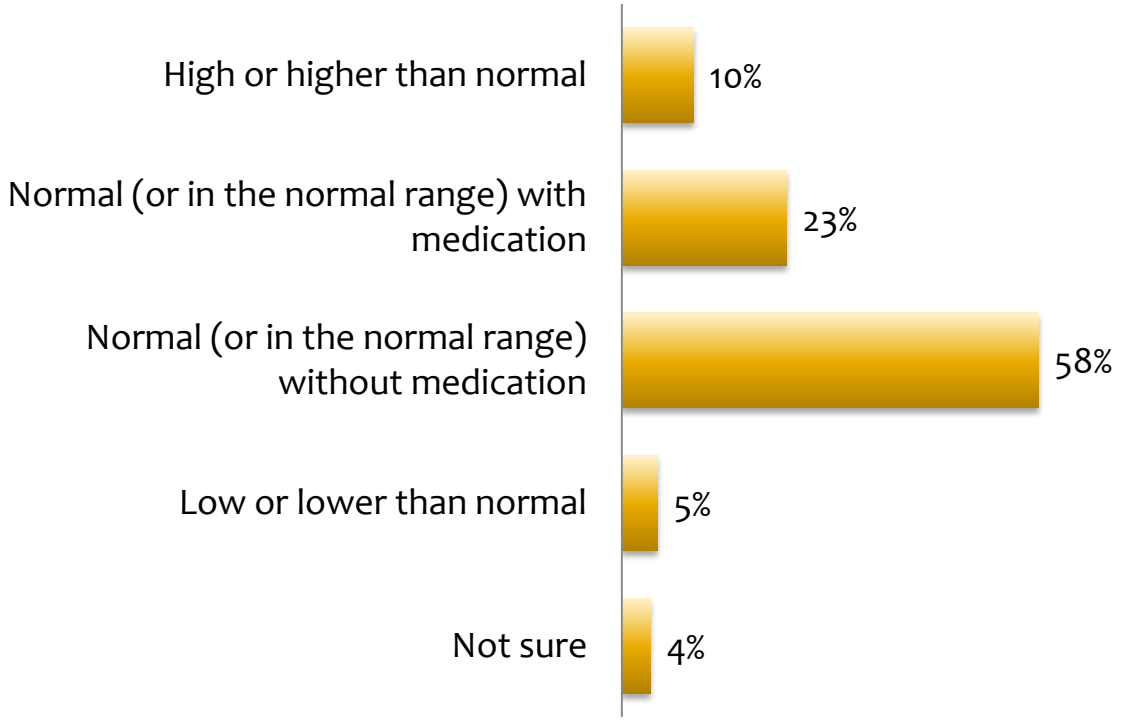


The large majority of Americans have normal blood pressure although, for nearly one in four, this is achieved with the help of medication.

As one would expect, the share who use medication to maintain a normal blood pressure rises with age.

To the best of your knowledge, is your blood pressure…

All (n=1,057)



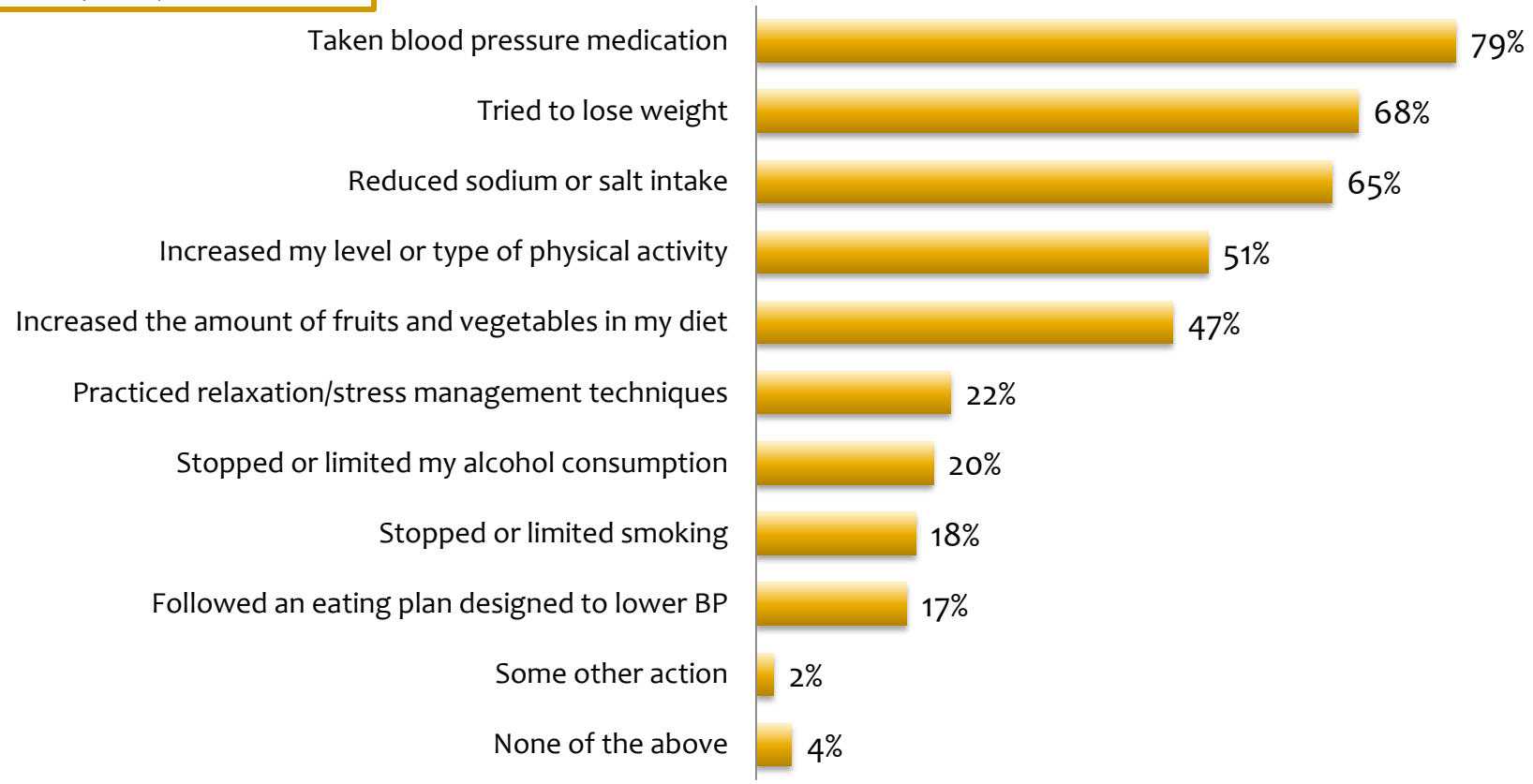
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65-80
High or higher than normal	7%	13%	12%	9%
Normal (or in the normal range) with medication	8%	15%	**35%**	**47%**
Normal (or in the normal range) without medication	**71%**	**61%**	49%	39%
Low or lower than normal	5%	6%	3%	4%
Not sure	**8%**	**4%**	1%	1%

Bolded figures are significantly higher than one or more counterpart groups.

For Americans who have high blood pressure, the top control strategies are medication, weight loss, and reduction of salt intake.

Which of the following, if any, have you ever done specifically to reduce your blood pressure or keep it from going higher?

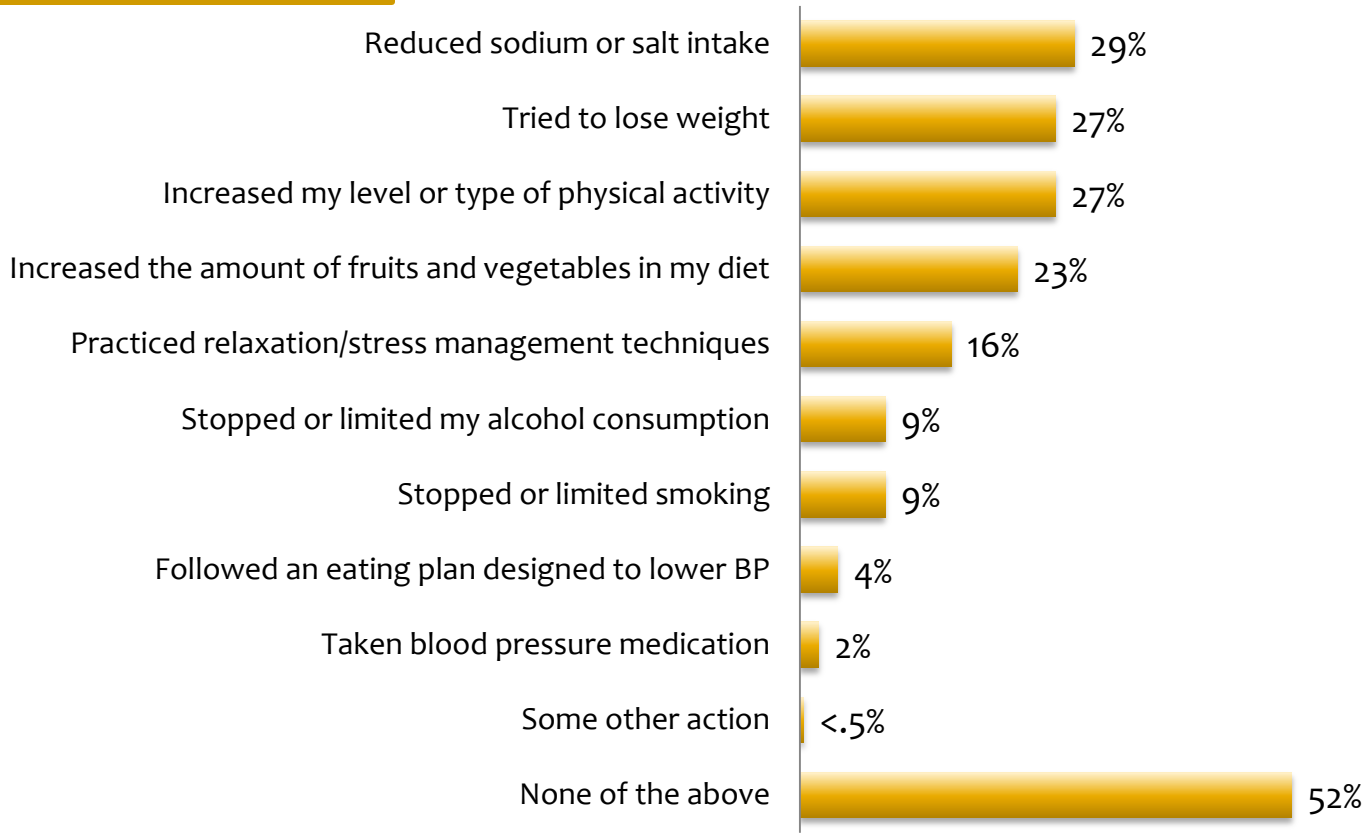
Blood pressure is high—even if brought into normal range with medication (n=354)



