



International  
**Food Information**  
Council

# Americans' Perceptions of Protein

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July 2025





# METHODOLOGY

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This report from the International Food Information Council (IFIC) contains results from two separate consumer surveys—the 2025 *IFIC Food & Health Survey* and the July 2025 *IFIC Spotlight Survey*. Each survey's methodology is briefly described below:

## July 2025 IFIC Spotlight Survey

IFIC commissioned this online survey among U.S. consumers (n=1000) to measure knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about protein. One thousand adults ages 18 years and older completed the online survey from May 10-13, 2025, and were weighted to ensure proportional results. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**SUGGESTED CITATION:** International Food Information Council (IFIC). IFIC Spotlight Survey: Americans' Perceptions of Protein. July 2025.

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## 2025 IFIC Food & Health Survey

IFIC commissions this survey annually among U.S. consumers (n=3000 since 2024, n=1000 in prior years), with 2025 marking the 20th consecutive year of the *IFIC Food & Health Survey*. 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. The 2025 *IFIC Food & Health Survey* was fielded from March 13-27, 2025.

**SUGGESTED CITATION:** International Food Information Council (IFIC). 2025 IFIC Food & Health Survey.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**According to the annual *IFIC Food & Health Survey*, the percentage of Americans trying to consume protein is on the rise: In 2022, 59% said they try to consume protein, 67% in 2023, 71% in 2024, and 70% in 2025. The 2025 *IFIC Food & Health Survey* also revealed that a “high protein” diet was the most common diet that Americans followed in the past year, and that consumers use “good source of protein” as the top criteria to define a healthy food.**

This protein boom is being driven by media attention and increased consumer interest in topics such as GLP-1 medications and weight management, fitness, energy, and healthy aging. In parallel, some nutrition researchers are both [questioning](#) and further investigating protein recommendations to support optimal health outcomes.

In the same spirit, IFIC commissioned the *IFIC Spotlight Survey: Americans' Perceptions Of Protein* to study U.S. consumer mindsets related to protein sources and consumption.

In this *IFIC Spotlight Survey*, 35% of respondents report they have increased their protein consumption in the last year. However, when asked about how much protein they should consume daily, most respondents indicated they are unaware (53%) or unsure (26%) of their daily protein needs. Of the 20% of respondents who report to know how much protein they should consume, over half (54%) think it should be 50 grams or less per day.

When asked about perceived health benefits of protein, muscle health/strength was the most recognized (by 51% of respondents), followed by energy/less fatigue (45%), and overall well-being (35%). When asked about their preferred protein sources, respondents selected meat/poultry (65%), eggs (62%), and fish/seafood (48%) as the top sources. On food packaging, the most referenced information about protein is the “grams of protein per serving” (39%). Among those using protein information on food packaging, only 27% say they seek an ideal number, or target, of protein grams per serving.

Overall, while interest in and awareness of protein are high, the results of this *IFIC Spotlight Survey* suggest that the average American may be unclear about their daily protein needs or lack access to reputable resources on how to estimate and meet them. This uncertainty may be influenced by the fact that a friend or family member is the top source of information on protein (reported by 29% of respondents), outpacing conversations with a personal healthcare professional (25%) and/or registered dietitian (13%).





# KEY FINDINGS

## Americans continue to be keen on protein in 2025.

Insights from the 2025 *IFIC Food & Health Survey* reveal the rise of protein in recent years. For the first time, “good source of protein” tops the list of criteria that Americans use to define a healthy food. For the third straight year a “high protein diet” is the most common eating pattern that Americans are following. For the fifth straight year, protein is the nutrient that most Americans say they are trying to consume.

**Source:** International Food Information Council (IFIC). 2025 IFIC Food & Health Survey.

## 1 in 3 say they have increased their protein intake over the past year.

Americans were asked how their protein intake has changed over the past year. More than 1 in 3 (35%) report increased intake, while nearly half of Americans (46%) report that their protein intake remained the same. One in 10 Americans (10%) reported a decrease, while 9% were not sure of any changes in protein intake over the past year.

**Source:** IFIC Spotlight Survey: Americans' Perceptions of Protein. July 2025.

## 8 in 10 Americans are unaware or unsure of the amount of protein they should consume daily.

Americans were asked if they know their individual daily protein needs, in grams. Half of Americans (53%) report that they do not know how many grams of protein they should consume daily, and 1 in 4 (26%) are unsure. Only 1 in 5 (20%) stated awareness of how many grams of protein they should consume daily.

**Source:** IFIC Spotlight Survey: Americans' Perceptions of Protein. July 2025.

## Among those who report knowing how many grams of protein they should consume each day, more than half say it should be 50 grams or less.

More than half of Americans (57%) who report knowing their personal daily protein needs believe that the amount of protein they should consume each day is 50 grams or less. One in 4 (24%) believe they should consume 51 – 100 grams of protein daily, while 1 in 10 (11%) believe they should consume 101 – 200 grams, and 8% say they should consume more than 200 grams.

**Source:** IFIC Spotlight Survey: Americans' Perceptions of Protein. July 2025.



# KEY FINDINGS

## 8 in 10 Americans prioritize protein during at least one eating occasion each day.

Respondents were asked to select all of the meals or eating occasions at which they prioritize protein. More than half (56%) prioritize dinner, while more than 4 in 10 prioritize breakfast (44%) and/or lunch (42%). Only 17% prioritize protein in snacks, and 18% indicated that they do not prioritize protein at any specific meals or snacks.

