



SPOTLIGHT
SURVEY

Americans' Perceptions of Obesity Medications

January 2025



METHODOLOGY

The International Food Information Council (IFIC) commissioned an online survey among U.S. consumers to measure knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about prescription drugs for weight loss. One thousand adults ages 18 years and older completed the online survey from October 11-17, 2024, and were weighted to ensure proportional results. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

The Bayesian confidence level for the survey sample (n=1000) is 3.5, which is roughly equivalent to a margin of error of ± 3.1 at the 95% confidence level. Callouts of statistically significant results are included where appropriate on slides displaying results. Something is statistically significant if the result cannot be attributed to random chance. Statistical significance in this report is only compared within each demographic group (e.g. age, race, gender, etc.).

SUGGESTED CITATION:

International Food Information Council (IFIC). IFIC Spotlight Survey: Americans' Perceptions of Obesity Medications. January 2025.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Slightly more than four in ten (42%) of Americans say they are currently trying to lose weight. This finding, from the *IFIC Spotlight Survey: Obesity Medications*, is consistent with consumer motivations for following specific diets and eating patterns. In the [2024 IFIC Food & Health Survey](#), consumers say that weight loss was their second most common motivation underlying their diets/eating patterns.

The [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) report that 40.3% of adults, age 20 years and older, have obesity—a number that rises to 73.6% when also considering overweight. Body mass index (BMI) between 25 and 30 is considered overweight; 30 or more is considered obese.

Different treatment approaches exist for obesity, but one that has recently surged in popularity includes [prescription medication](#). There are different medications that work in different ways, including providing earlier onset of fullness or blocking the body from absorbing dietary fat in the gastrointestinal tract. This *IFIC Spotlight Survey* indicates one-third of Americans have heard "a lot" about prescription drugs for weight loss, and while they report hearing an equal mix of positive and negative information about these drugs, 41% of Americans have some level of interest—slightly to extremely interested—in taking the medication. Just over half (56%) say their motivation would be for weight loss, and 48% say they think they would feel better about themselves.

Americans feel that prescription drugs would impact their consumption of water (44% net increase), the healthfulness of their food choices (37% net increase), and the amounts of fruits and vegetables consumed (35% net increase). Four in ten think their packaged foods consumption and frequency of eating away from home would decrease.

IFIC commissioned this *IFIC Spotlight Survey: Americans' Perceptions of Obesity Medications* to study U.S. consumer mindset related to these drugs.



KEY FINDINGS

Almost half of Americans describe their current body weight as neither underweight nor overweight.

Forty-nine percent of Americans report they are not underweight or overweight. The other half provide a range: 34% describe themselves as overweight; 8% very overweight; 6% underweight; and 3% very underweight.

4 in 10 Americans are currently trying to lose weight.

When asking Americans about their current approach to their body weight, 42% say they are focused on losing weight whereas 48% want to maintain their current weight. One in ten find themselves trying to gain weight.

More Americans believe that what and how much they eat and drink has the biggest impact on their body weight compared to when, why, and where they eat and drink.

As Americans consider what has the biggest impact on their personal body weight, they say “what I eat and drink” (31%) and “how much I eat and drink” (24%) are the most impactful. Exercise quantity (i.e., “how much I exercise”) is perceived as less impactful (15%), and least of all, is “where I eat and drink” (4%).

Americans report feeling less control over how much they eat and drink when they eat away from home, dessert, and snacks compared to other eating occasions.

When asked about their perceived level of control for how much they eat and drink during specific occasions, the greatest amount of control is perceived during dinner (73%) and when eating at home (71%). Alternatively, they report the least amount of control with snacks (57%) and when eating away from home (57%).

KEY FINDINGS

3 in 10 Americans say they have heard “a lot” about prescription drugs for weight loss.

Three in ten (31%) Americans report hearing “a lot” about prescription drugs for weight loss. On the other hand, slightly more than one in ten (11%) say they have heard “nothing” about these drugs. Most Americans describe themselves as somewhere in between hearing a lot to nothing.

Among those who have heard about prescription drugs for weight loss, most report hearing an equal mix of positive and negative information about these drugs.

From the subset (n = 886) who say they have heard some varying amount of information about prescription weight loss drugs, approximately six in ten say they have heard an equal mix of positive and negative information. Roughly one in four (26%) say their information is positive; 14% describe what they hear as negative.

More than 4 in 10 Americans are interested in taking a prescription drug for weight loss.

Forty-four percent of Americans say they possess some level of interest, including “extremely interested”, “very interested”, or “slightly interested”, in taking a prescription drug for weight loss, with that number climbing to 53% among those who self-report as being overweight or very overweight. Overall, roughly half (47%) tell us they are not interested in taking a prescription drug for weight loss.

Among those not interested in taking a prescription drug for weight loss, almost half say they do not need to lose weight and/or prefer to manage their weight without medication.

From the subset (n = 466) who report no interest in taking drugs for weight loss, roughly half (48%) say “I do not need to lose weight” while 45% prefer nonpharmacological means to weight management. Cost is a reported barrier for approximately two in ten Americans.