Half of those who have normal blood pressure work to keep it so. Their top efforts: to reduce salt, lose weight, increase their activity level, and eat more fruits/vegetables.

Which of the following, if any, have you ever done specifically to reduce your blood pressure or keep it from going higher?

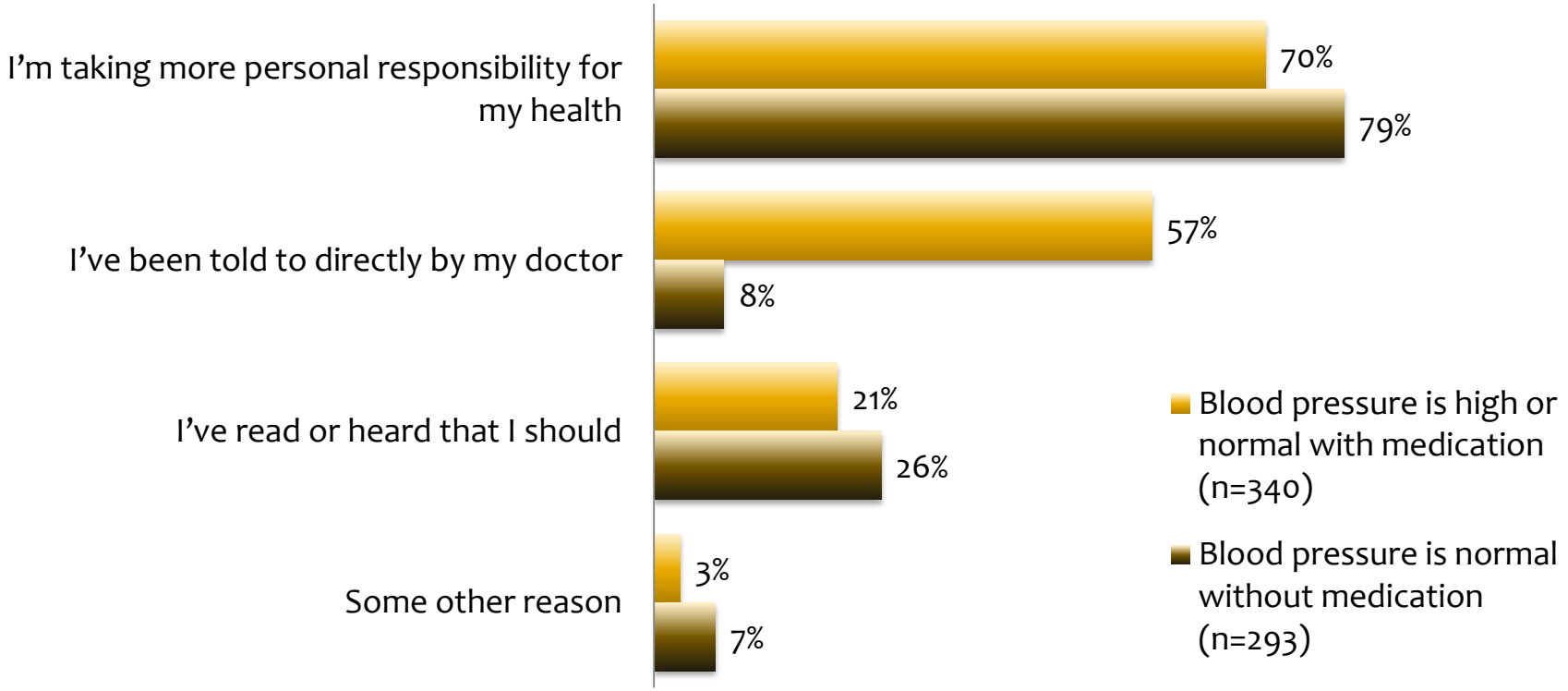
Blood pressure is normal without medication (n=611)



A sense of personal responsibility drives efforts to manage blood pressure. A doctor's directive plays a role too for many of those with high blood pressure.

For what reasons are you making those efforts to manage your blood pressure?

Made efforts to manage blood pressure

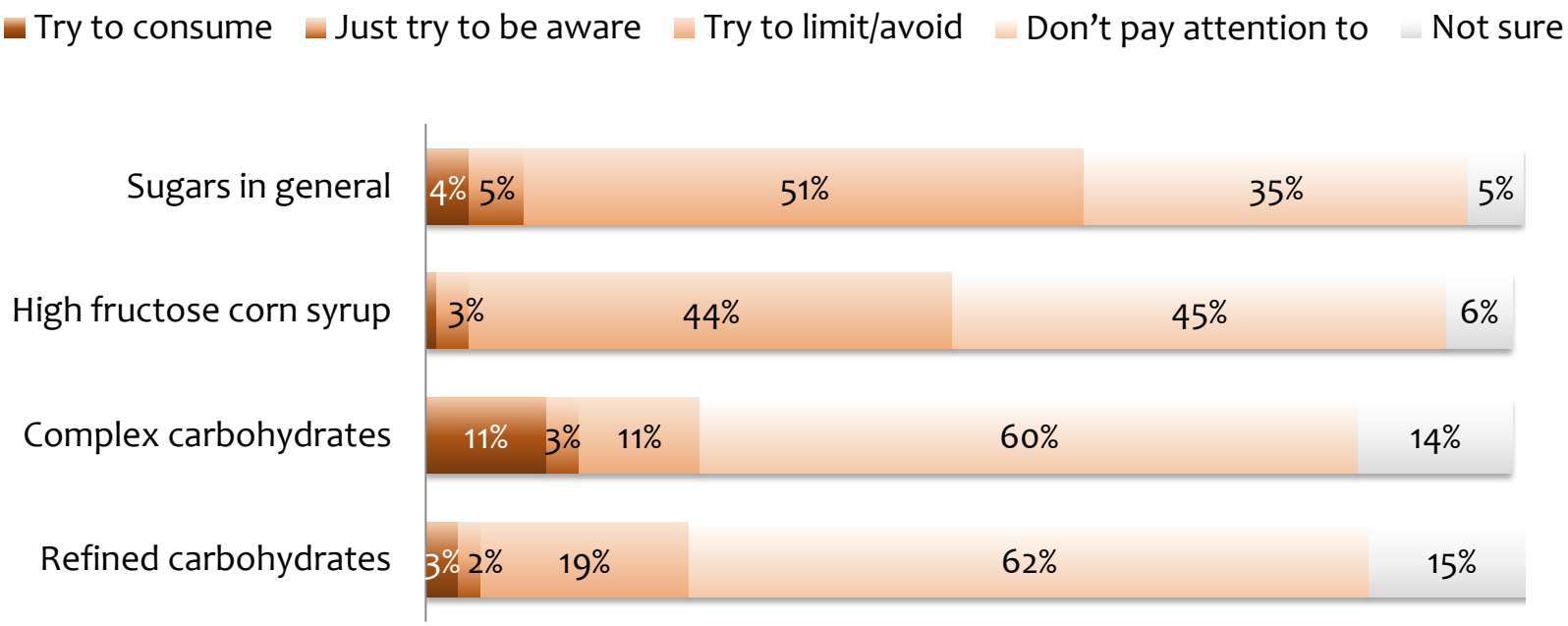


CARBOHYDRATES AND SUGARS

Many Americans try to limit their consumption of sugars in general or high fructose corn syrup in particular. Fewer are trying to limit their carbohydrates.

Over the past twelve months, when making decisions about buying packaged food or beverages, did you consider whether or not they contain the following?
To what extent do you try to consume or avoid the following?