## Half of Americans think protein provides benefits for muscle health/strength and endurance, as well as energy.

When presented with numerous potential health benefits commonly associated with protein, the majority (51%) selected muscle health/strength and endurance as a perceived benefit. Slightly fewer selected energy/less fatigue (45%), followed by overall wellbeing (35%), healthy aging (33%), and bone health (32%). About 3 in 10 (29%) also selected metabolic health/metabolism, weight loss/weight management (29%), gut health (28%), and immune health (27%). More than 1 in 10 (13%) selected "I am not sure, but I have heard protein is good for me."

## Americans' top three preferred sources of protein are animal-based: meat, eggs, and seafood.

When asked to select their preferred sources of protein, the top-ranked sources were meat/poultry (65%), eggs (62%), and fish/seafood (48%). The top three preferred sources were followed by dairy (41% selected "yogurt, cottage cheese, and cheese"), beans/peas/lentils (40%), nuts (38%), milk/milk-based drinks (38%), and grains (37%). Preferences for protein powder (27%), meat alternatives (18%), and plant-based dairy alternatives (18%) were also represented.

## Grams of protein per serving is the most often used piece of protein information on food packaging.

Respondents were asked to select the details about protein on food packaging they use most often. Four in 10 (39%) selected "grams of protein per serving," followed by "sources of protein in the ingredients list" (33%), front of package "high in protein" statements (29%), and Percent Daily Value (26%). Nearly 3 in 10 (28%) say they do not use protein information on food packaging.



# KEY FINDINGS

**Among those who report using protein information on food packaging, 1 in 4 have an ideal number of protein grams per serving that they look for.**

Nearly 3 in 4 (73%) who use protein information on food packaging indicate that they do not seek an ideal or target number of protein grams per serving, while 1 in 4 (27%) do. Among those who look for an ideal amount per serving, 7 in 10 (69%) look for 30 grams or less (36% look for ≤15 grams, 33% look for 16-30 grams).

**Taste and price are the top factors that Americans consider when choosing sources of protein.**

When asked which factors Americans consider when choosing protein sources, taste (66%), price (59%), and healthfulness (49%) rank highest, followed by convenience (38%), animal-based (23%), plant-based (18%), and environmental sustainability (18%).

**Friends and family, healthcare professionals, and health-focused websites are top sources of protein information.**

Consumers seek health and nutrition information from a variety of sources. When it comes to protein, 29% of respondents indicate a friend or family member as the top information source, followed by a conversation with my personal healthcare professional (25%), and health-focused website (24%). Fitness/diet/nutrition mobile app (19%) and social media influencer/blogger (17%) were also notably cited sources.

**Source:** IFIC Spotlight Survey: Americans' Perceptions of Protein. July 2025.





# IMPLICATIONS

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Results from the *IFIC Spotlight Survey: Americans' Perceptions of Protein* show that while 35% of Americans report having increased their protein consumption over the past year, most consumers (79%) admit to being unaware or unsure of the amount of protein they should consume each day. Of the 20% who indicated they know their daily protein needs, more than half (57%) believe it is 50 grams or less. The top sources of information about protein are a friend or family member (by 29% of respondents), followed by a conversation with a healthcare professional (25%), and a health-focused website (24%).

These findings suggest that consumers may lack knowledge and/or have a potential misunderstanding of their daily protein needs. For example, the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for protein is 0.8 grams (g) of protein per kilogram (kg) of body weight. When applying this calculation to adults weighing between 150 and 200 pounds (68 to 91 kg), the resulting RDA protein needs range from 54 to 73 g. However, the RDA calculation does not account for increased protein needs related to exercise or other metabolic or medical considerations; instead, it represents a baseline target for the average adult. For more active adults and/or individuals taking weight loss medications, actual protein needs may be significantly higher.

Insights from the [2024 IFIC Food & Health Survey](#) revealed that the top motivators for consumers to follow a specific diet are to feel better, lose weight, and improve physical appearance. Consequently, many are turning to high-protein diets most frequently to achieve these goals. As protein messaging becomes increasingly prominent, consumers may require additional guidance from nutrition professionals, such as registered dietitians, to accurately identify their individual protein needs and plan meals and snacks accordingly. Food and nutrition stakeholders, communicators, and regulatory agencies also have an opportunity to enhance nutrition literacy and comprehension of food labeling, while providing evidence-based communication that facilitates a greater understanding of general protein needs and food sources.

**Source:** IFIC Spotlight Survey: Americans' Perceptions of Protein. July 2025.





# Americans continue to be keen on protein in 2025.



For the first time, “good source of protein” is the most common criteria that Americans use to define a healthy food.

**38%** use “good source of protein” to define a healthy food

37% in 2024 (n=3000)  
37% in 2023 (n=1022)  
29% in 2022 (n=1005)



For the third straight year a “high protein” diet is the most common eating pattern that Americans are following.

**23%** have followed a “high protein” diet in the past year

20% in 2024 (n=3000)  
18% in 2023\* (n=1022)  
4% in 2018\* (n=1009)



For the fifth straight year, protein is the nutrient that most Americans say they are trying to consume.