KEY FINDINGS

Among those interested in taking a prescription drug for weight loss, losing weight and feeling better about themselves would be their most desired benefits.

For Americans who say they are interested in taking a prescription drug for weight loss, 56% would do so to lose weight, and 48% say they would take the medication to feel better about themselves. One in four (25%) say their interest is motivated to think less about food.

Nearly half of Americans think taking a prescription drug for weight loss would increase their water intake, healthfulness of food choices, as well as their fruit and vegetable consumption.

Americans feel that prescription drugs would impact their consumption of water (44% net increase), the healthfulness of their food choices (37% net increase), and the amounts of fruits and vegetables consumed (35% net increase). Four in ten think their packaged foods consumption and frequency of eating away from home would decrease. Enjoyment of food (4% net increase) and time spent shopping for food (3% net increase) would only increase slightly, based on perceived impact.

IMPLICATIONS

According to the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), more than 40% of U.S. adults have obesity, with certain demographic groups, including non-Hispanic Black adults and individuals with lower educational attainment, disproportionately affected. Obesity frequently coexists with other chronic diseases, such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease, amplifying its public health impact.

[Comprehensive clinical guidelines](#) for managing overweight and obesity have been developed through collaborations between the American Heart Association, the American College of Cardiology, and The Obesity Society. These guidelines emphasize annual screening to monitor anthropometric measurements and advocate for lifestyle modifications as the foundation of treatment. Core interventions include tailored dietary adjustments, increased physical activity, and behavioral counseling. However, these approaches alone may not be sufficient for all individuals, necessitating additional modalities such as pharmacotherapy or bariatric surgery.

While pharmacological and surgical interventions can be effective, they are not a substitute for improving dietary quality and overall nutrition. [Registered Dietitians](#) play a critical role in addressing the nutritional challenges associated with these treatments. For instance, obesity medications can lead to side effects like nausea and constipation and may result in reduced dietary intake and lean muscle mass loss. Therefore, enhancing dietary quality—including sufficient protein, fiber, and micronutrient intake—becomes even more essential for patients undergoing these treatments.

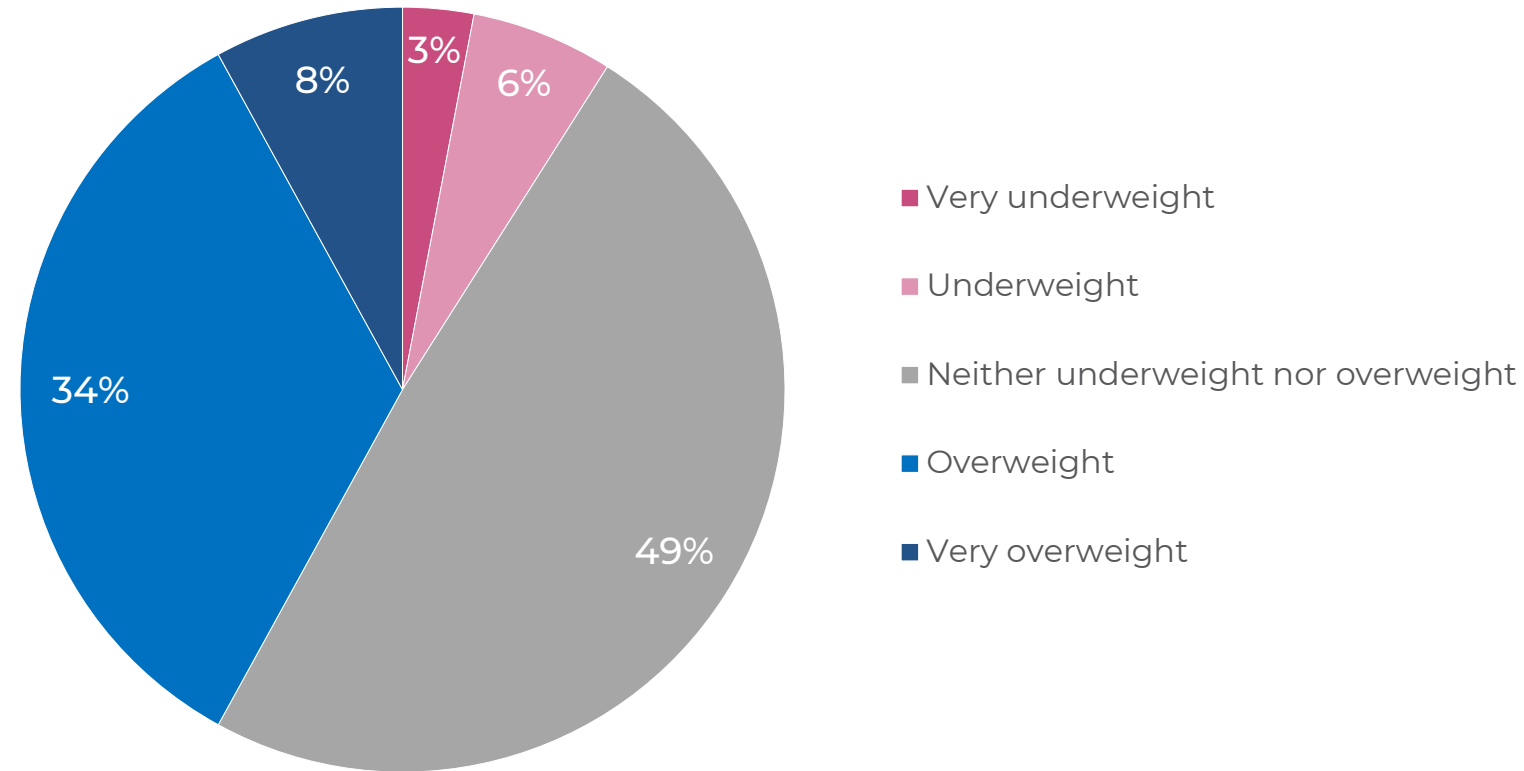
Given the prevalence of obesity-related comorbidities, such as diabetes and dyslipidemia, nutrition therapy remains a cornerstone of comprehensive care. Furthermore, as this *IFIC Spotlight Survey* highlights, many Americans (42%) are currently trying to lose weight, and a similar percentage are either interested in taking a prescription medication for weight loss (44%) or are already doing so (3%). These trends underscore the need for obesity management to include a full spectrum of risk assessment and intervention strategies.