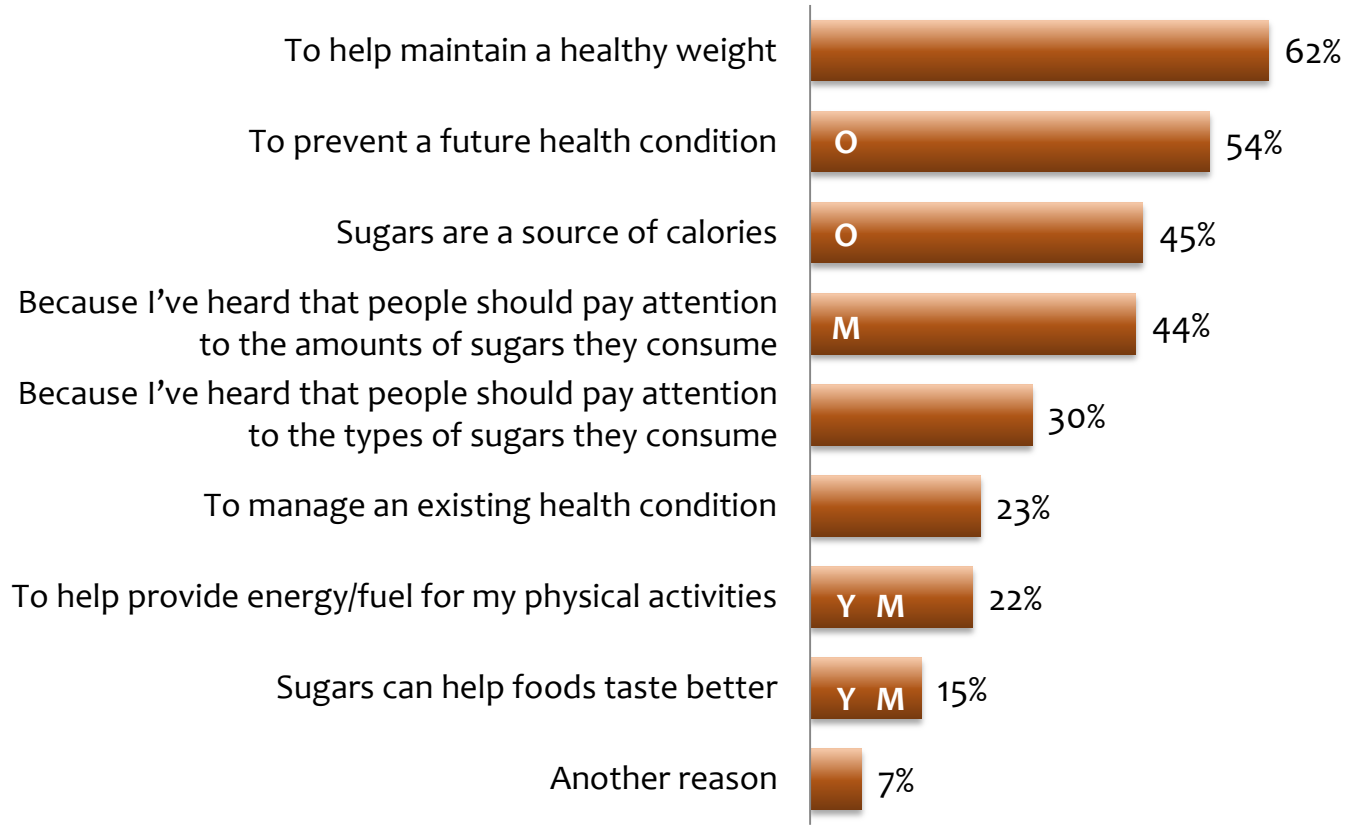
All (n=1,057)



Weight and other health factors are the most common reasons for monitoring sugar or carbohydrate consumption.

Which of the following, if any, are reasons why you consider the sugars and/or carbohydrate content of the foods and beverages you buy?

Consider the presence/absence of carbohydrates or sugar (n=723)



O

Older consumers (ages 65 to 80) are more likely than those who are younger to consider sugars/carbs out of concern for future health conditions or because of monitoring calories.

Y

Younger consumers (18 to 34) are more apt than older ones to consider carbs because of taste or to get energy for activities.

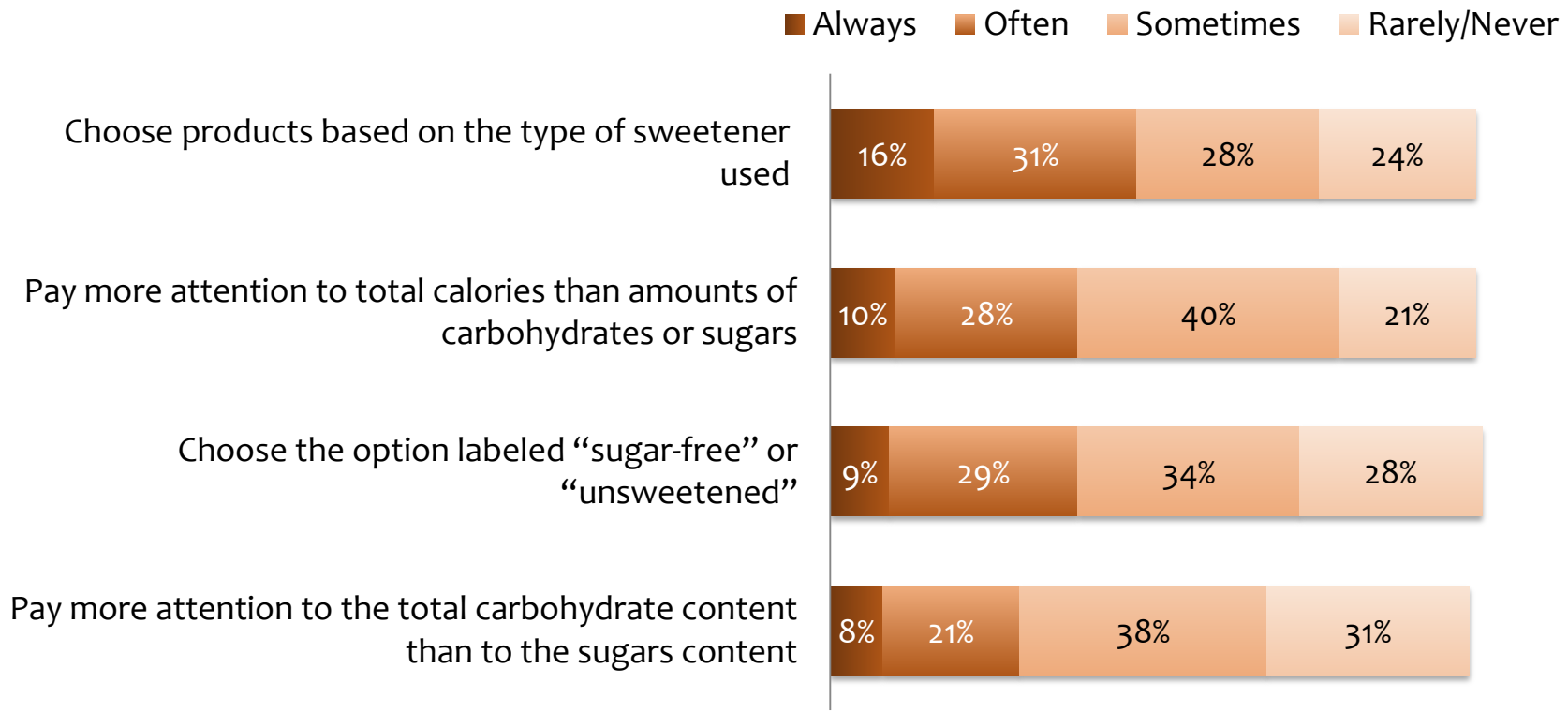
M

Men are different from women in several of the reasons why they consider sugar/carb content of their food.

Among those who pay attention to carbs/sugars, half choose products based on the type of sweetener.

How often do you do each of the following?

Consider the presence/absence of carbohydrates or sugar (n=723)



The proportion of Americans who agree it is fine to include some sugar in one's diet increased this year.

Trend

As far as you know, which of the following statements, if any, are true?

	2011 (n=1,000)	2012 (n=1,057)
Moderate amounts of sugar can be part of an overall healthful diet	52%	**62%**
It is not necessary to completely eliminate sugar from your diet in order to lose weight	32%	**61%**
People with diabetes can include some foods with sugar as part of their total diet	36%	**43%**
All sugars (high fructose corn syrup, table sugar, honey, etc.) are similar and are used by the body in the same way	28%	28%
None of the above	21%	**9%**

Bolded 2012 figures are significantly different than 2011 percentages.