**70%** are trying to consume protein

71% in 2024 (n=3000)  
67% in 2023 (n=1022)  
59% in 2022 (n=1005)  
62% in 2021 (n=1014)

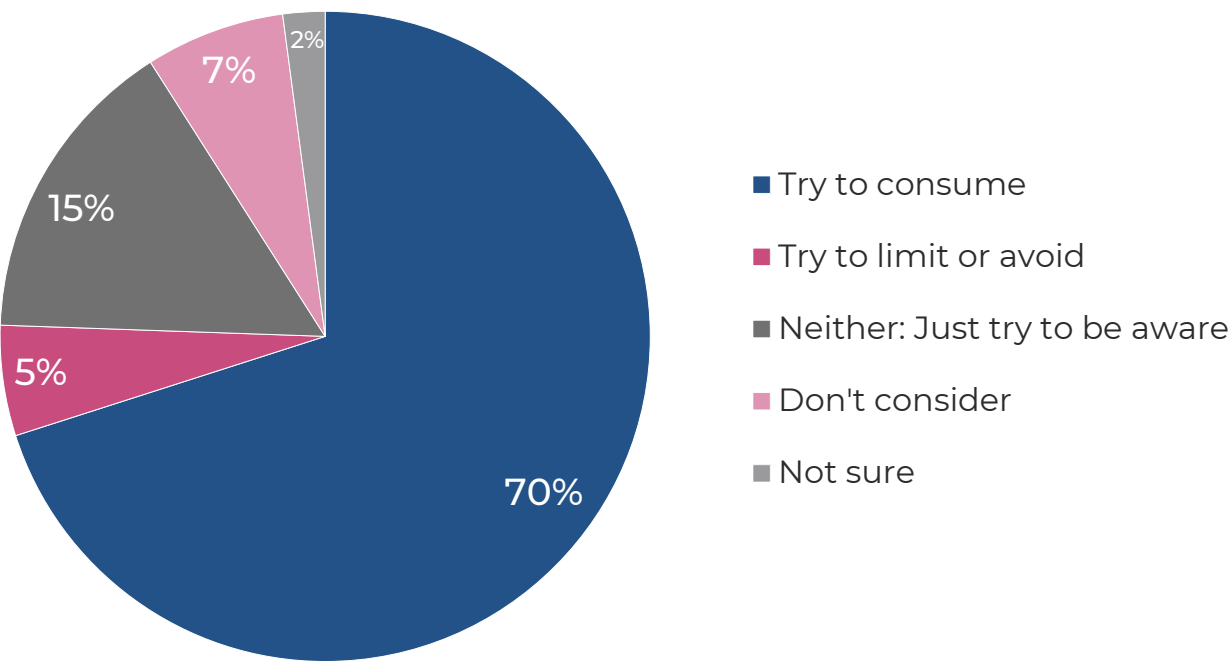
Source: International Food Information Council (IFIC). 2025 IFIC Food & Health Survey.



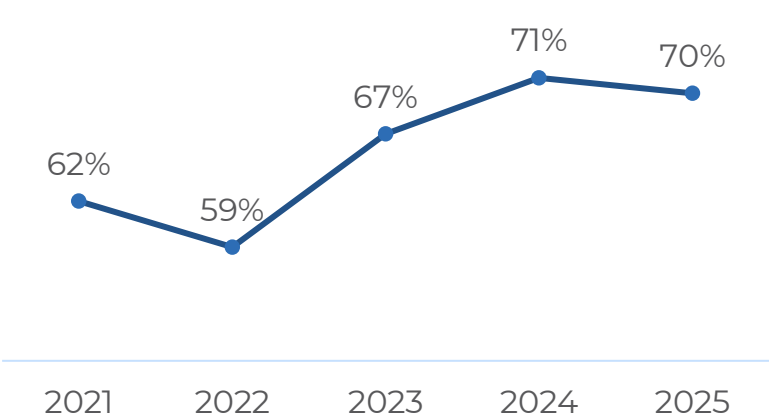
# 7 in 10 Americans report trying to consume protein.

2 in 10 (22%) either do not consider their protein consumption (7%) or are just trying to be aware of it (15%).

Approach to Protein Consumption in 2025



5-Year Trend of Americans Who Report Trying to Consume Protein\*\*



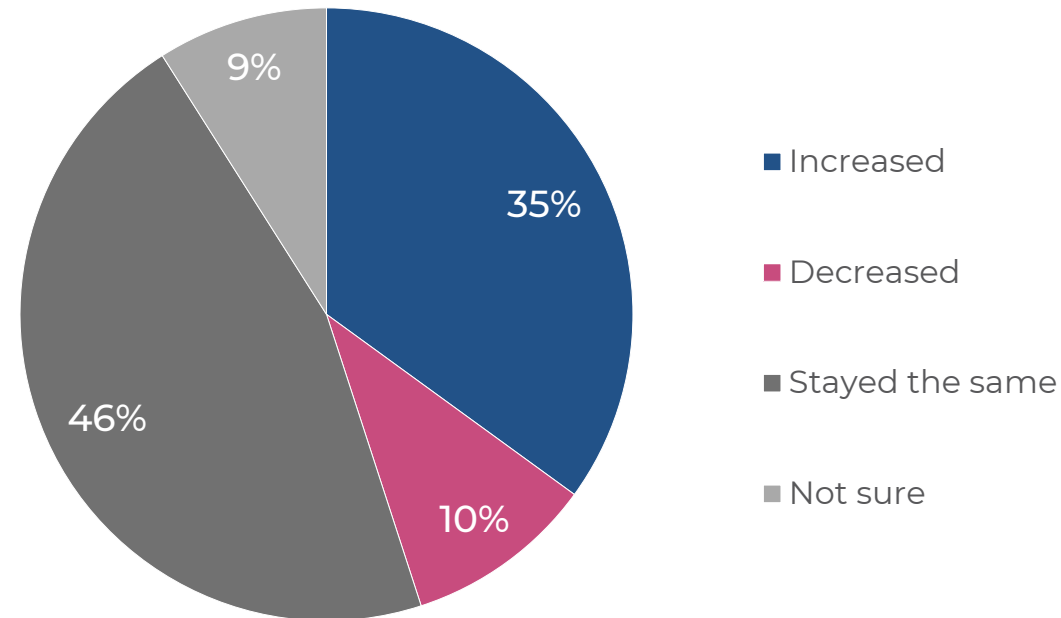
Source: International Food Information Council (IFIC). 2025 IFIC Food & Health Survey.