Source: IFIC Spotlight Survey: Americans' Perceptions of Obesity Medications. January 2025.



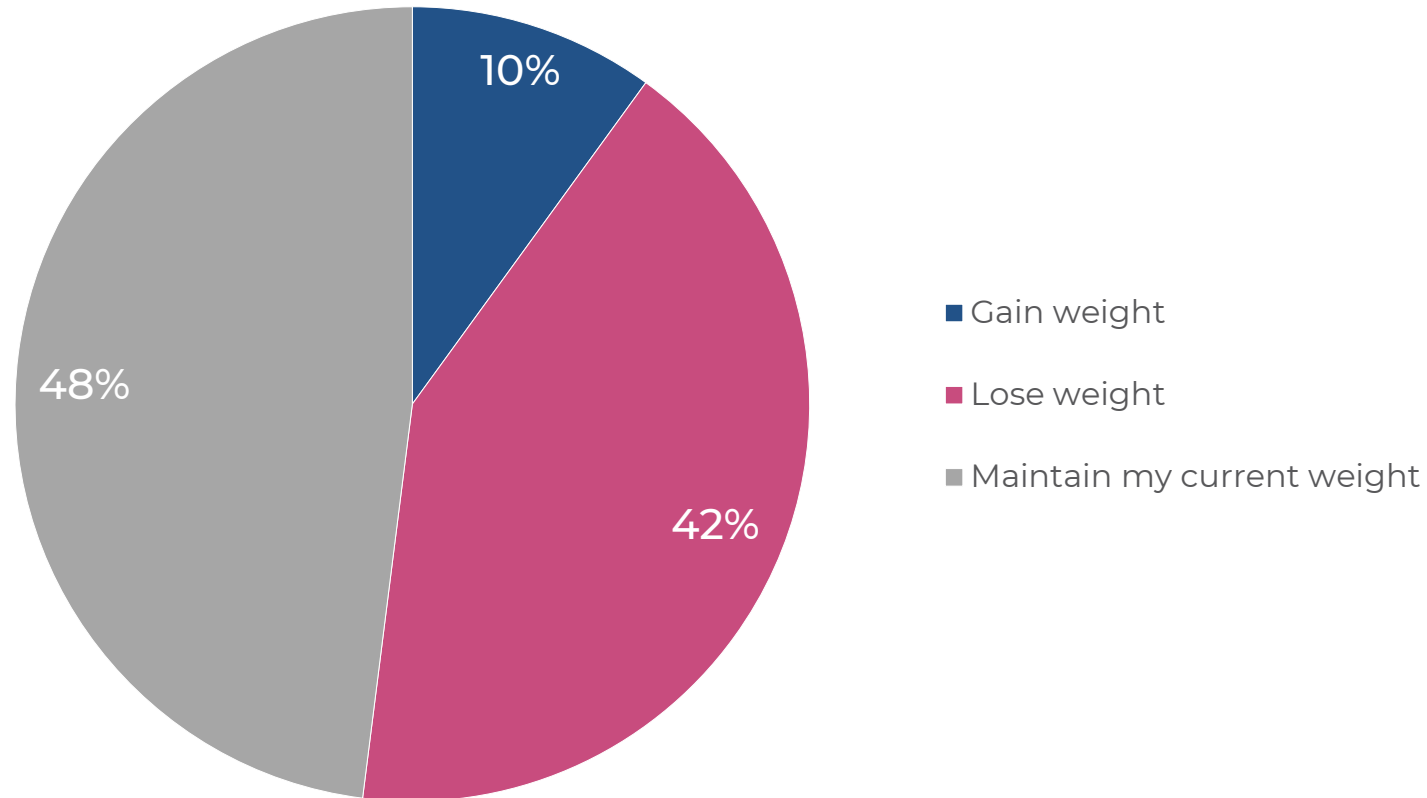
Almost half of Americans describe their current body weight as neither underweight nor overweight.

