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## *A Focus On* **Food & Ingredient Safety**



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

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# METHODOLOGY



FOOD & HEALTH  
SURVEY

2025



## 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 Food & Ingredient Safety. July 2025. <https://ific.org/research/2025-food-health-survey>

- 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 Food & Ingredient Safety



FOOD & HEALTH  
SURVEY



2025

# KEY FINDINGS ON FOOD & INGREDIENT SAFETY

## Confidence in the safety of the U.S. food supply hits an all-time low.

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IFIC began trending American confidence in the safety of the U.S. food supply in the 2012 *IFIC Food & Health Survey*. That year 78% reported being very confident (20%) or somewhat confident (58%). In 2025, only 55% of Americans report feeling very confident (11%) or somewhat confident (44%) in the safety of the U.S. food supply.

In recent years, the erosion of confidence has been sharp. For the second consecutive year (70% in 2023, 62% in 2024), overall confidence in the safety of the U.S. food supply is down significantly. For the third straight year, those who report being “very confident” (11%) have decreased significantly (24% in 2022, 17% in 2023 14% in 2024), approaching the 2016 historical low of 10%.

## Overall confidence in the safety of the U.S. food supply is down across multiple demographic groups compared to 2024.

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Confidence in the safety of the U.S. food supply has also fallen dramatically across nearly all demographic groups compared to 2024. The decline is most notable among Gen Z, those with higher household incomes, men, and Asian Americans.

## Confidence in the safety of the U.S. food supply is increasingly driven by belief or disbelief that coordination takes place across the food system.

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Among those reporting they are not too confident (30%) or not at all confident (11%) in the safety of the U.S. food supply, the top reasons include believing profit is prioritized over safety (reported by 59%), not believing everyone across the food system is working together to ensure safety (54%), not believing the federal government’s regulations on safety are strict enough (46%), and the belief that there are too many recalls (43%). Among those who are confident in the safety of the U.S. food supply, 49% cite the belief that everyone across the food system is working together to ensure safety.



# KEY FINDINGS ON FOOD & INGREDIENT SAFETY

**Americans say stronger regulation and transparency about how food companies and government keep food safe are top ways to increase their confidence in the safety of the U.S. food supply.**

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Survey takers identified ways to increase their confidence in the safety of the U.S. food supply. Four in ten say they would have more confidence if they better understood how food companies (42%) and the government (41%) currently ensure that food is safe. A similar share (41%) say seeing stricter regulations would also increase their confidence. One in three Americans (34%) say that their confidence would increase if they understood how the government responds when food has been deemed unsafe, up from 29% in 2023, the last time this question was asked in the *IFIC Food & Health Survey*.

Only 6% say they already have full confidence in the safety of the U.S. food supply, leaving significant room to increase confidence among most Americans.

**Foodborne illness, cancer-causing chemicals in food, and pesticides continue to be important food safety issues for Americans.**

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Compared to 2024, more Americans identify foodborne illness from bacteria (23%) as the most important food safety issue. As a result, foodborne illness has taken over as the top food safety issue overall (50% ranking it in their top three), surpassing carcinogens or cancer-causing chemicals in food (47% in 2025). Pesticides and pesticide residues come in as a close third overall at 46% and heavy metals are fourth overall at 41%. Rounding out the top five most important food safety issues, food additives and ingredients are increasingly important to Americans (36% in 2025, up from 30% in 2024).

**Compared to 2015, more Americans say they have not taken action in response to a food recall. Fewer report unawareness of being affected by a food recall.**

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In 2025, more Americans (44%) report that they have not taken action in response to a food recall, up 10 points from 2015, the last time this question was asked in the *IFIC Food & Health Survey*. Fewer Americans report unawareness of being affected by a food recall (28% in 2025 vs. 35% in 2015). A similar percentage of Americans in 2025 say they have taken action in response to a food recall (28%) compared to 2015 (30%).

## KEY FINDINGS ON FOOD & INGREDIENT SAFETY

### One-third of Americans think imported foods are less safe than foods produced or grown in the U.S., a 20-point drop from 2014.

Perception of the safety of imported foods is more positive now than it was a decade ago. In 2025, 1 in 3 Americans (32%) think imported foods are less safe than foods produced or grown in the U.S., a 20-point drop from 2014, the last time this question was asked in the *IFIC Food & Health Survey*. Three in ten (30%) think imported foods are as safe as foods produced or grown in the U.S., up 6 points from 2014. One in ten (12%) think that imported foods are safer than foods produced or grown in the U.S., a 9-point increase from 2014.

When it comes to the healthfulness of imported foods compared to U.S. foods, just as many Americans think imported foods are less healthy (21%) as think they are healthier (19%). The rest are split, with 30% thinking they are equally healthy, and 31% are unsure.

### 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, the first time this question was asked in the *IFIC Food & Health Survey*, more Americans now believe the government is responsible for approving the use of low- and no-calorie sweeteners (LNCS) in the U.S. (35%), and fewer are unsure who is responsible (18%). Nearly 3 in 10 (28%) believe the responsibility falls to companies that manufacture LNCS (16%) and companies that sell products containing them. One in ten (10%) believe there is no U.S. authority responsible for approving the use of LNCS in the U.S.

### Nearly half of Americans believe the U.S. allows some food colors that are banned in other countries. Far fewer believe that other countries allow some food colors that are banned in the U.S.

Forty-five percent of Americans believe that the U.S. allows some food colors in its food supply that are banned in other countries, while 16% believe that other countries allow some food colors that are banned in the U.S. Examining these perceptions domestically, nearly 1 in 4 (23%) Americans believe that some U.S. states allow food colors that are banned in other U.S. states.

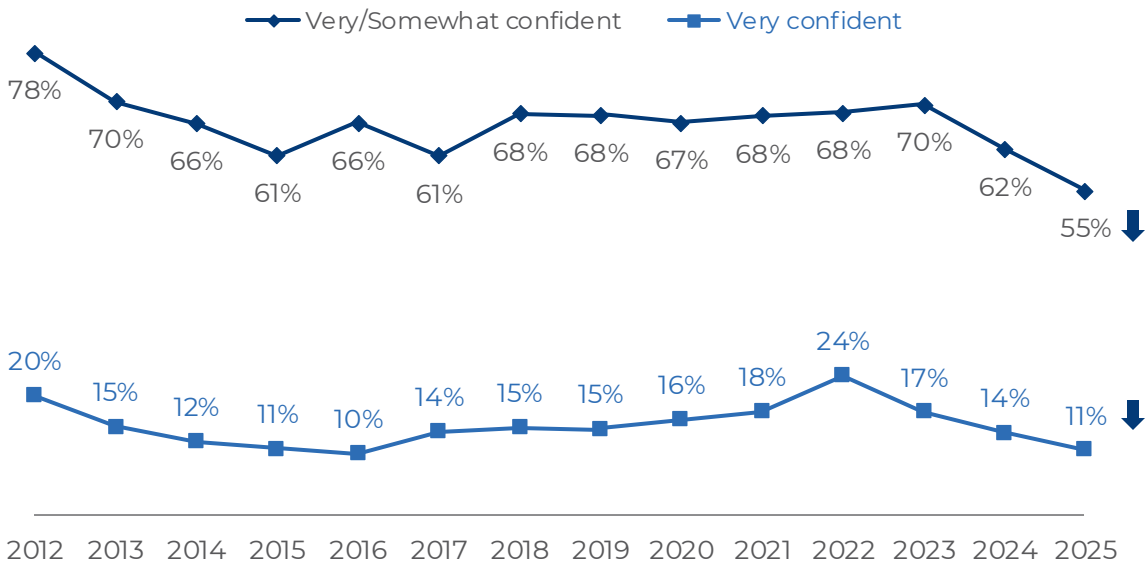
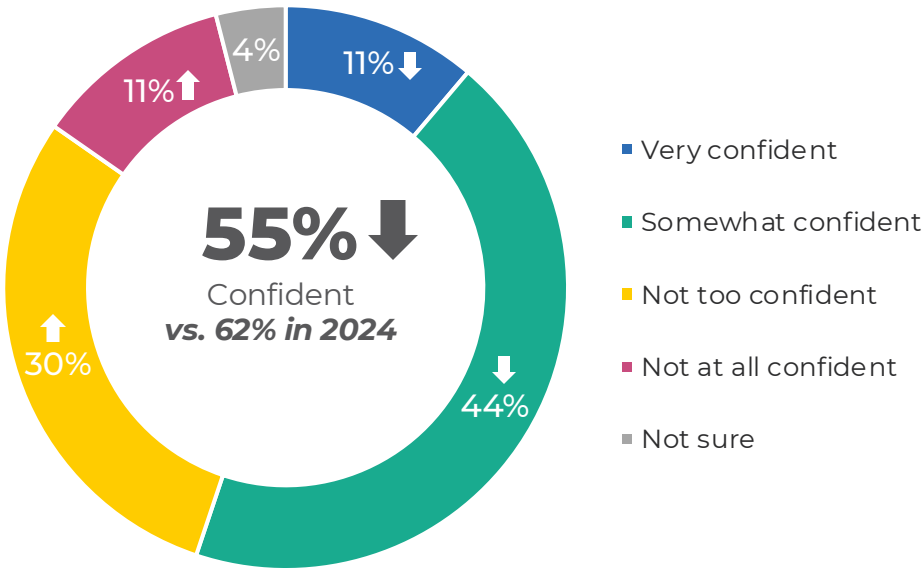
Compared to 2012, the last time this question was asked in the *IFIC Food & Health Survey*, fewer Americans now believe that both natural and artificial food colors must be labeled on packaging (41%), a 12-point drop. Fewer Americans also now believe that food colors must be reviewed and approved by the U.S. government before being added to foods (38%), an 8-point drop from 2012.