# 1 in 3 say they have increased their protein intake over the past year.

1 in 10 (9%) say they have decreased their protein intake over the past year, while nearly half (46%) have not changed their protein consumption.

**Change in Protein Intake in the Past Year**

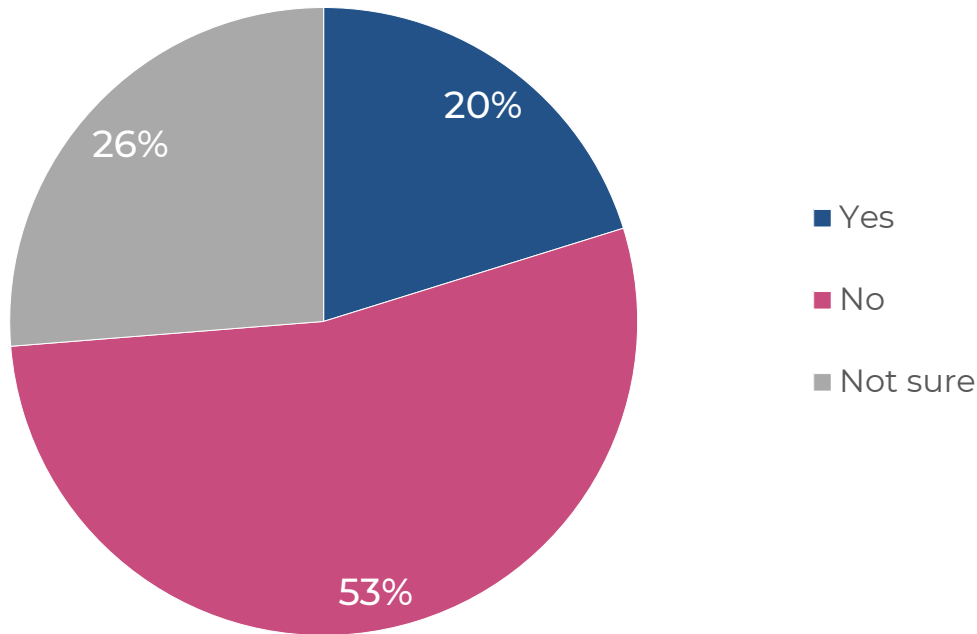




# 8 in 10 Americans are unaware or unsure of the amount of protein they should consume daily.

20% say they know how many grams of protein they should consume each day.

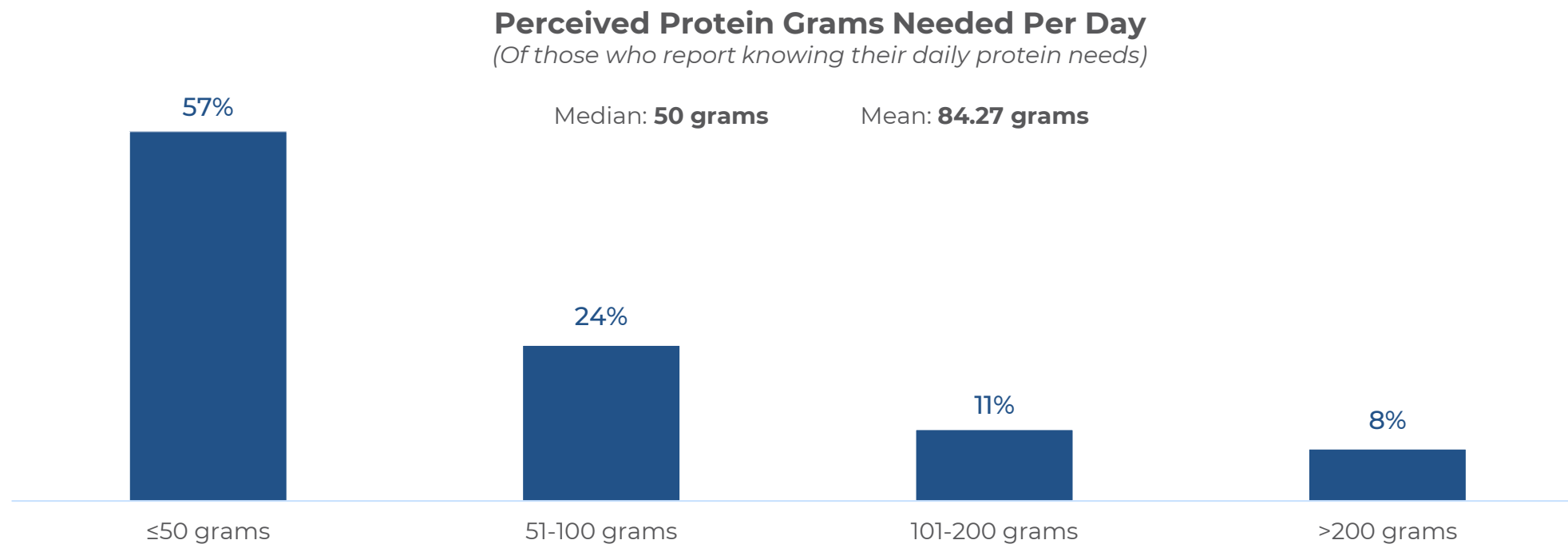
Knowledge of Protein Grams Needed Per Day





# Among those who report knowing how many grams of protein they should consume each day, more than half say it should be 50 grams or less.