Approximately 1 in 10 (9%) say they are very/underweight and 4 in 10 (42%) say they are very/overweight.



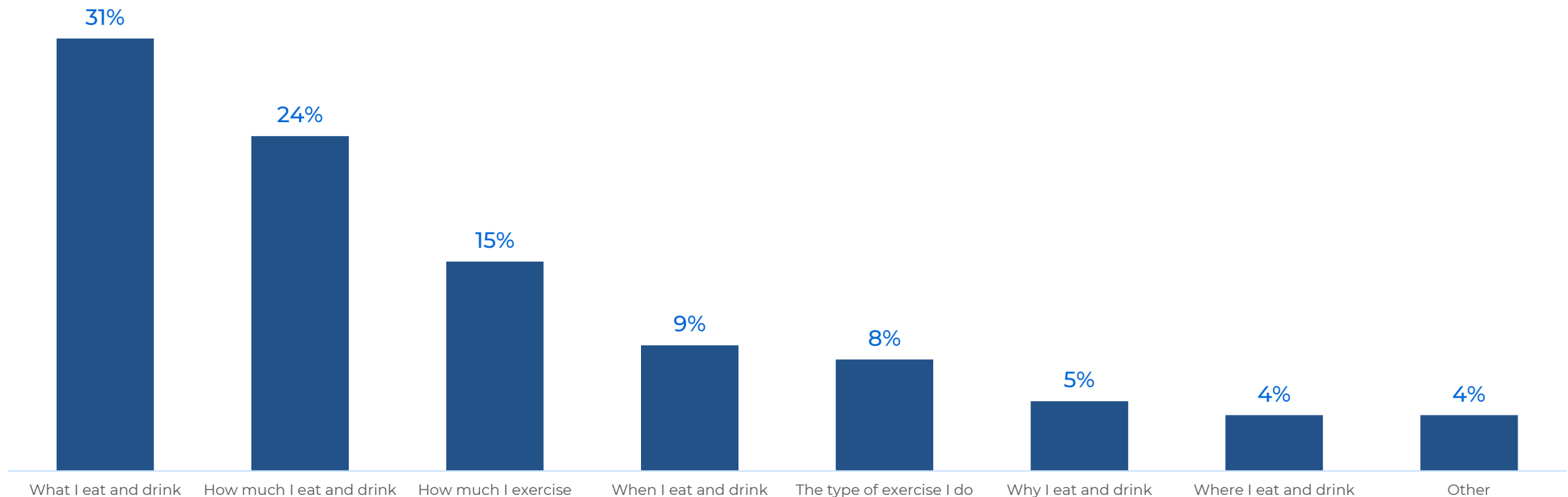
4 in 10 Americans are currently trying to lose weight.

Almost half of Americans (48%) are trying to maintain their current body weight.



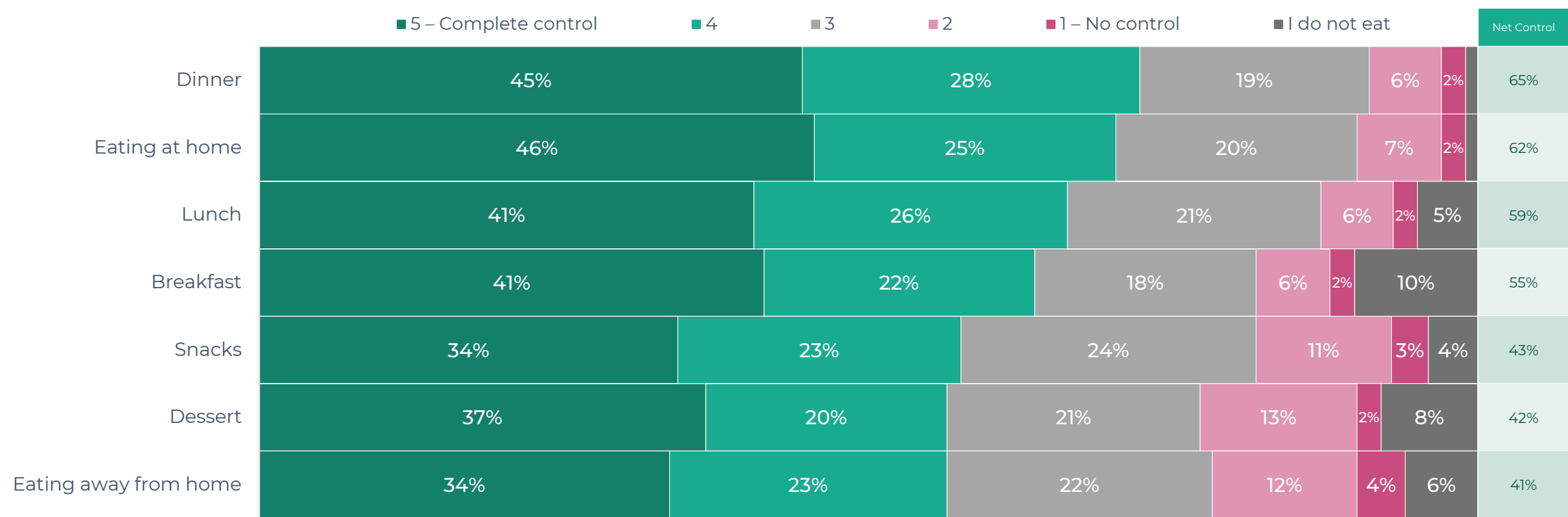
More Americans believe that what and how much they eat and drink has the biggest impact on their body weight compared to when, why, and where they eat and drink.