# Confidence in the safety of the U.S. food supply hits an all-time low.

Overall confidence (55%) is down significantly for two consecutive years. Those who report being “very confident” (11%) has decreased significantly for three consecutive years, approaching the 2016 historical low.

Confidence in the Safety of the U.S. Food Supply

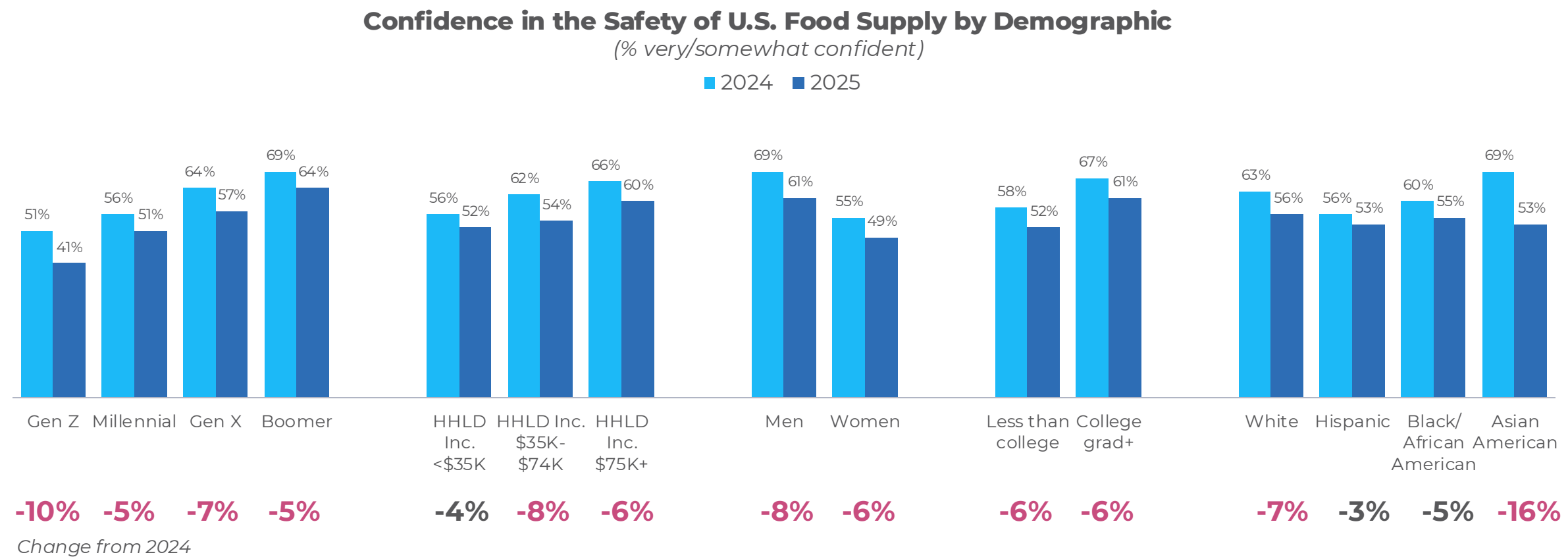


**10-year trend**  
↓ 55% in 2025  
vs. 66% in 2016

**5-year trend**  
↓ 55% in 2025  
vs. 68% in 2021

# Overall confidence in the safety of the U.S. food supply is down across multiple demographic groups compared to 2024.

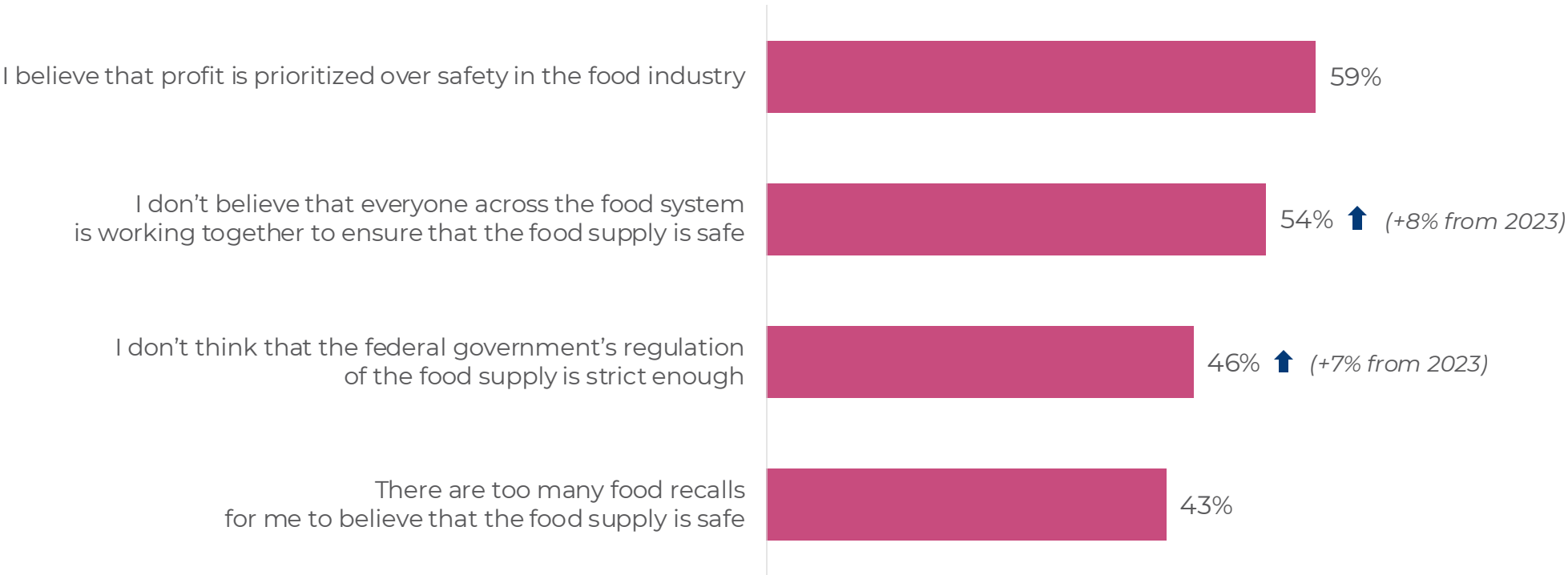
The decline is most notable among Gen Z, those with higher household incomes, men, and Asian Americans.



# Among those who are not confident in the safety of the U.S. food supply, the perceived lack of food system coordination and lack of strict federal government regulation is up significantly from 2023.

Nearly 6 in 10 (59%) lack confidence in the safety of the U.S. food supply because they believe profit is prioritized over safety.