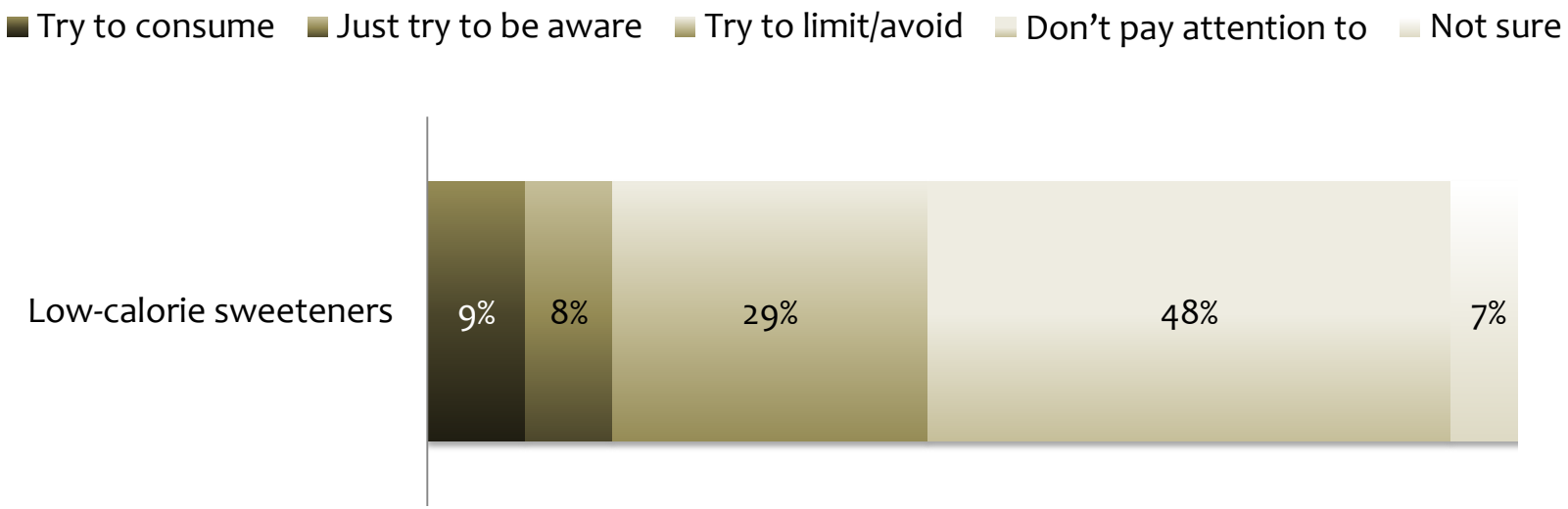
LOW-CALORIE SWEETENERS

Nearly half of Americans consider whether their food contains low-calorie sweeteners. One in ten try to consume them; three in ten try to limit them.

Over the past twelve months, when making decisions about buying packaged food or beverages, did you consider whether or not they contain the following?
To what extent do you try to consume or avoid the following?

All (n=1,057)

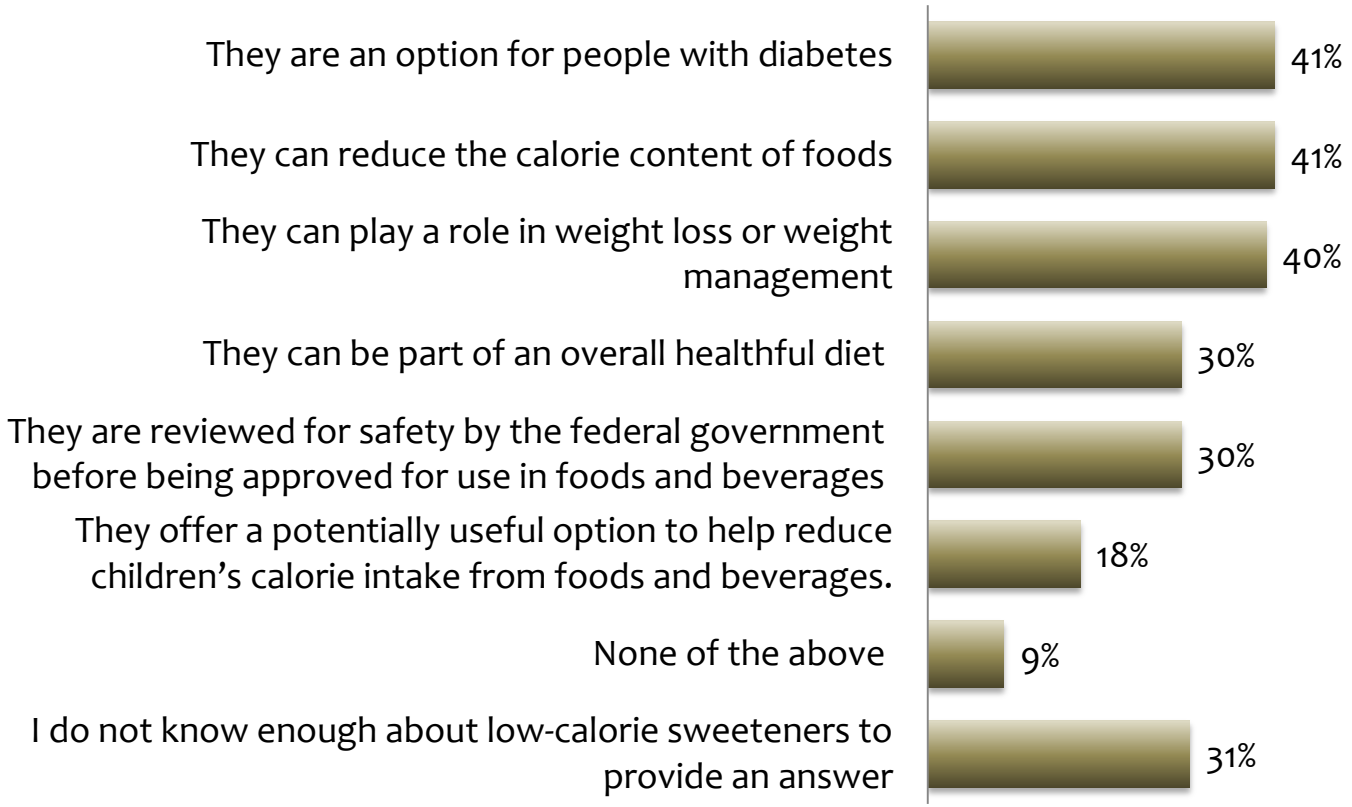
46% consider whether or not their packaged foods contain low-calorie sweeteners.



Nearly one out of three feel they do not know enough about low-calorie sweeteners to judge their benefits.

Which of the following statements, if any, do you agree with regarding low-calorie sweeteners?

All (n=1,057)



Agreement with these statements about low-calorie sweeteners has fluctuated over the years, with 2012 findings similar to 2010.

Trend

Which of the following statements, if any, do you agree with regarding low-calorie sweeteners?

	2009 (n=1,064)	2010 (n=495)	2011 (n=1,000)	2012 (n=1,057)
They are an option for people with diabetes	34%	38%	34%	**41%**
They can reduce the calorie content of foods	34%	34%	29%	**41%**
They can play a role in weight loss or weight management	34%	38%	29%	**40%**
They can be part of an overall healthful diet	28%	29%	24%	**30%**
They are reviewed for safety by the federal government before being approved for use in foods and beverages	26%	24%	21%	**30%**
They offer a potentially useful option to help reduce children's calorie intake from foods and beverages.	N/A	14%	15%	18%
None of the above	12%	12%	12%	**9%**
I do not know enough about low-calorie sweeteners to provide an answer	28%	27%	34%	31%

Bolded 2012 figures are significantly higher than 2011 percentages.

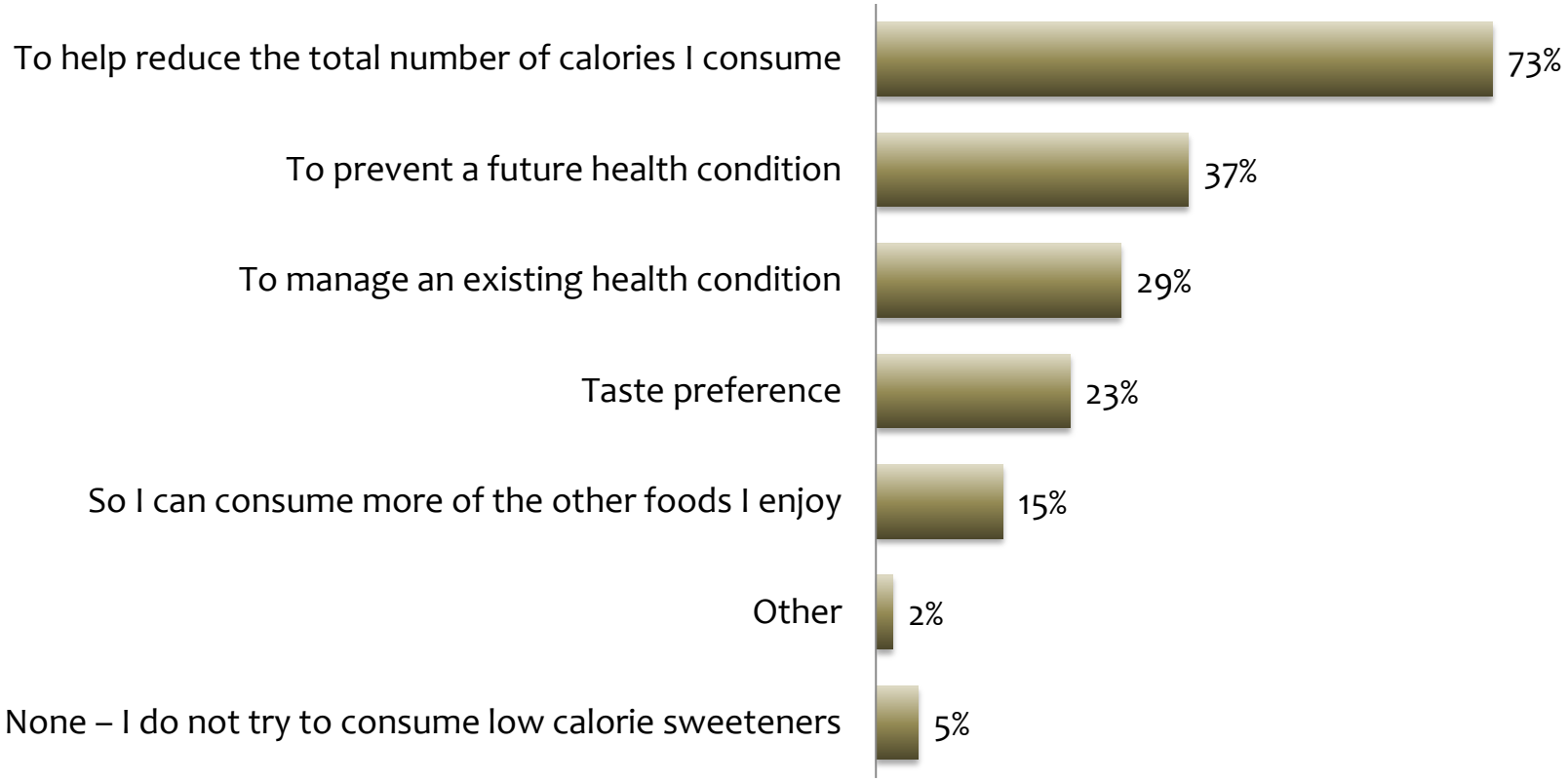
Prior to 2012, the question referenced "low-calorie/artificial" sweeteners.