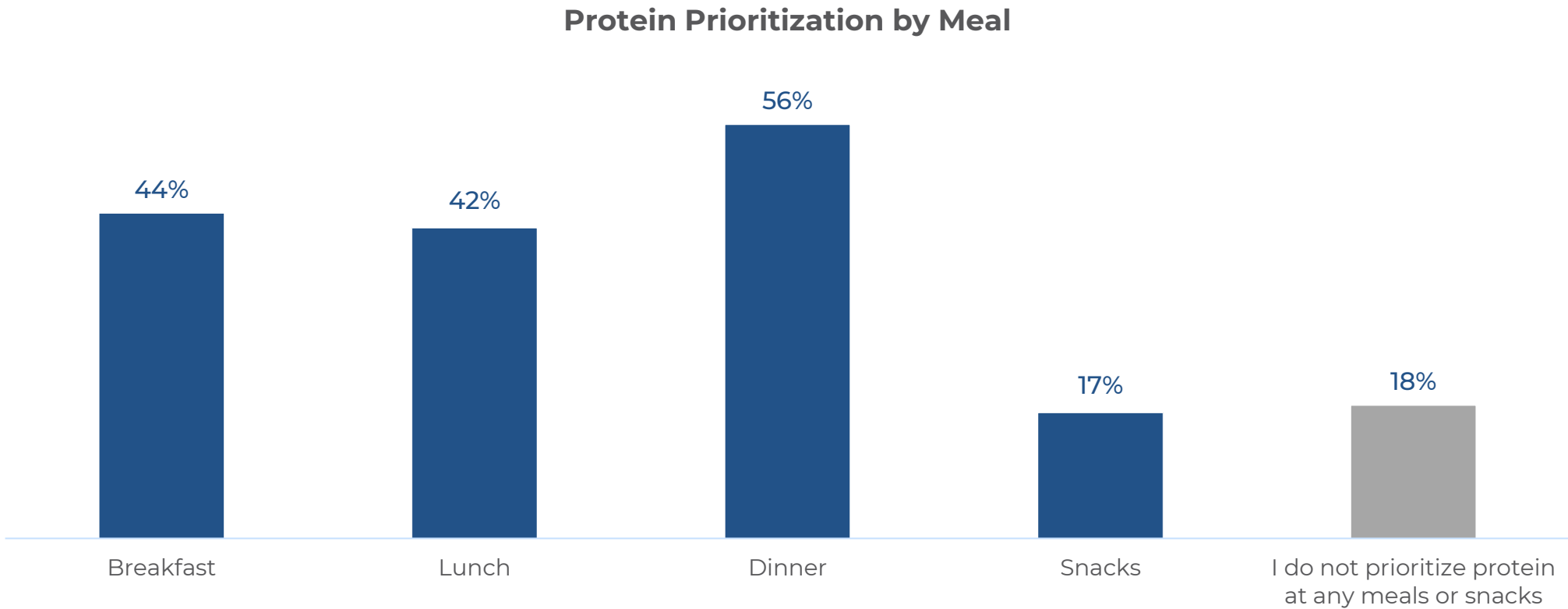
1 in 4 (24%) say they should consume 51-100 grams of protein per day, 11% say they should consume 101-200 grams, and 8% say they should consume more than 200 grams.