**Reasons for Lack of Confidence in Safety of U.S. Food Supply**  
*(Of those not too/not at all confident)*

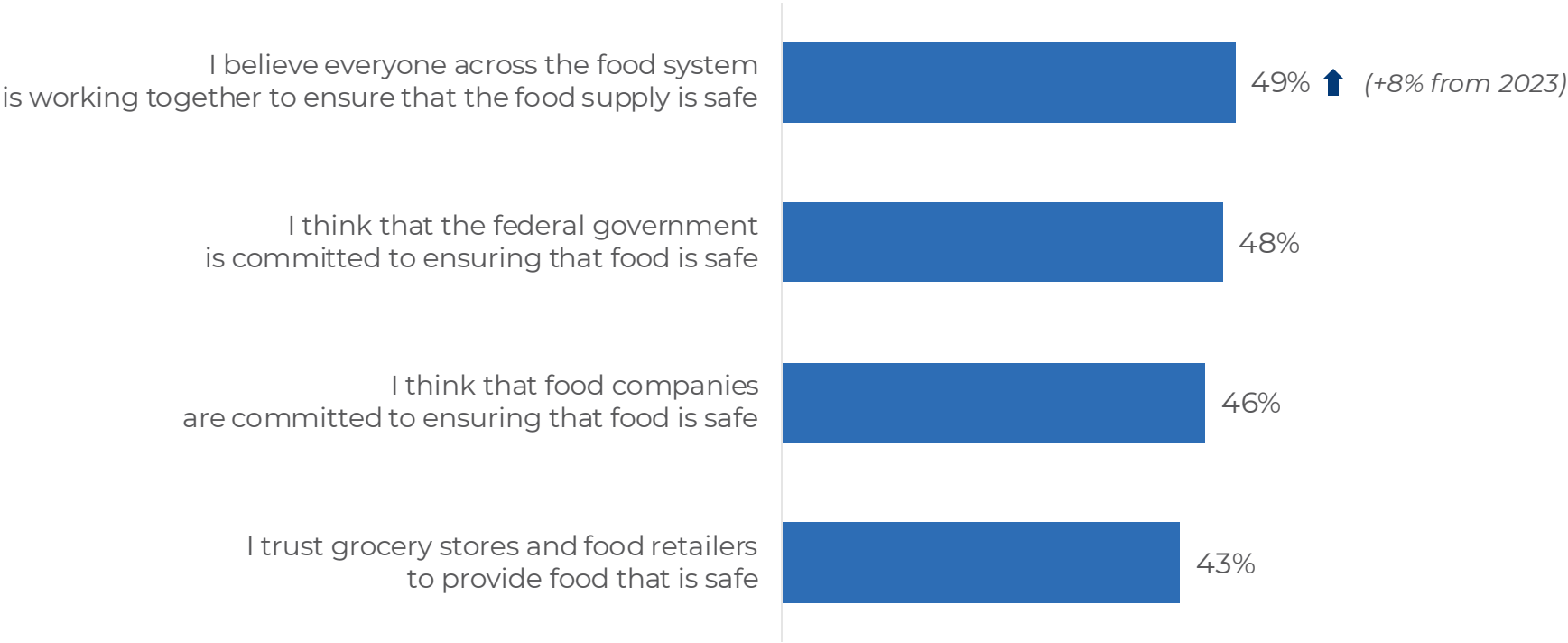




# Among those who are confident in the safety of the U.S. food supply, nearly half attribute their confidence to belief in food system coordination, up significantly from 2023.

Nearly half believe that the federal government (48%) and food companies (46%) are committed to ensuring that food is safe, while slightly fewer (43%) trust grocery stores and food retailers to provide safe food.

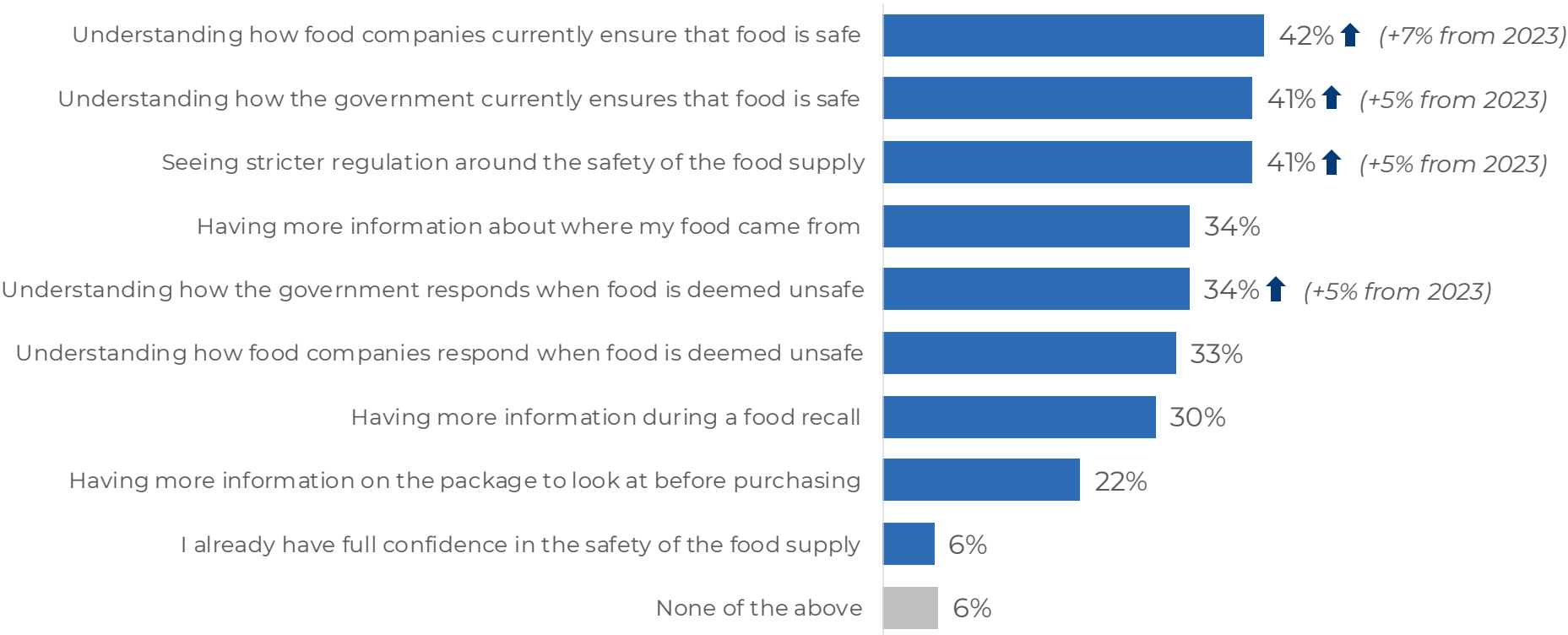
**Reasons for Confidence in Safety of U.S. Food Supply**  
(Of those very/somewhat confident)



# Americans say stronger regulation and transparency about how food companies and government keep food safe are top ways to increase their confidence in the safety of the U.S. food supply.

Compared to 2023, more say understanding how food companies (42%) and the government (41%) ensure that food is safe, and seeing stricter regulations (41%) would increase their confidence in the safety of the U.S. food supply.

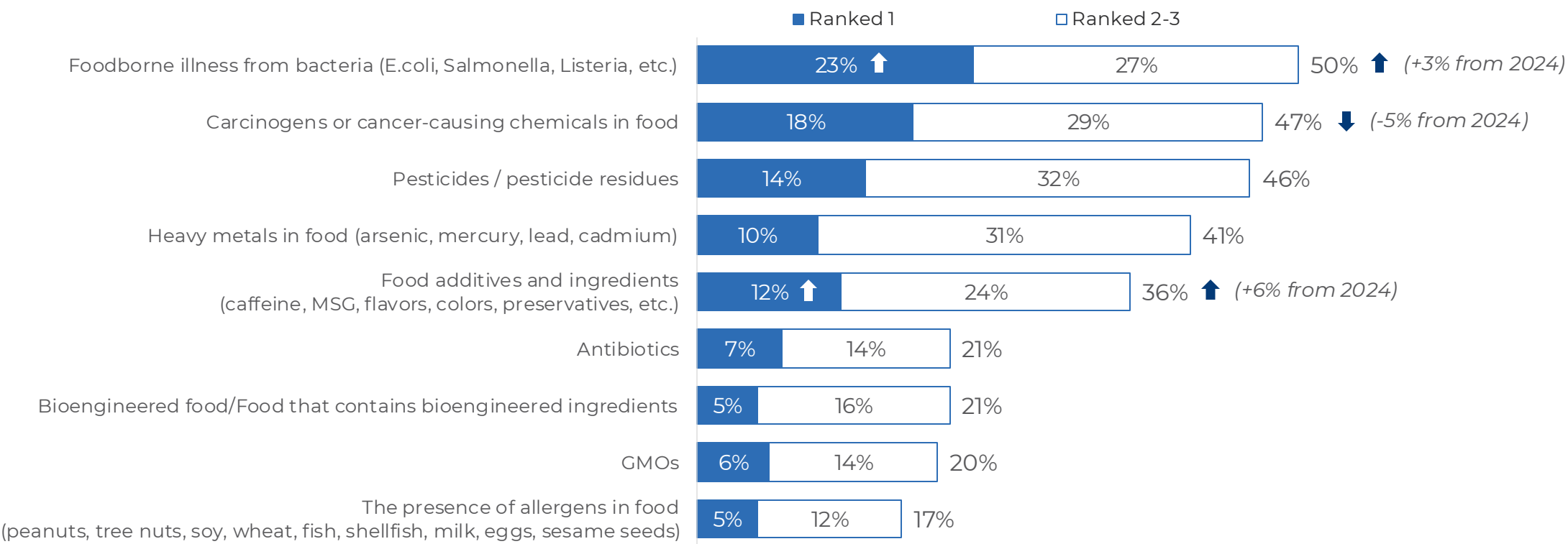
## Steps to Increase Confidence in Safety of U.S. Food Supply



# Foodborne illness, cancer-causing chemicals in food, and pesticides continue to be important food safety issues for Americans.