N/A indicates not asked in previous years.

Predictably, calorie control is the most common reason for consuming low-calorie sweeteners.

What are your reasons for consuming foods or beverages that contain low-calorie sweeteners?

Do not try to avoid low-calorie sweeteners (n=317)

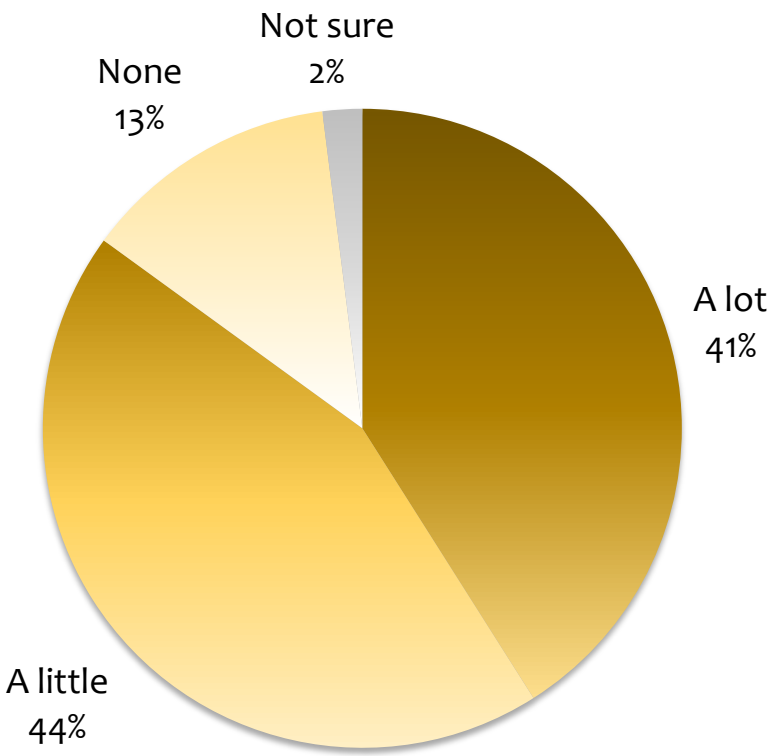


4 FOOD SAFETY

More than eight out of ten Americans admit to giving some thought to the safety of their foods and beverages over the past year.

Over the past year, how much thought have you given to the safety of your foods and beverages?

All (n=1,057)

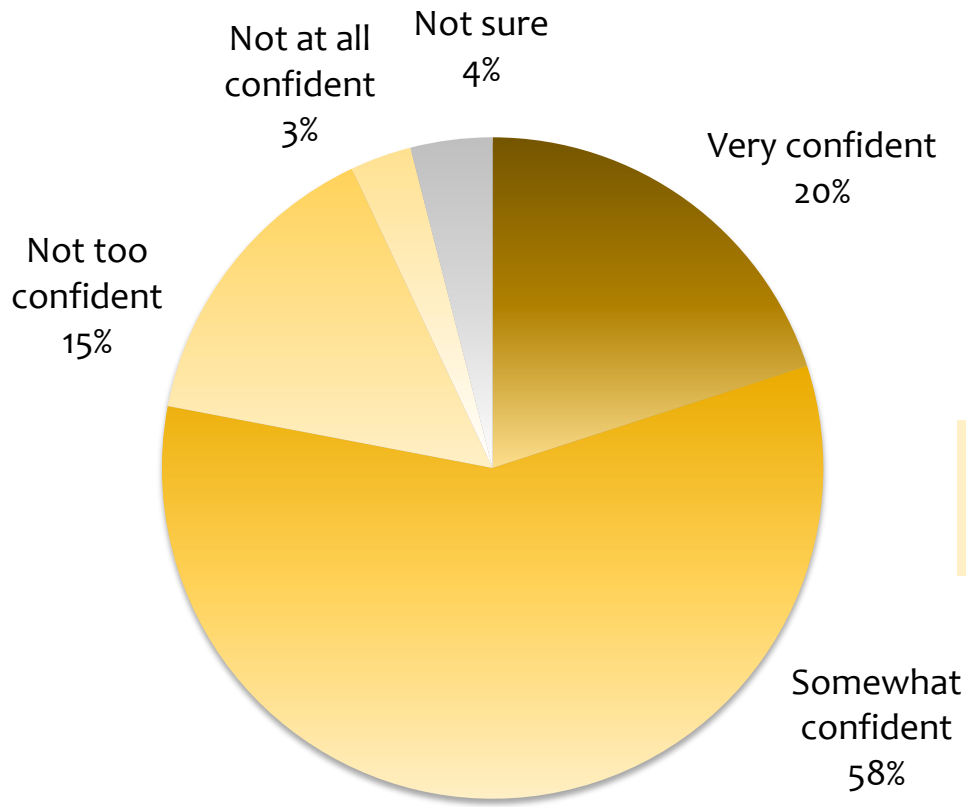


85% have given *a lot* or *a little* thought to food safety.

Three out of four are confident in the safety of the country's food supply.

Overall, how confident are you in the safety of the U.S. food supply?

All (n=1,057)



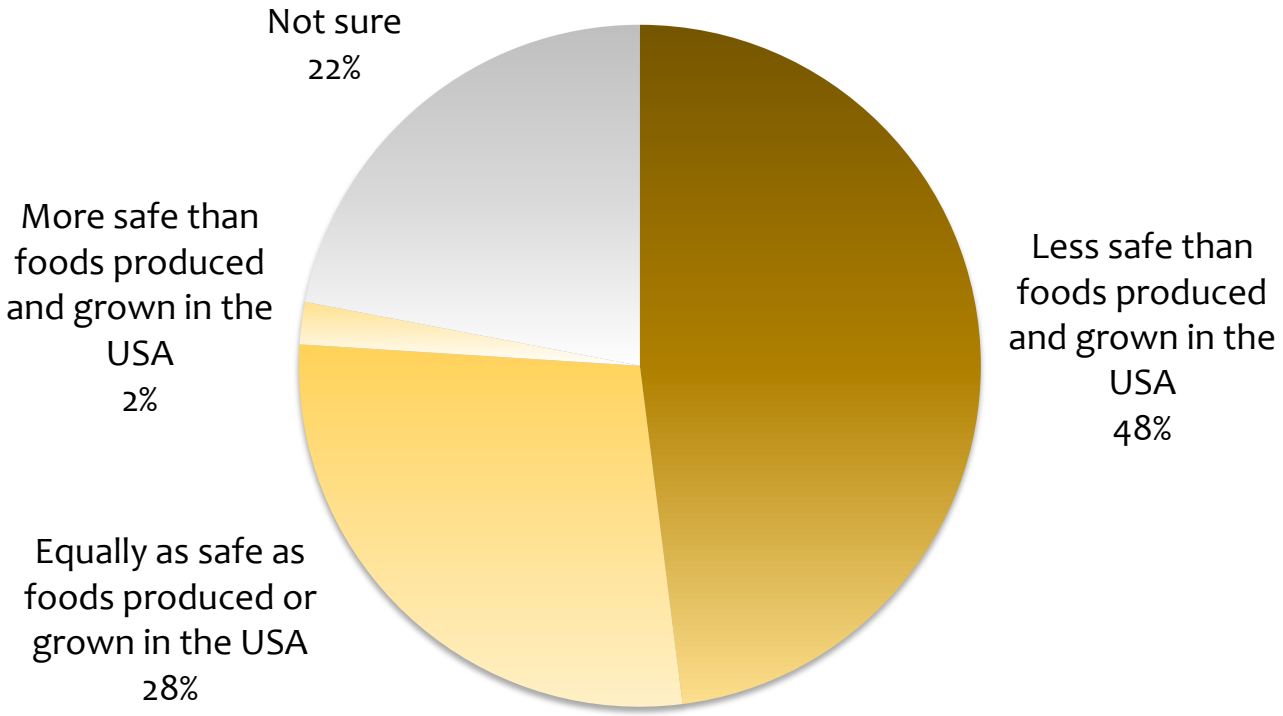
78% are *very* or *somewhat* confident in the safety of the U.S. food supply.

Half feel that imported foods are less safe than foods produced in the United States.

Hispanic consumers are more likely than non-Hispanic Whites and African Americans to rate imported and domestic foods as equally safe (40% vs. 26%, 24%).