Exercise is considered less impactful on personal body weight than what or how much someone eats and drinks.



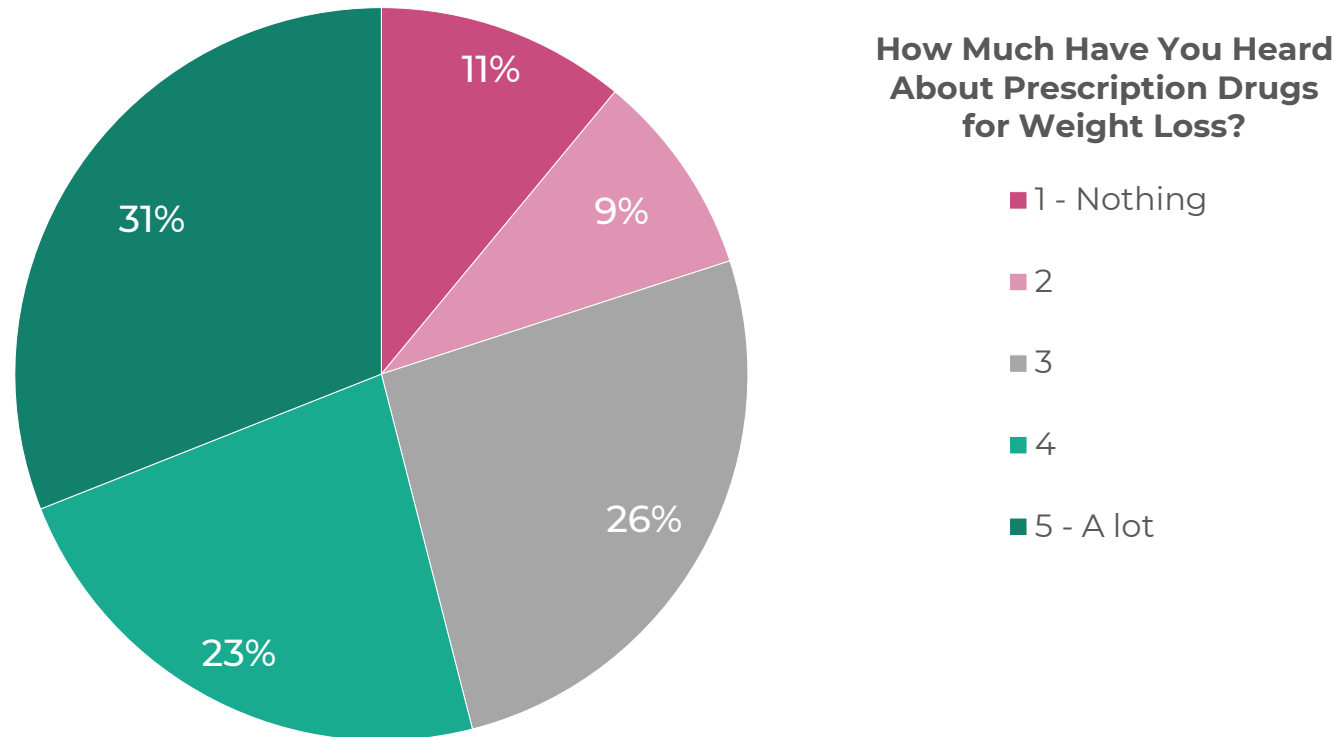
Americans report feeling less control over how much they eat and drink when they eat away from home, dessert, and snacks compared to other eating occasions.

Americans report feeling the most control at dinner (73%) and when eating at home (71%).