Compared to 2024, more Americans identify foodborne illness from bacteria (50%) and food additives and ingredients (36%) as the most important food safety issues, while fewer identify carcinogens or cancer-causing chemicals in food (47%)

Most Important Food Safety Issues

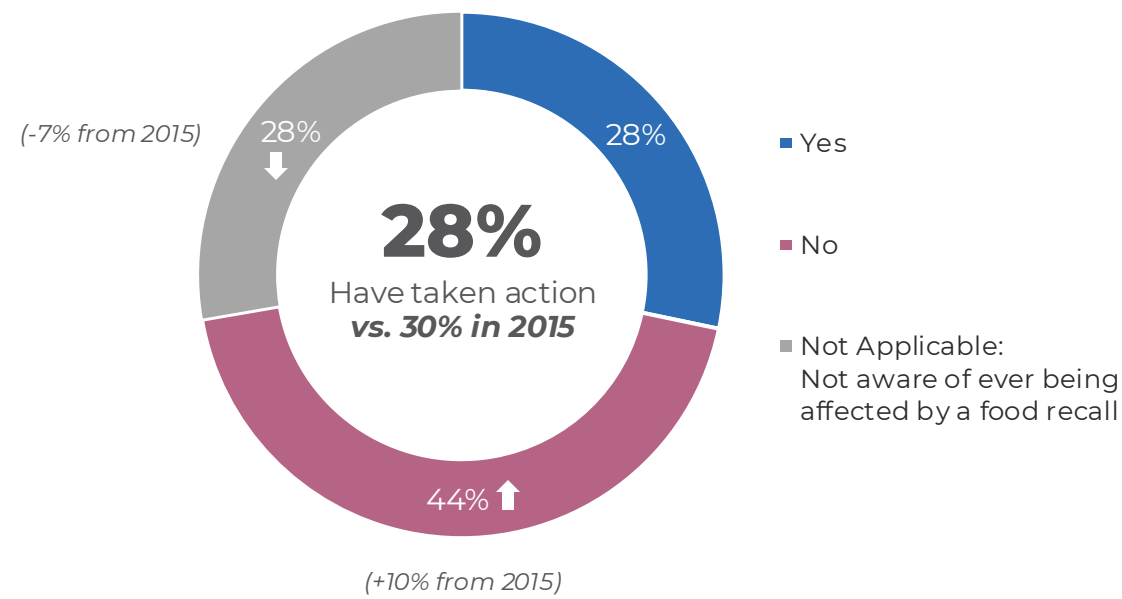




# Compared to 2015, more Americans say they have not taken action in response to a food recall. Fewer report unawareness of being affected by a food recall.

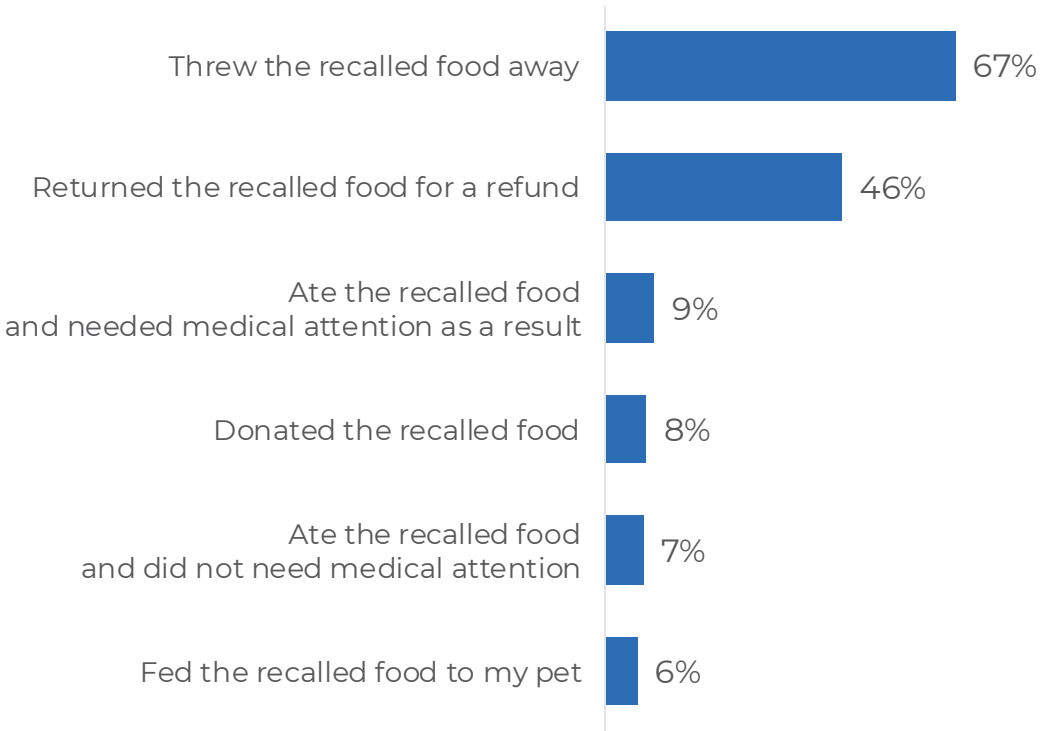
Of the 28% of Americans who have taken action in response to a food recall, 67% say they threw the recalled food away.

Taken Action in a Food Recall



Actions Taken

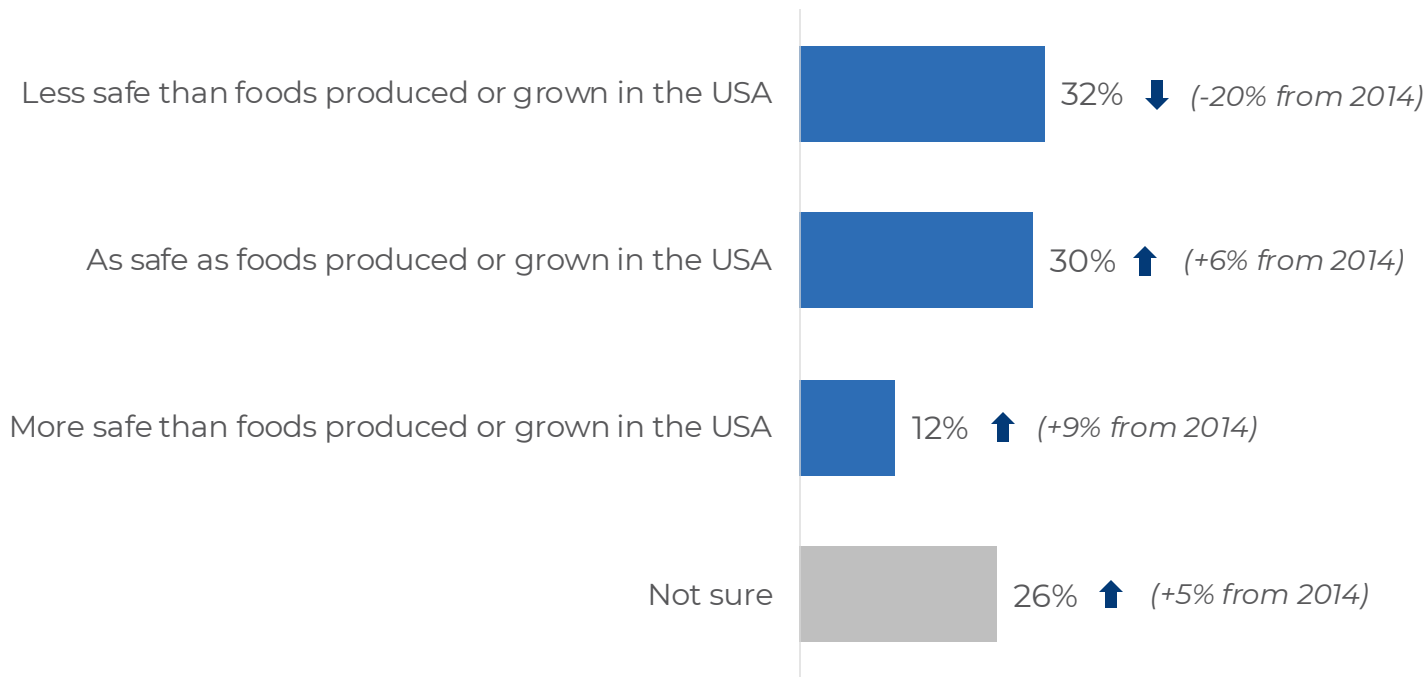
(If ever taken action in response to a food recall)



# One-third of Americans think imported foods are less safe than foods produced or grown in the U.S., a 20-point drop from 2014.