All (n=1,057)

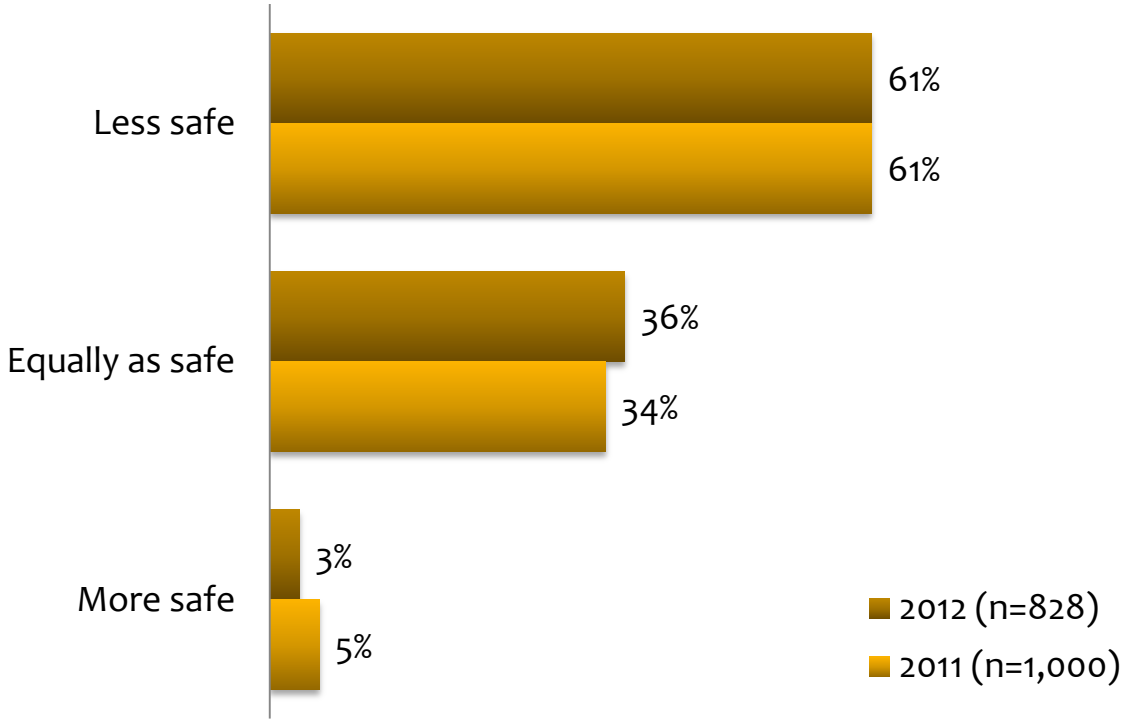
In general, do you think that imported foods are…?



The perceived safety of imported foods has not changed in the past year.

Trend

In general, do you think that imported foods are…?



In 2012, a "not sure" option was provided for the first time. The comparison excludes respondents who chose that response.

Most of those who feel that imported foods are less safe than domestically-produced foods attribute that to a lack of regulations.

Why do you believe that imported foods are less safe than foods produced or grown in the United States?

Believe imported foods are less safe (n=509)

They have fewer regulations and inspections than are required in the U.S.	77%
They have less sanitary conditions	61%
They could become contaminated or spoiled during travel to get to the U.S.	60%
I do not know enough about how they are produced	49%
They use more chemicals and pesticides or some that are more harmful than the ones used in the U.S.	48%
Other	3%
Not sure	1%

Those who feel that imported foods are just as safe as domestically-produced foods generally believe that both sources can have issues.

Why do you believe that imported foods are equally as safe as foods produced or grown in the United States?

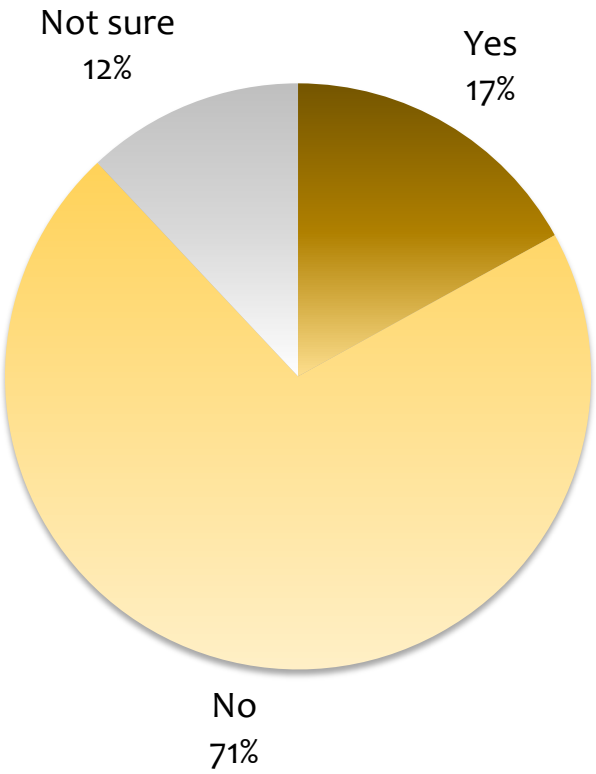
Believe imported foods are equally safe (n=295)

Foodborne illness can come from both U.S. produced and imported food	58%
The U.S. food supply has food safety issues too	53%
I have never had a bad experience with imported foods	47%
Imported foods are regulated and inspected to the same extent as domestically produced foods	46%
Other countries have safety standards that are as good as the ones in the U.S.	22%
I have had similar bad experiences with domestically produced foods	12%
Other	1%
Not sure	6%

Only one out of six have stopped buying a specific brand or type of food due to concerns about its safety.

In the past twelve months, have you stopped buying any specific brand or type of food or beverage due to a concern about its safety?

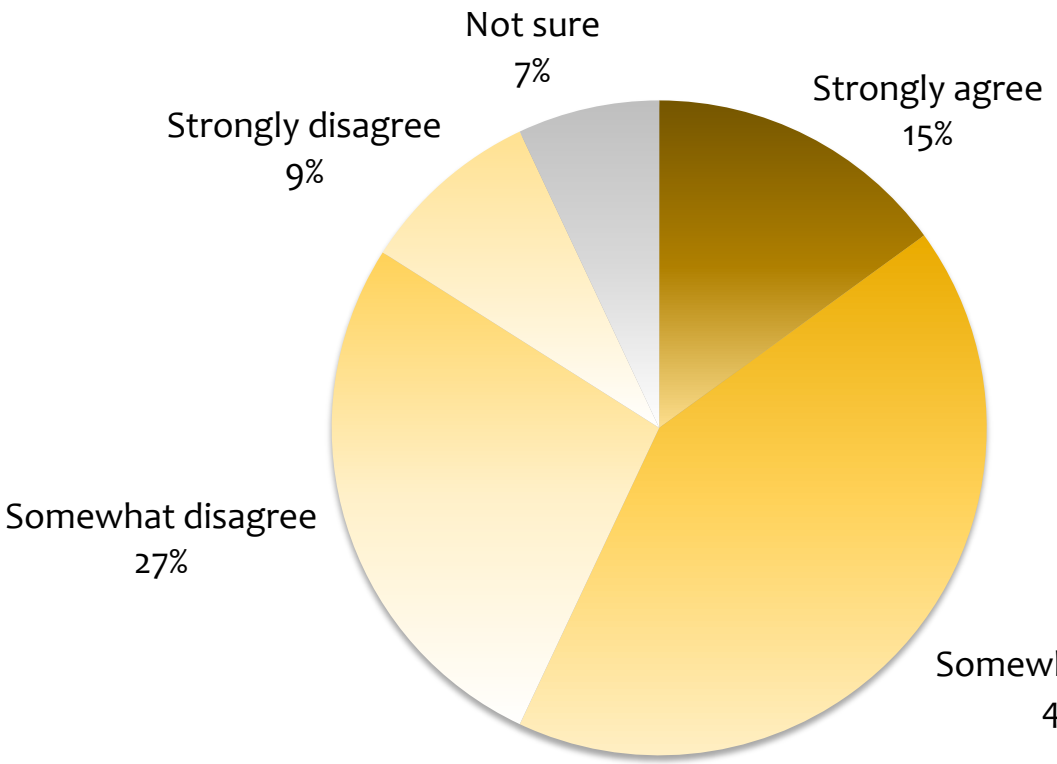
All (n=1,057)



Nearly six out of ten agree that the chances they will be sickened by their food are extremely low.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
The chances that I will actually get a foodborne illness or food poisoning (like Salmonella or E.coli) from something I eat or drink are extremely low.