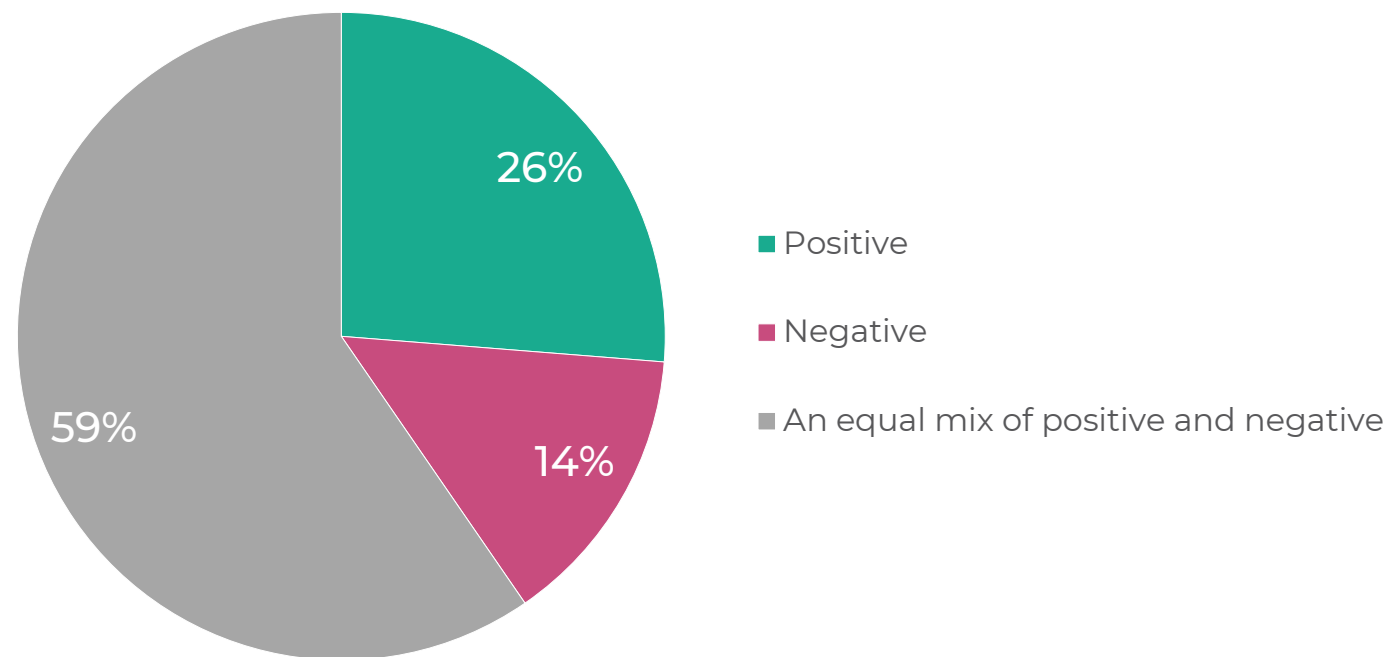
3 in 10 Americans say they have heard “a lot” about prescription drugs for weight loss.

Only 1 in 10 (11%) say they have heard “nothing” about prescription drugs for weight loss.



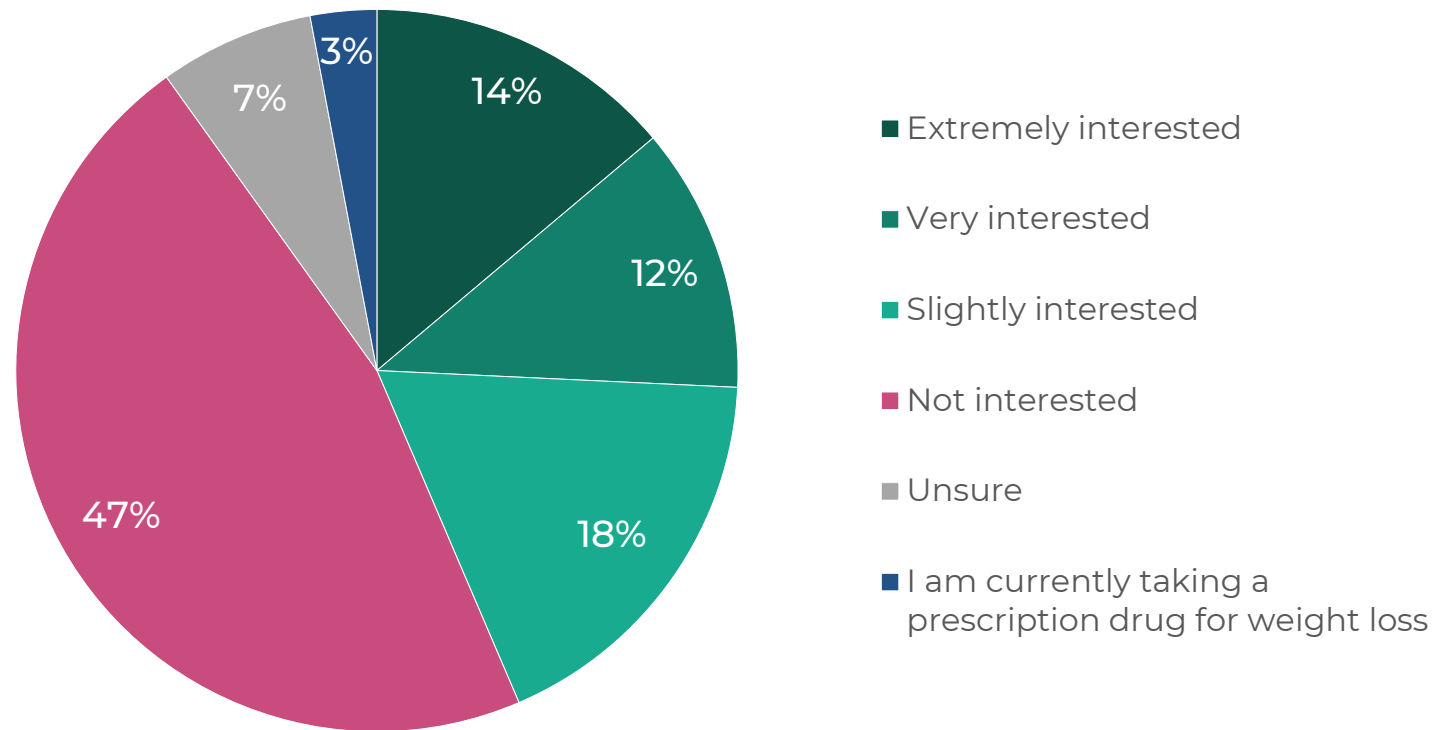
Among those who have heard about prescription drugs for weight loss, most report hearing an equal mix of positive and negative information about them.