Up from 2014, 1 in 10 (12%) think imported foods are safer than foods produced or grown in the U.S., 3 in 10 (30%) think imported foods are just as safe, and 1 in 4 (26%) are not sure.

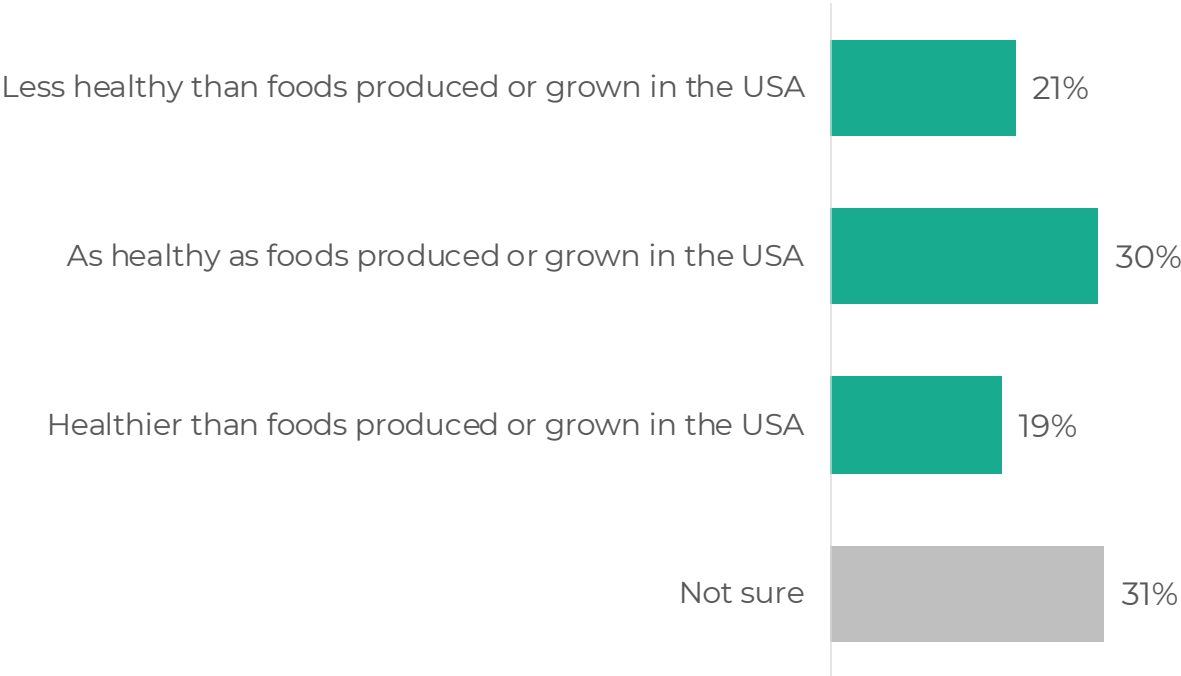
Perceived Safety of Imported Foods



# Perceptions about the healthfulness of imported foods compared to foods produced or grown in the U.S. are split.

Just as many Americans think imported foods are less healthy than U.S. foods (21%) as think imported foods are healthier than U.S. foods (19%). The rest are split: 30% say imported foods and U.S. foods are equally healthy, and 31% are unsure.

Perceived Healthfulness of Imported Foods

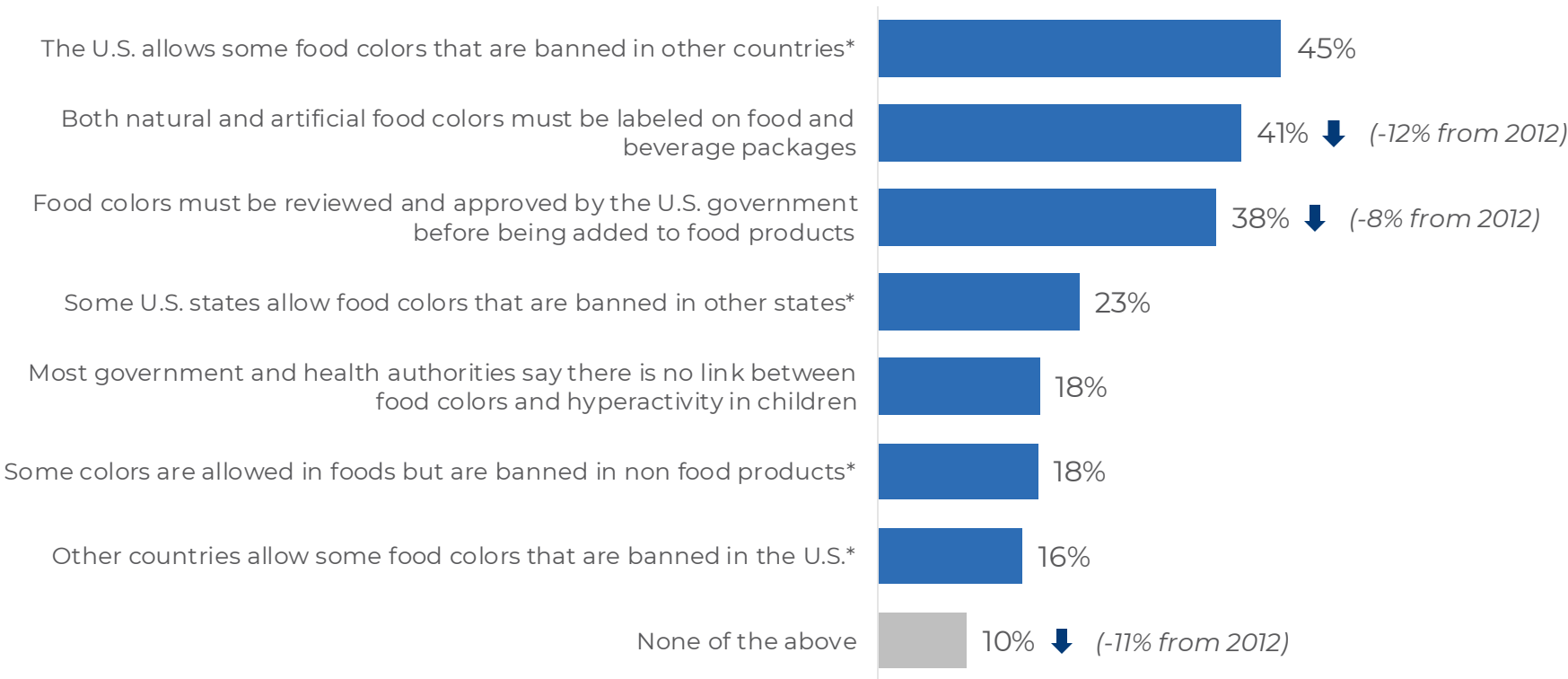




# Nearly half of Americans believe the U.S. allows some food colors that are banned in other countries. Far fewer believe that other countries allow some food colors that are banned in the U.S.

About 4 in 10 believe both natural and artificial food colors must be labeled on packaging (41%) and/or that food colors must be reviewed and approved by the U.S. government before being added to food products (38%), both significant drops from 2012.