All (n=1,057)

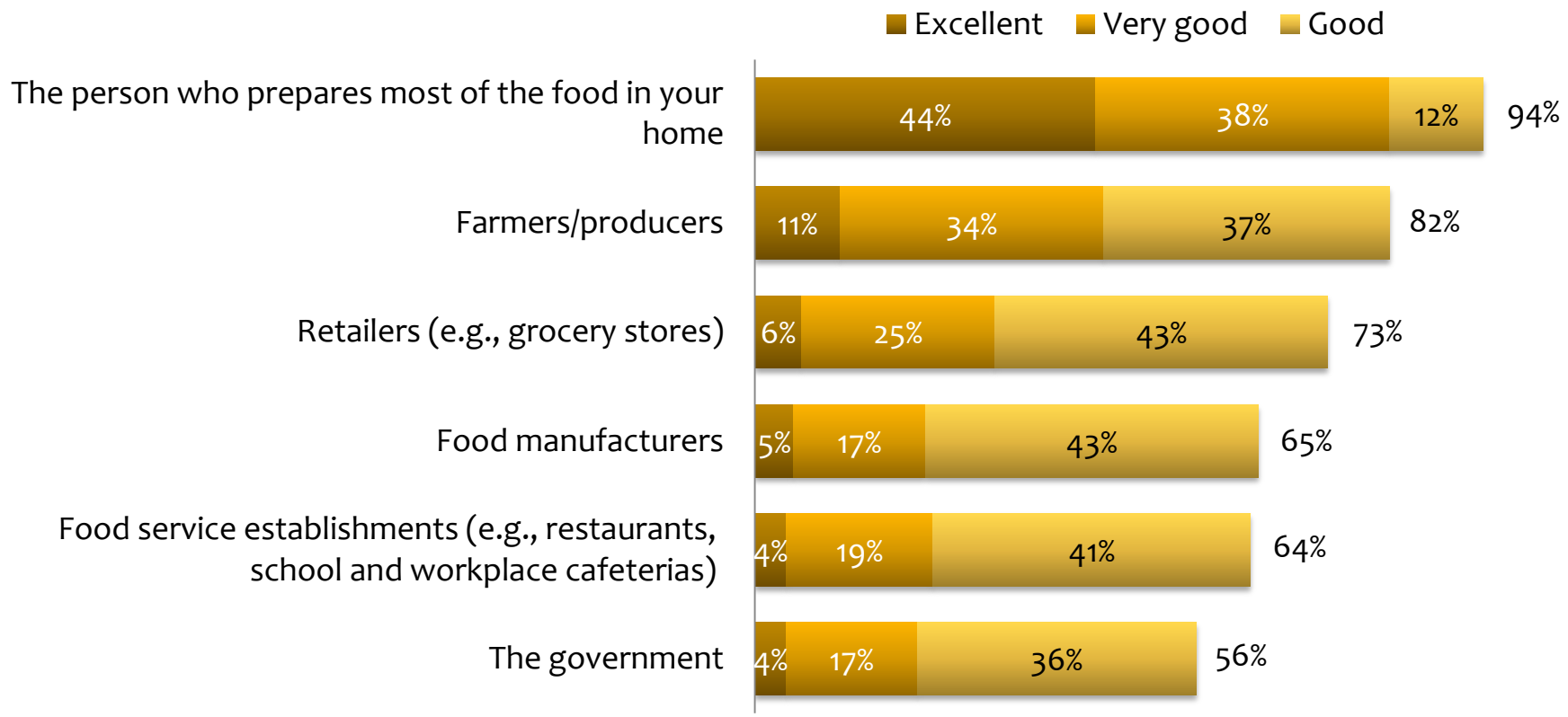


57% *strongly* or *somewhat* agree that the chances they will get a serious foodborne illness are extremely low.

Although Americans trust themselves the most, all entities charged with ensuring the safety of the U.S. food supply are viewed as doing at least a *good* job.

How good a job do you believe each of the following do in ensuring the safety of your food?

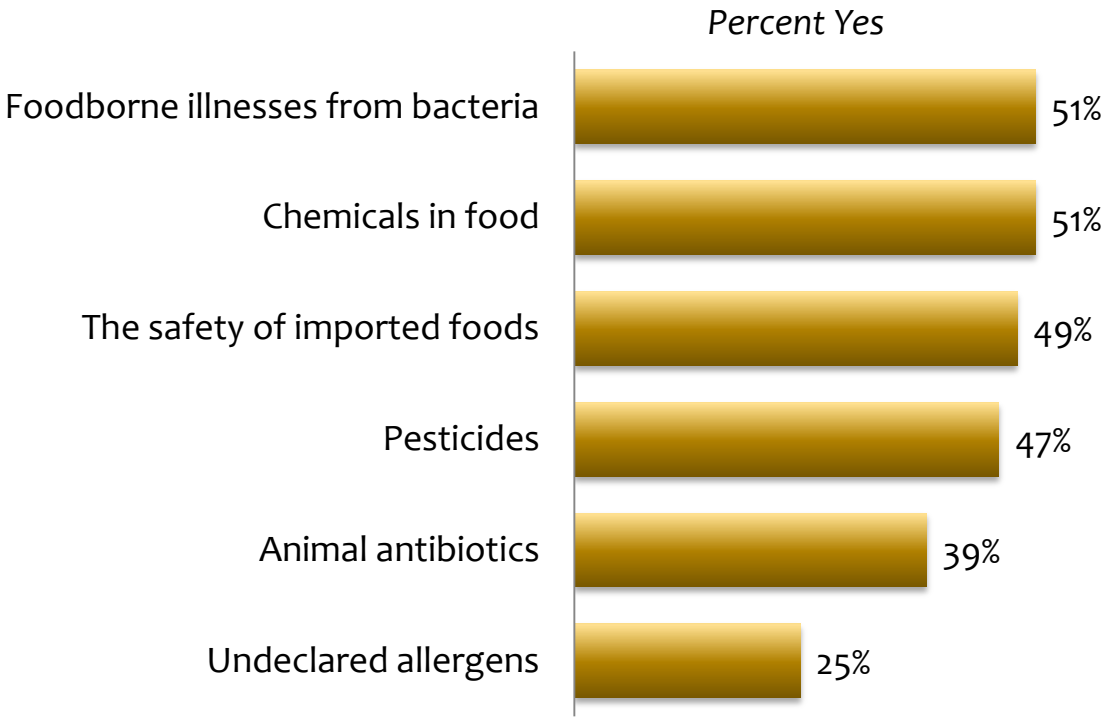
All (n=1,057)



Concerns about bacteria, chemicals, imported food safety, and pesticides have had about the same level of impact on food purchase decisions.

In the past year, has concern about any of the following impacted what foods or brands of food you purchase?

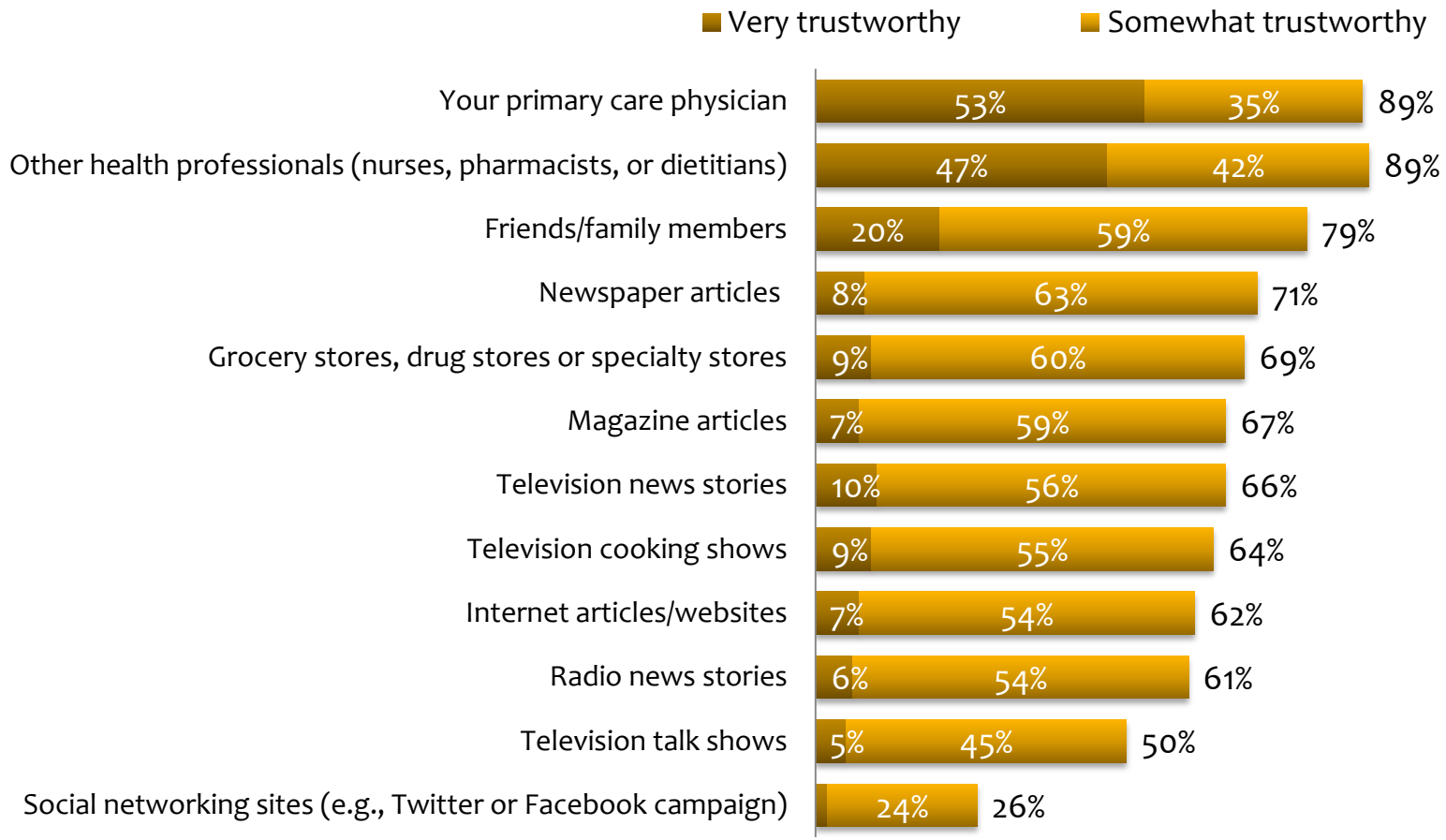
All (n=1,057)



The sources of food safety information most frequently judged as trustworthy are primary care physicians and other health professionals.