# 8 in 10 Americans prioritize protein during at least one eating occasion each day.

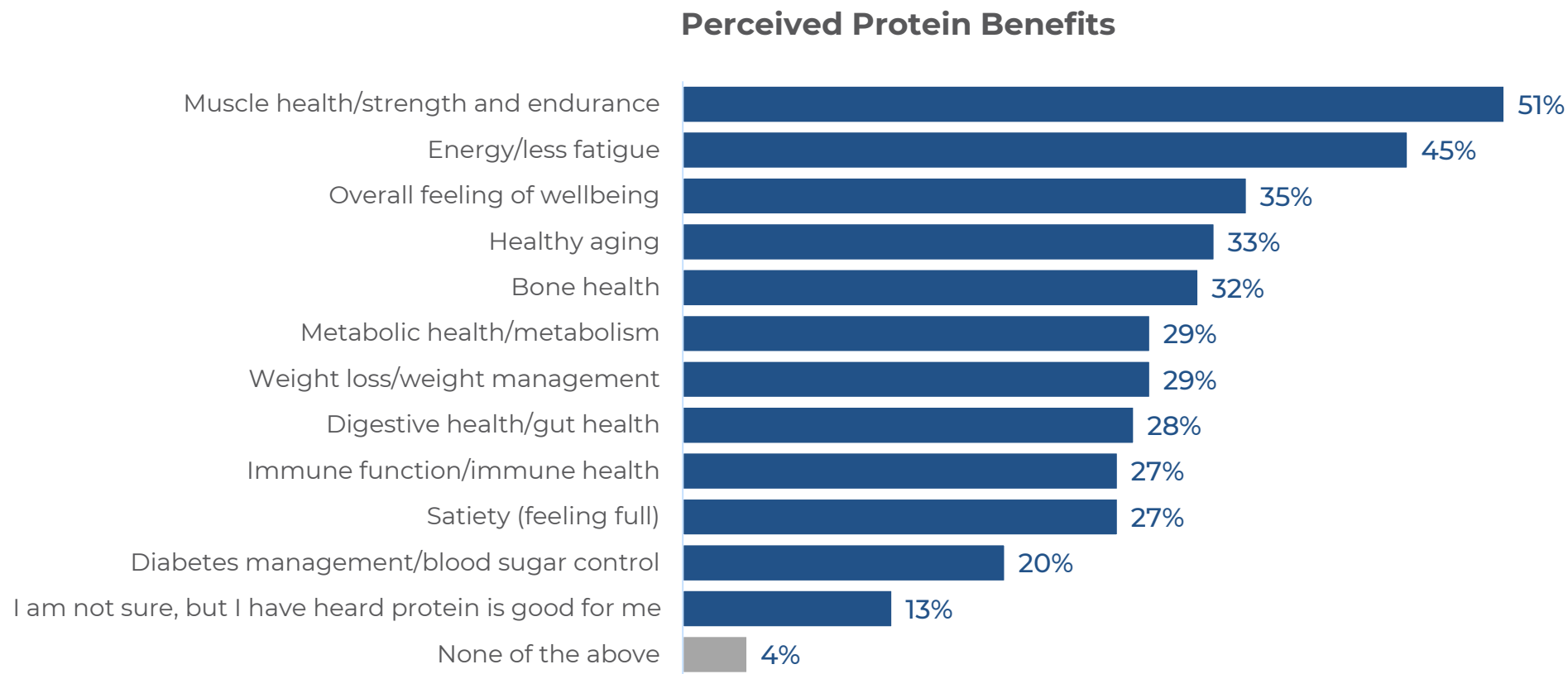
More than half (56%) prioritize protein at dinner, while more than 4 in 10 prioritize protein at breakfast (44%) and/or lunch (42%). Far fewer (17%) prioritize protein for snacks.





# Half of Americans think protein provides benefits for muscle health/strength and endurance, as well as energy.

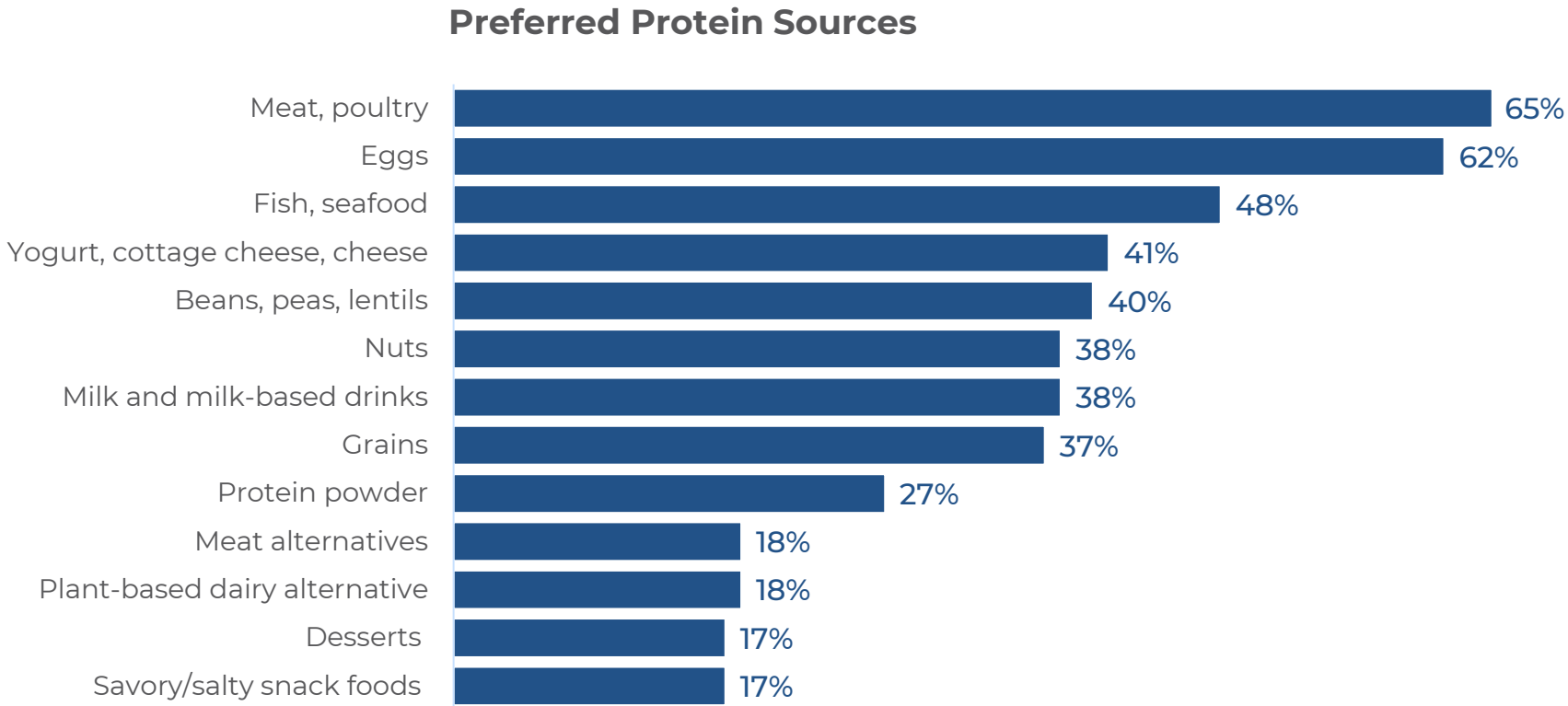
Other top perceived protein benefits include overall wellbeing (35%), healthy aging (33%), and bone health (32%).