Nearly twice as many describe what they have heard about prescription drugs for weight loss as “positive” (26%) compared to those who describe what they have heard as “negative” (14%).



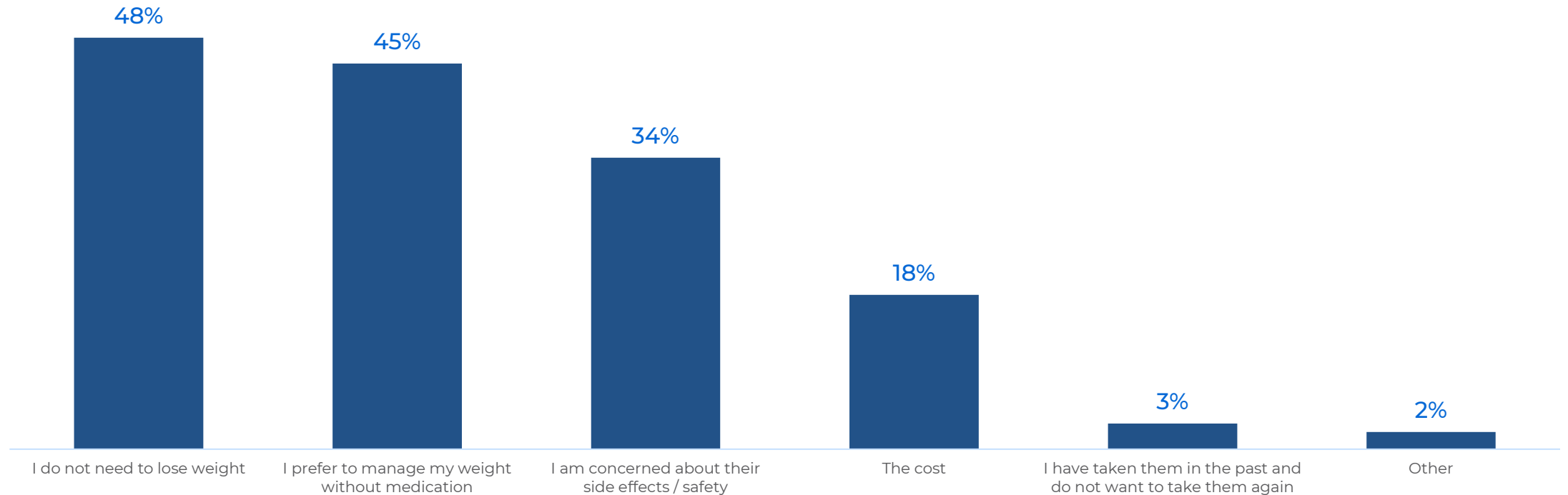
More than 4 in 10 Americans are interested in taking a prescription drug for weight loss.

Among those who self-report being overweight or very overweight, more than half (53%) are interested in taking a prescription drug for weight loss, while nearly 1 in 3 (36%) are not interested.