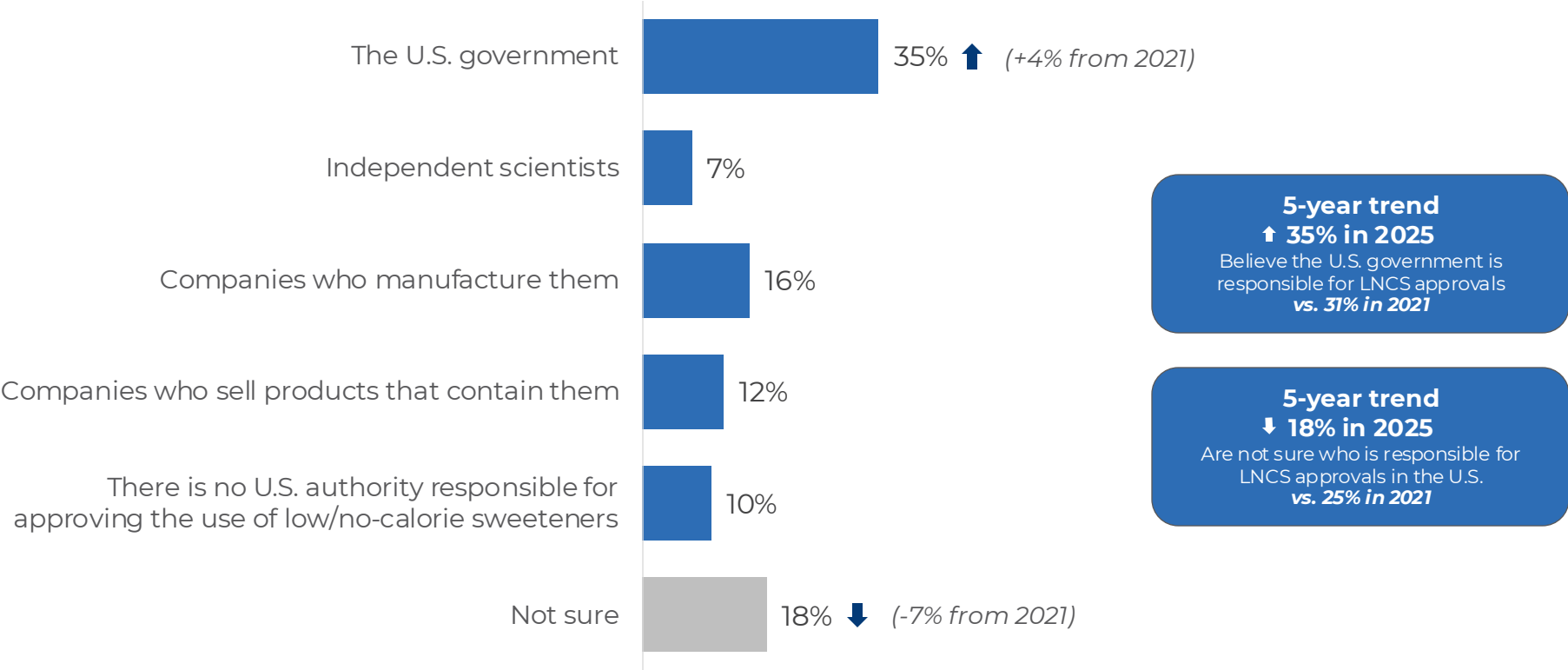
Beliefs About Food Colors



# 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

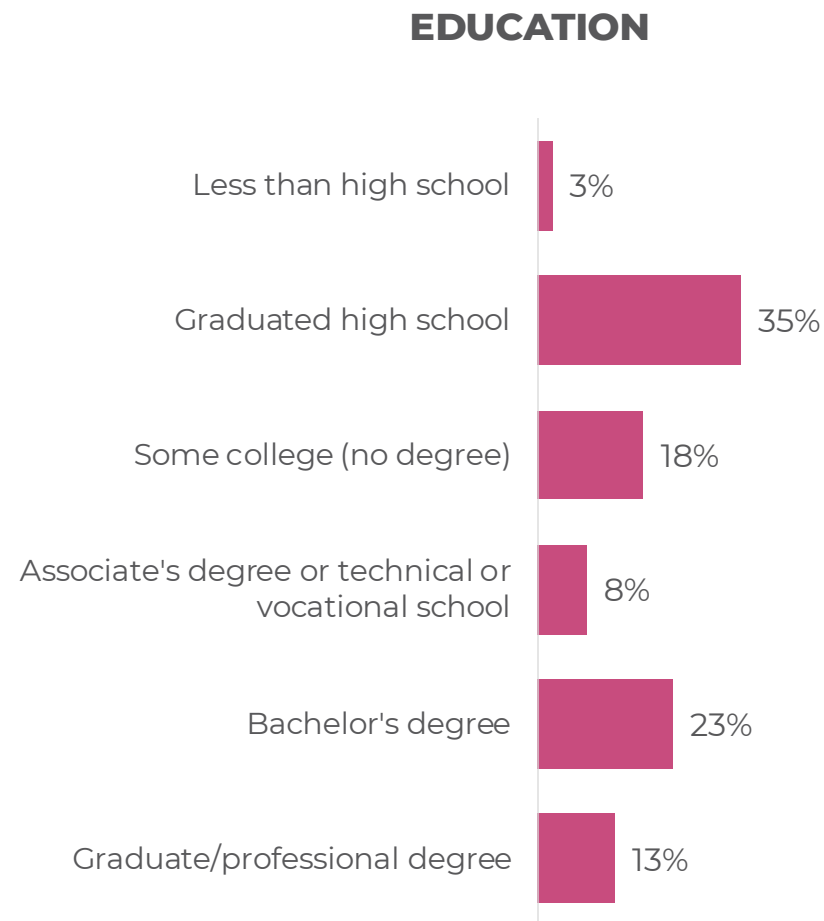
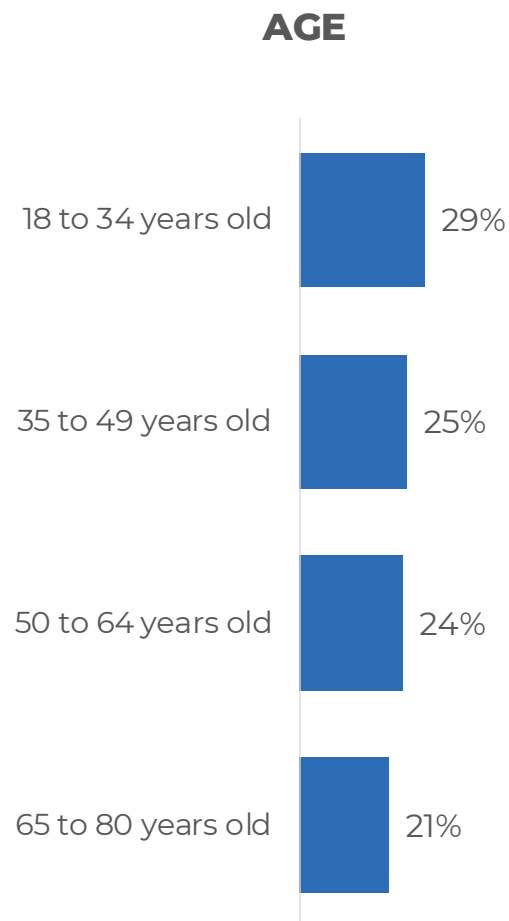