# Americans' top three preferred sources of protein are animal-based: meat, eggs, and seafood.

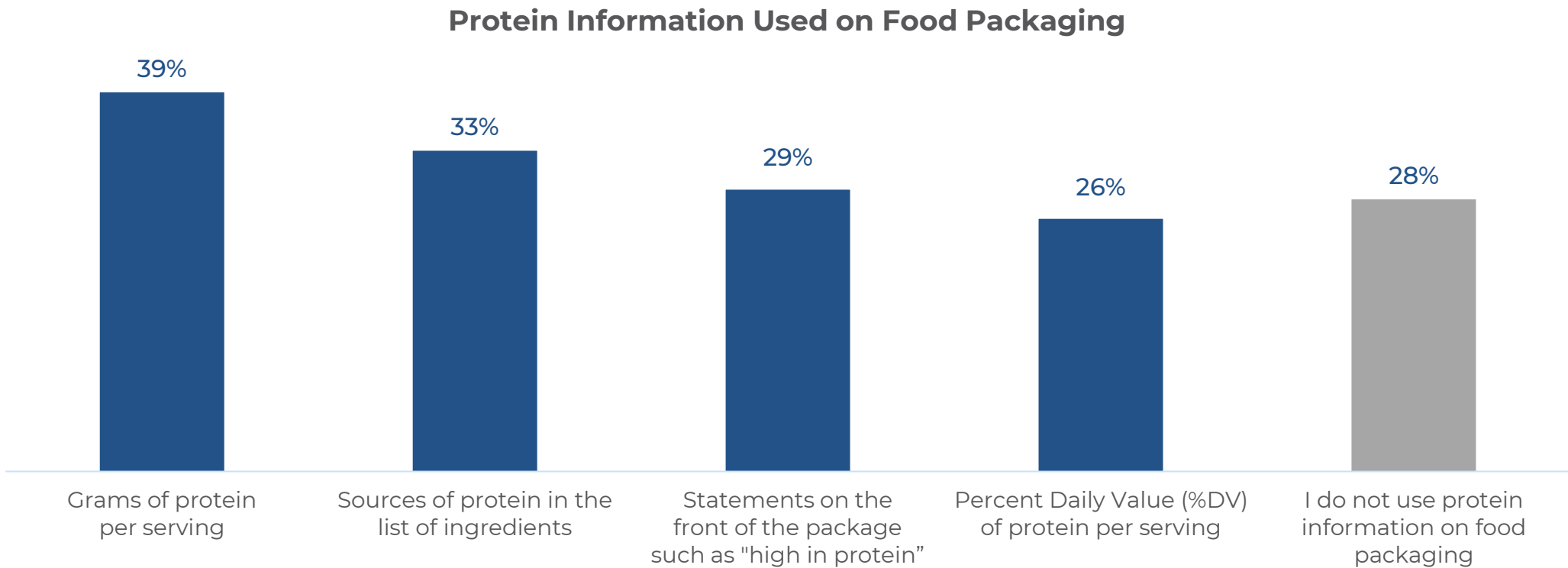
About 4 in 10 prefer to get their protein from dairy (41%), beans, peas, and lentils (40%), nuts (38%), milk and milk-based drinks (38%), and grains (37%).





# Grams of protein per serving is the most often used piece of protein information on food packaging.

Nearly 3 in 10 (28%) say they do not use protein information on food packaging.



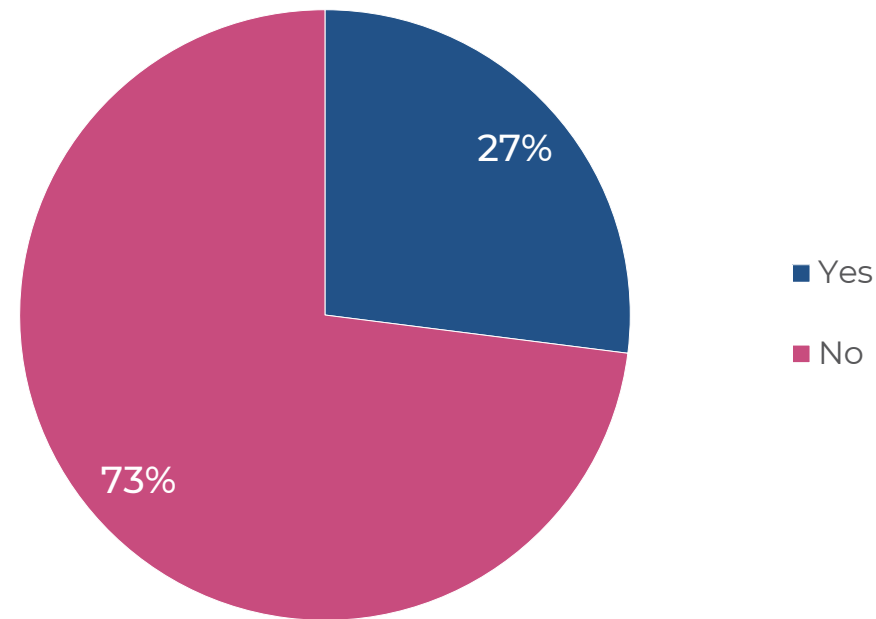


# Among those who report using protein information on food packaging, 1 in 4 have an ideal number of protein grams per serving that they look for.