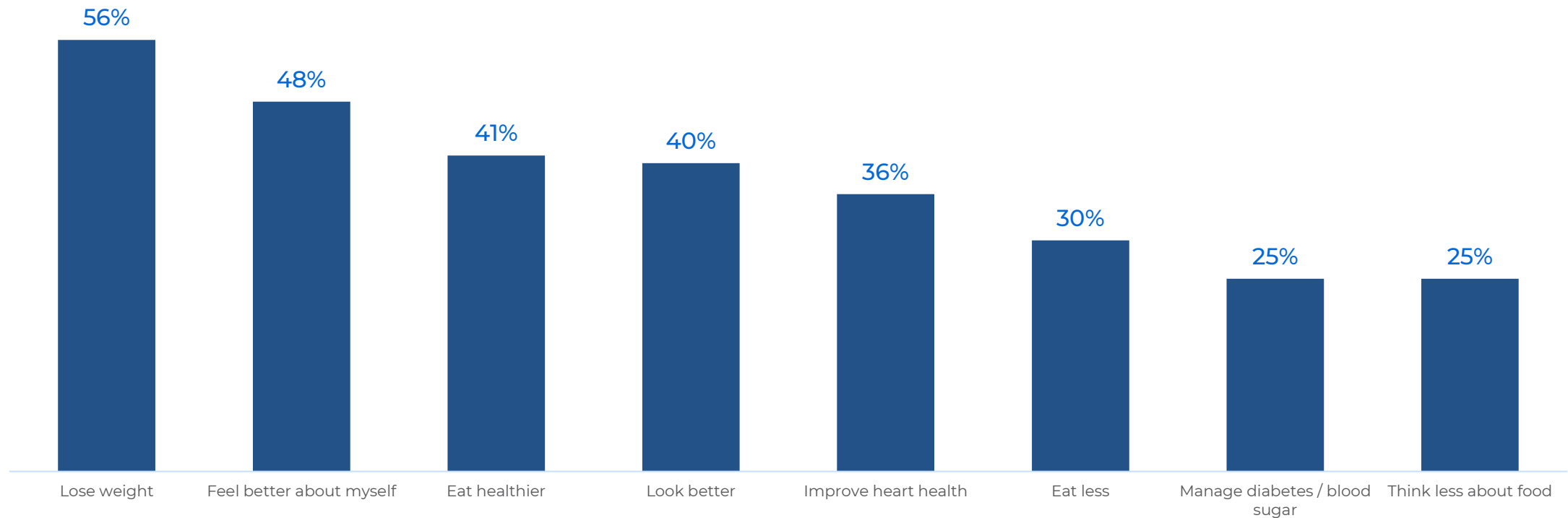
Among those not interested in taking a prescription drug for weight loss, almost half say they do not need to lose weight and/or prefer to manage their weight without medication.

1 in 3 (34%) cite concern about side effects/safety for their lack of interest, while nearly 2 in 10 (18%) cite cost.



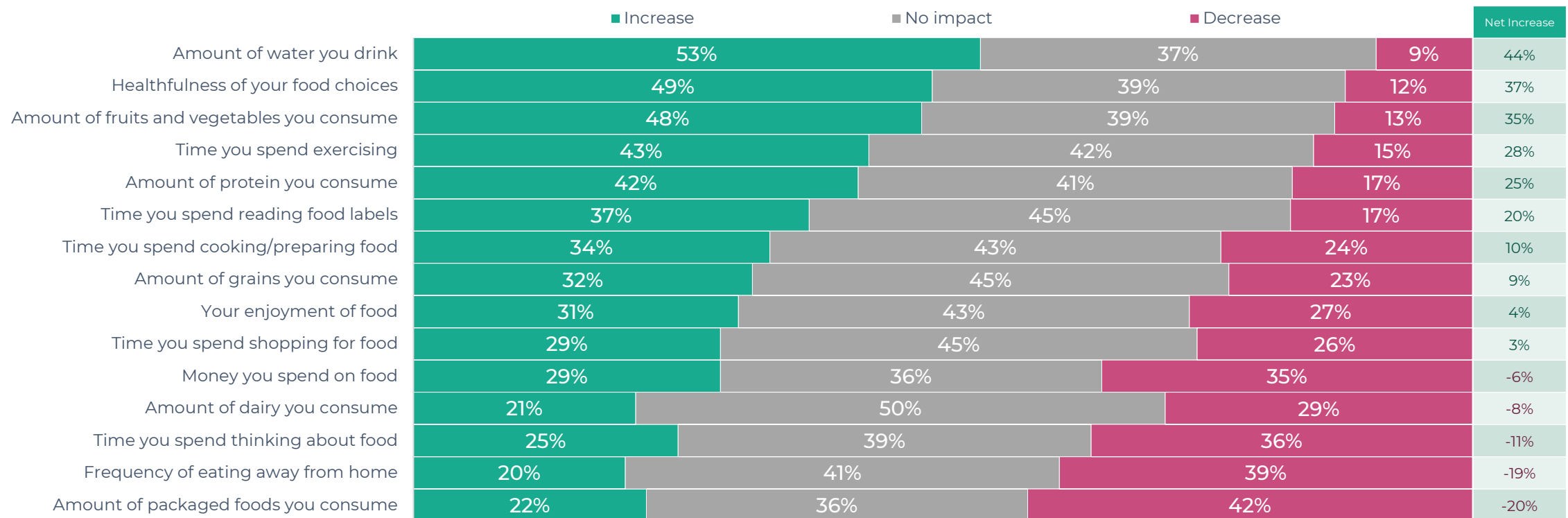
Among those interested in taking a prescription drug for weight loss, losing weight and feeling better about themselves would be their most desired prescription benefits.

With respect to weight loss prescription drug benefits, more people said they would be interested in eating healthier (41%) and looking better (40%) than eating less (30%), improving heart health (36%) or managing diabetes (25%), and thinking less about food (25%).



Nearly half of Americans think taking a prescription drug for weight loss would increase their water intake, healthfulness of food choices, and/or fruit and vegetable consumption.

4 in 10 think their packaged food consumption and/or frequency of eating away from home would decrease.





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