How trustworthy, if at all, do you find the following sources to deliver accurate food safety information?

All (n=1,057)



Hispanic and African American consumers are more likely than Whites to consider TV talk shows and social networking sites as trustworthy for food safety info.

Non-Hispanic Whites are more apt than African Americans to trust health professionals other than physicians.

How trustworthy, if at all, do you find the following sources to deliver accurate food safety information?

(n=979)

% *Very* or *Somewhat* Trustworthy
By Age

	White Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	African American
Other health professionals (nurses, pharmacists, or dieticians)	**90%**	87%	82%
Magazine articles	65%	69%	**74%**
Television news stories	63%	**74%**	71%
Television talk shows	47%	**60%**	**61%**
Social networking sites (e.g., Twitter or Facebook campaign)	23%	**35%**	**36%**

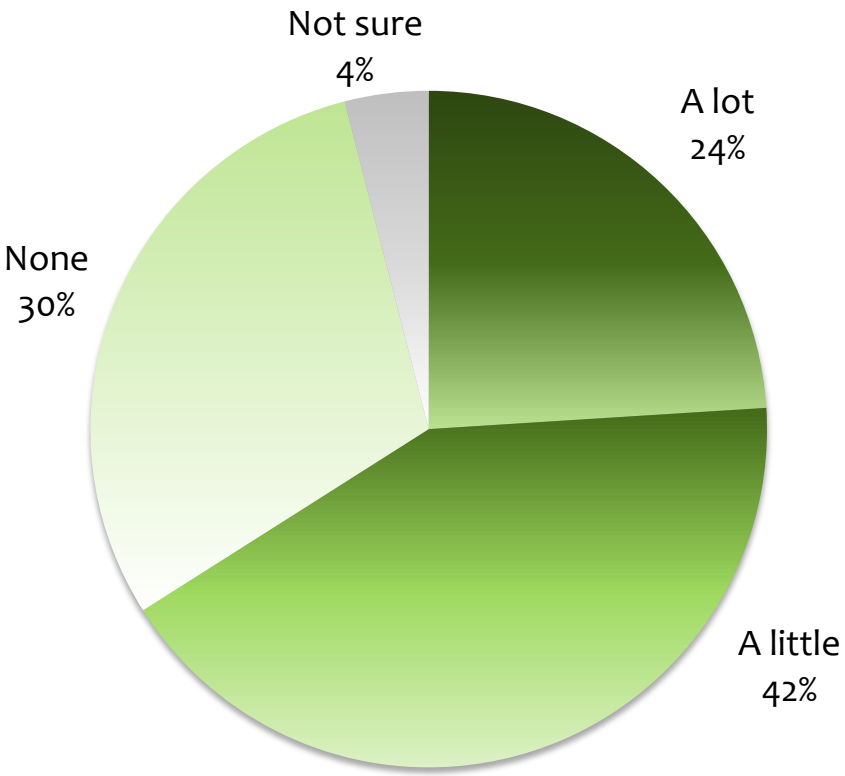
Bolded figures are significantly higher than one or more counterpart groups.

5 SUSTAINABILITY

Two-thirds say they have thought about the sustainability of their foods and beverages.

Over the past year, how much thought have you given to whether foods and beverages are produced in a sustainable way?

All (n=1,057)

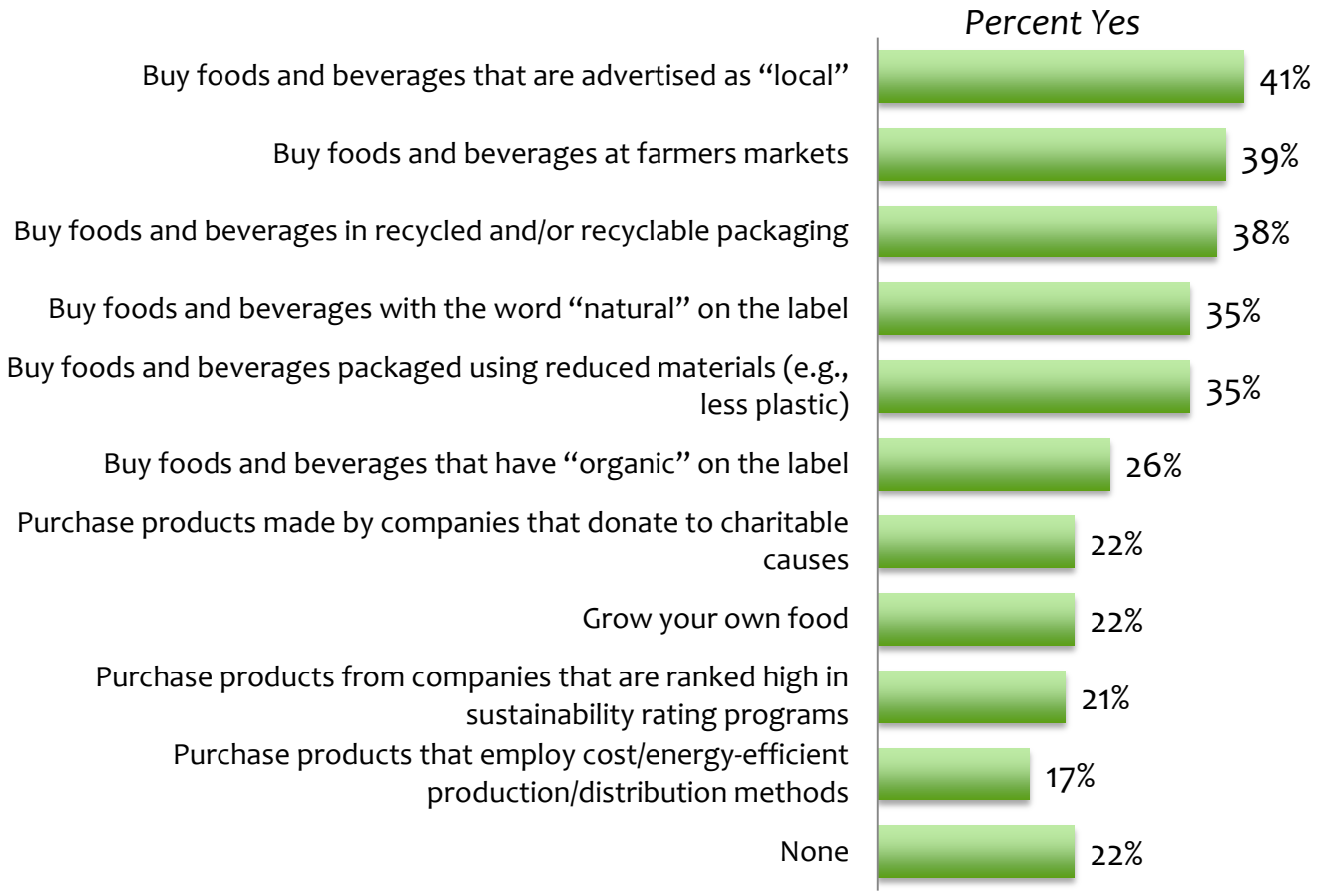


66% have given *a lot* or *a little* thought to the sustainability of their foods and beverages.

About four in ten regularly purchase locally-sourced or recyclable food and beverage products.

Which of the following, if any, do you purposefully do on a regular basis?

All (n=1,057)



DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Respondents mirror the U.S. distribution of age, gender, education, and race/ethnicity for 18- to 80-year-olds.

Age	(n=1,057)	Gender	(n= 1,057)
18 to 34 years old	31%	Male	49%
35 to 49 years old	27%	Female	51%
50 to 64 years old	26%		
65 to 80 years old	15%		
Education		**Race/Ethnicity**	
Less than high school	2%	White (Non-Hispanic)	72%
Graduated high school	41%	Hispanic/Latino/Spanish descent	14%
Some college (no degree)	19%	Black or African American	12%
Associates degree or technical or vocational school	9%	Asian or Pacific Islander	5%
Bachelor's degree	18%	American Indian or Alaskan Native	1%
Graduate/Professional work or degree	10%	Native Hawaiian	<.5%
Children Under 18 in Household		**Marital Status**	
0 to 2 years old	7%	Married	53%
3 to 6 years old	8%	Single	31%
7 to 12 years old	11%	Divorced	11%
13 to 17 years old	14%	Widowed	3%
There are no children under 18 in my household	70%	Other	2%
Prefer not to say	1%	Prefer not to say	1%

The mix of respondents also reflects the U.S. regional distribution.

Region	(n=1,057)
Northeast	18%
Midwest	22%
South	37%
West	23%
Household Income	
Less than $35,000	21%
$35,000 to less than $50,000	19%
$50,000 to less than $75,000	22%
$75,000 to less than $100,000	13%
$100,000 or more	13%
Don't know	2%
Prefer not to answer	10%

Medical Conditions	(n=1,057)
High blood pressure	26%
High cholesterol	19%
Heart disease	4%
Diabetes	8%
Overweight/obesity	7%
Stress/anxiety/depression	11%
Osteoporosis	3%
Cancer	2%
AD/HD	1%
Stroke	<.5%
None of the above	54%