FOOD & HEALTH  
SURVEY



2025

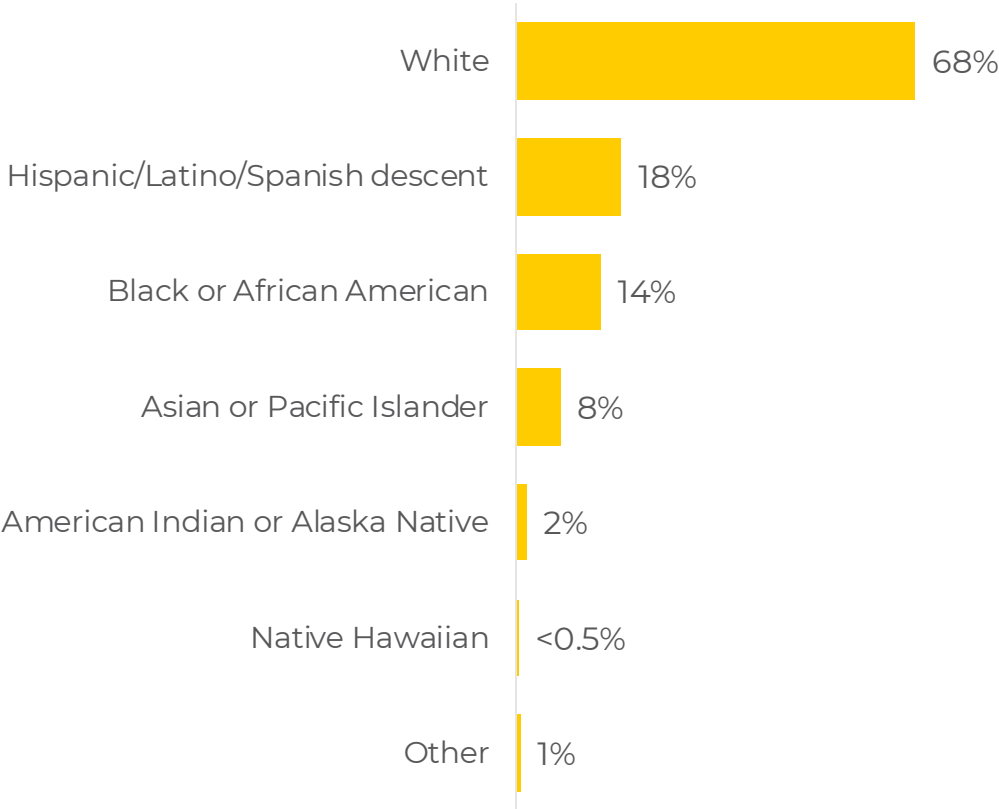
# Demographics



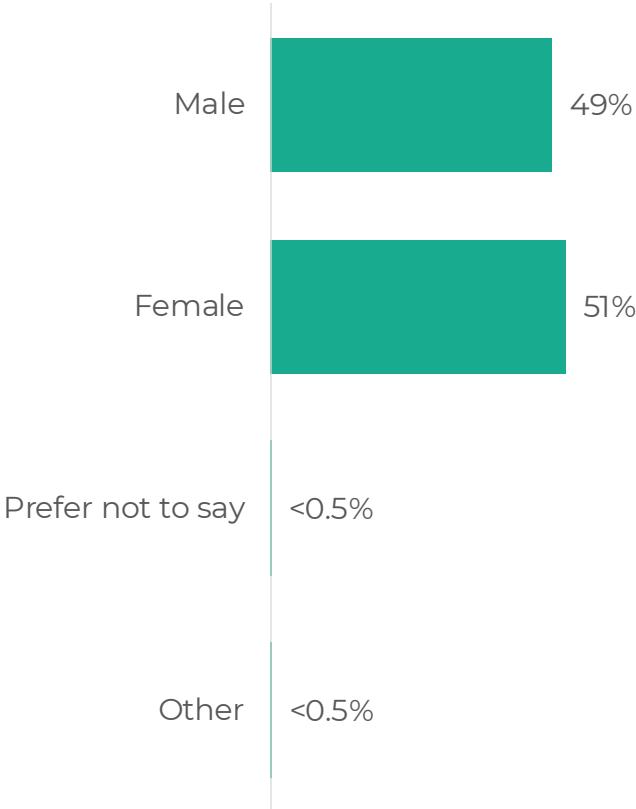


# Demographics

## RACE/ETHNICITY

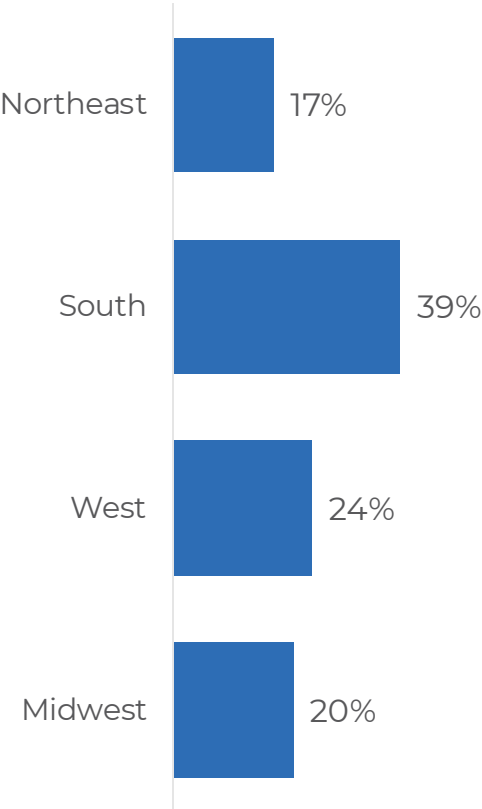


## GENDER

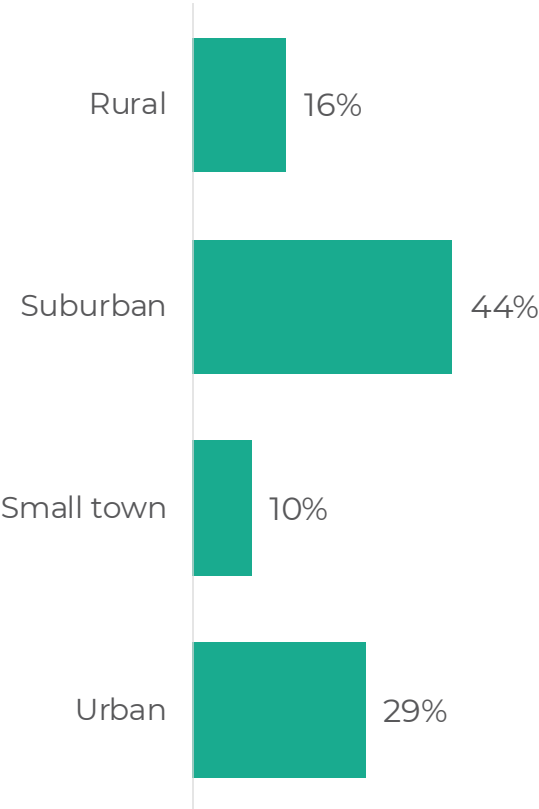


# Demographics

REGION

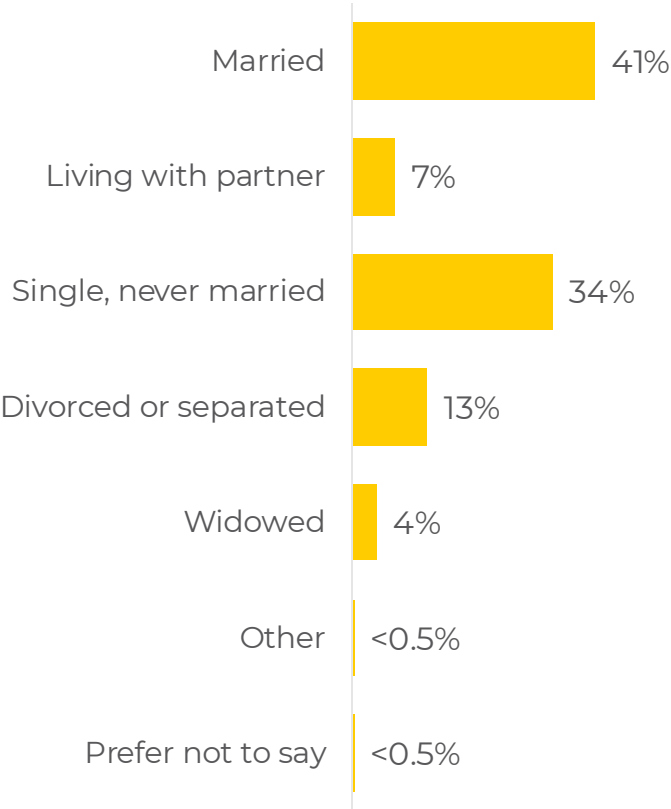


COMMUNITY

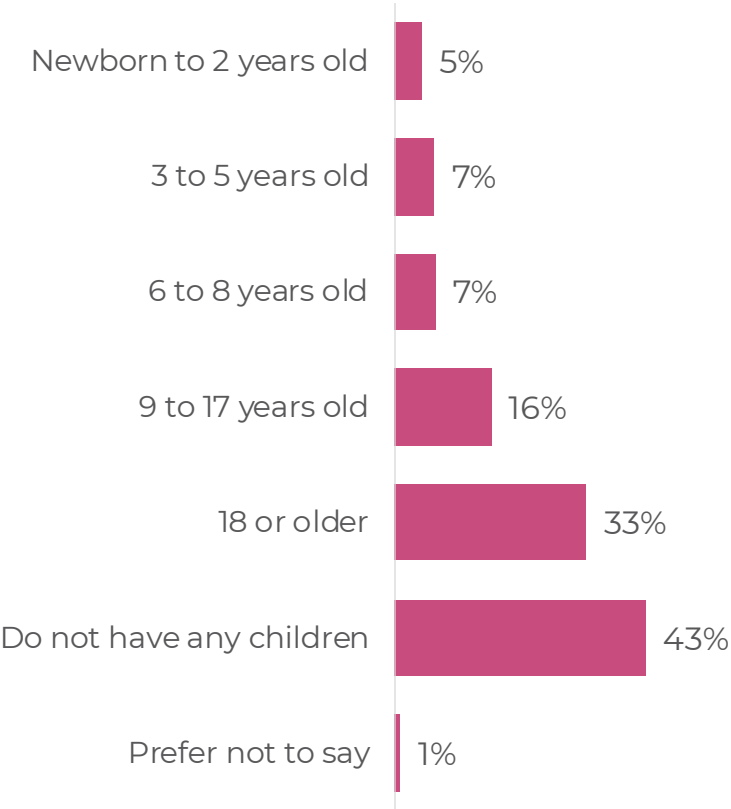


# Demographics

## MARITAL STATUS

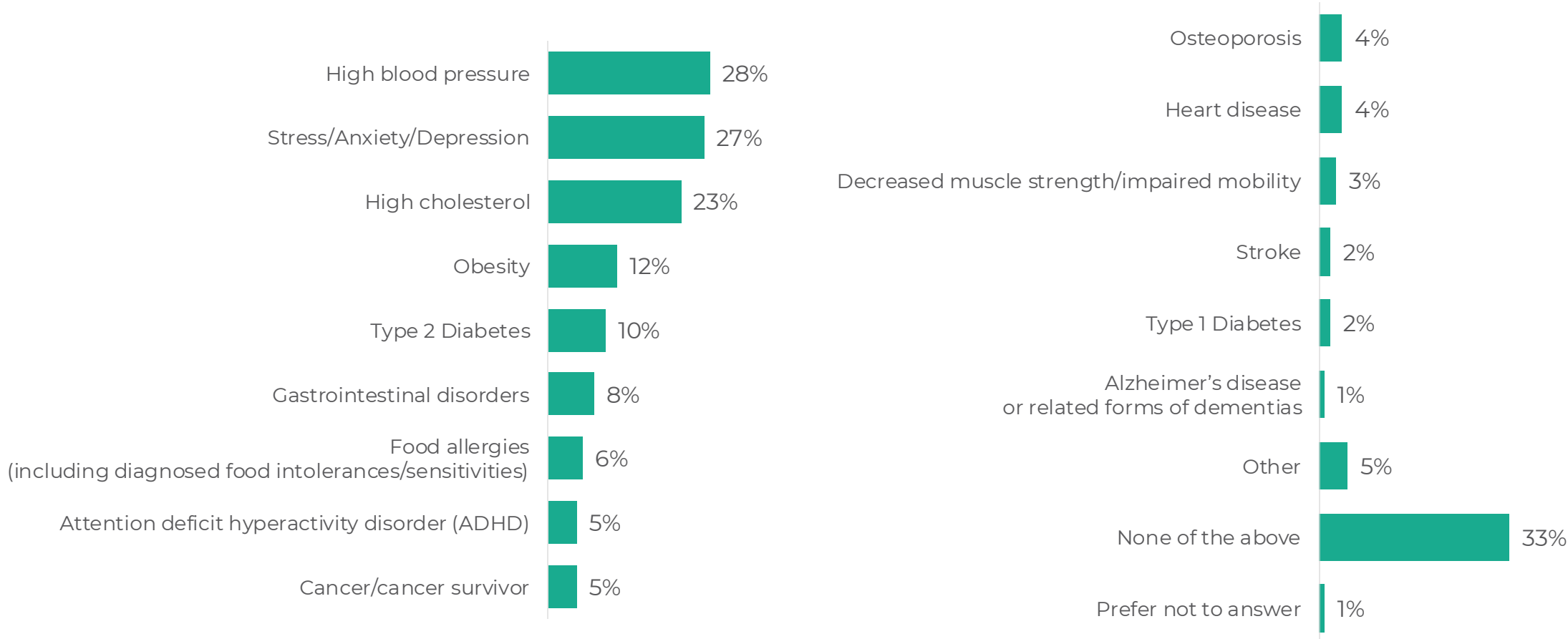


## CHILDREN



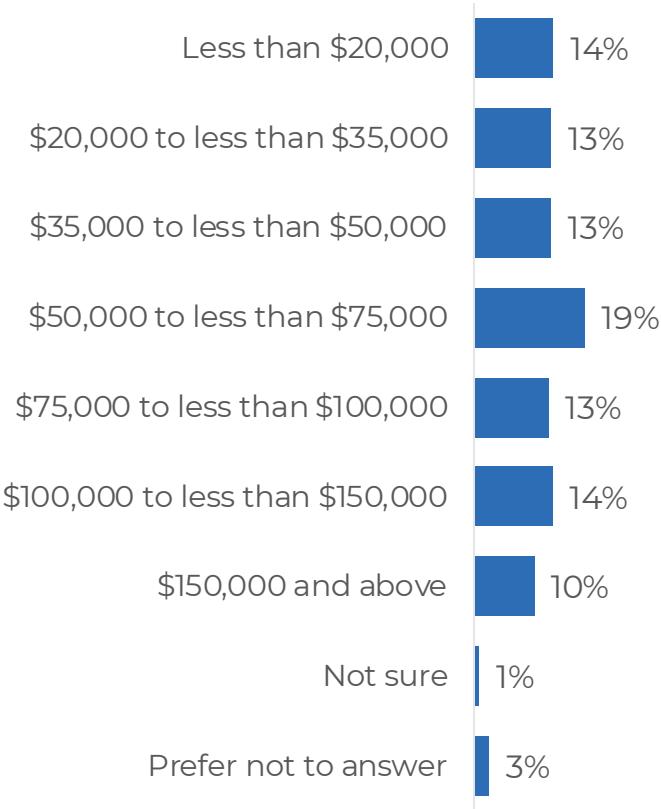
# Demographics

## MEDICAL CONDITIONS

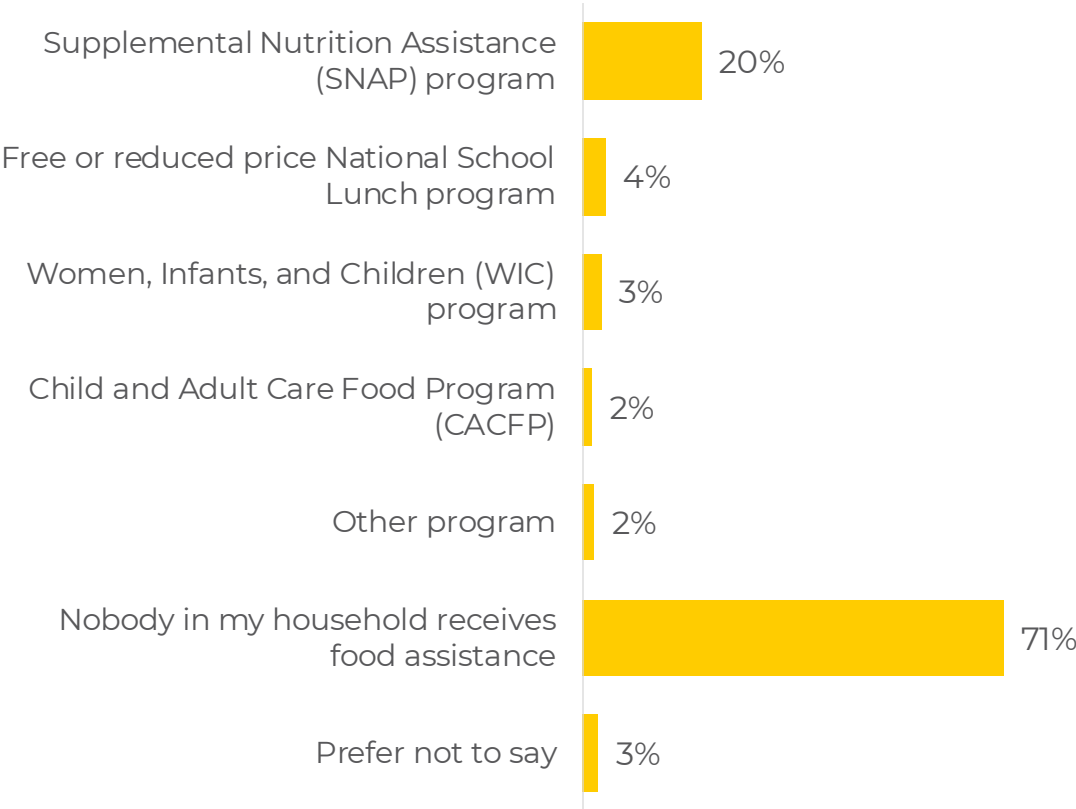


# Demographics

## INCOME



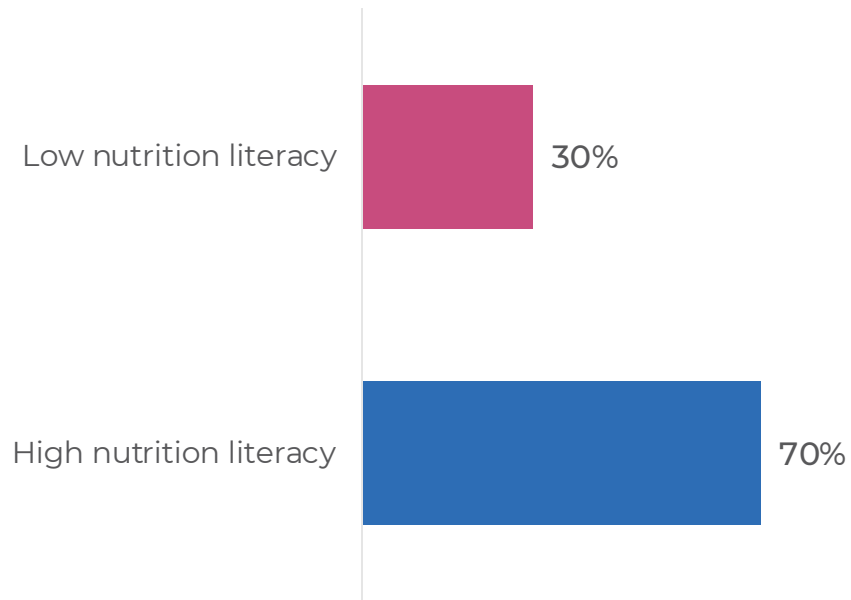
## GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE





# 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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