3 in 4 (73%) say they do not look for an ideal number of protein grams per serving.

## Looks for an Ideal Number of Protein Grams Per Serving

*(Of those who report using protein information on food packaging)*





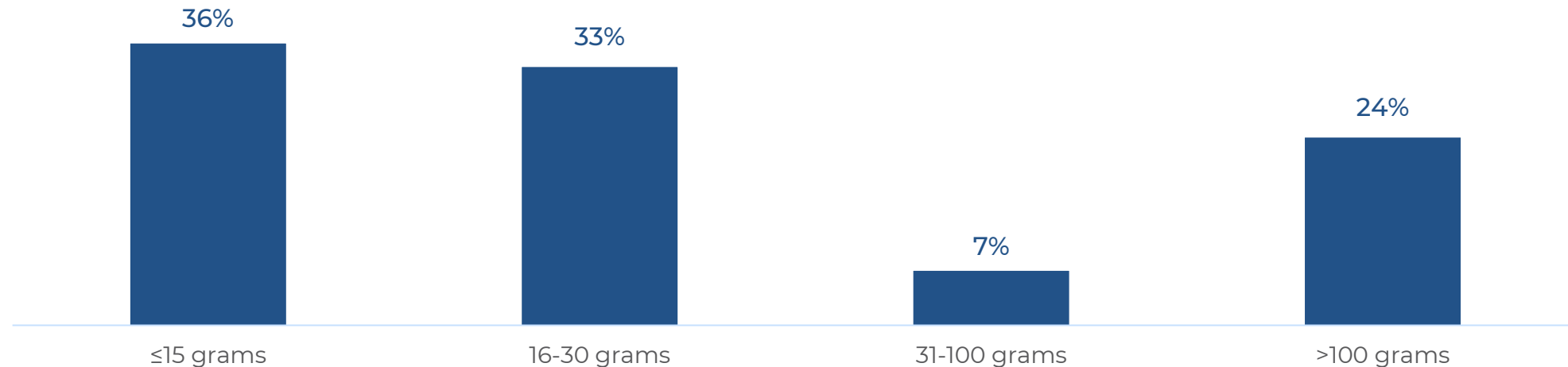
# Among those who report using protein information on food packaging and look for an ideal amount per serving, 7 in 10 look for 30 grams or less per serving.

1 in 4 (24%) say the ideal amount of protein that they look for is more than 100 grams per serving.

**Ideal Number of Protein Grams Per Serving**  
(Of those who report using protein information on food packaging and have an ideal amount of protein they look for per serving)

Median: **20 grams**

Mean: **112.75 grams**

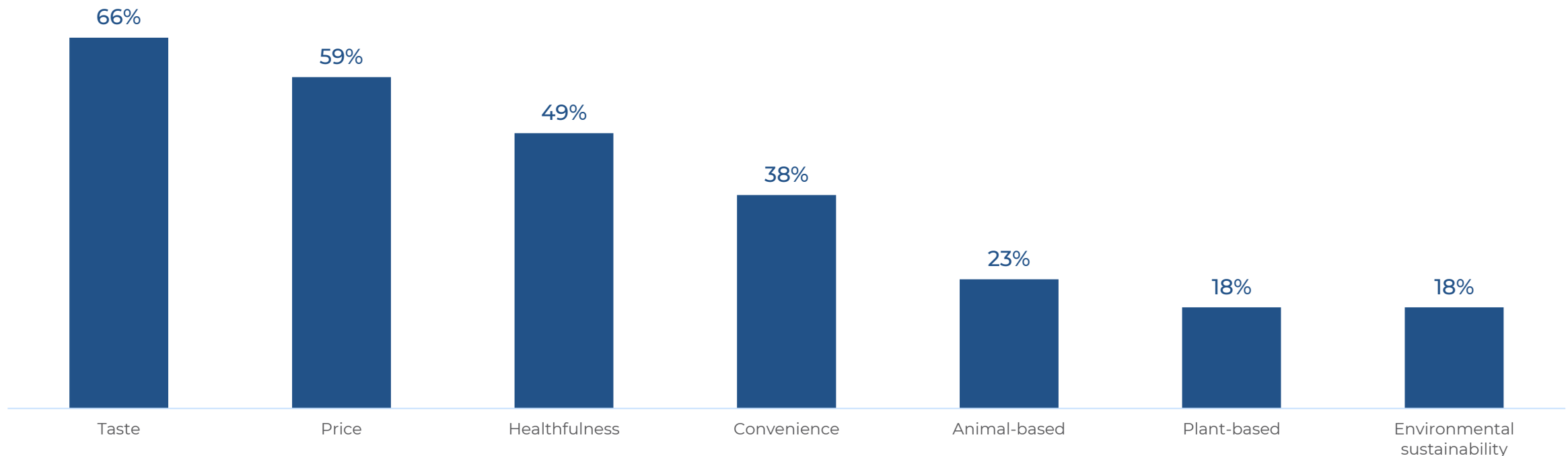




# Taste and price are the top factors that Americans consider when choosing sources of protein.

More Americans consider healthfulness (49%) when choosing protein than consider convenience (38%) and/or environmental sustainability (18%).

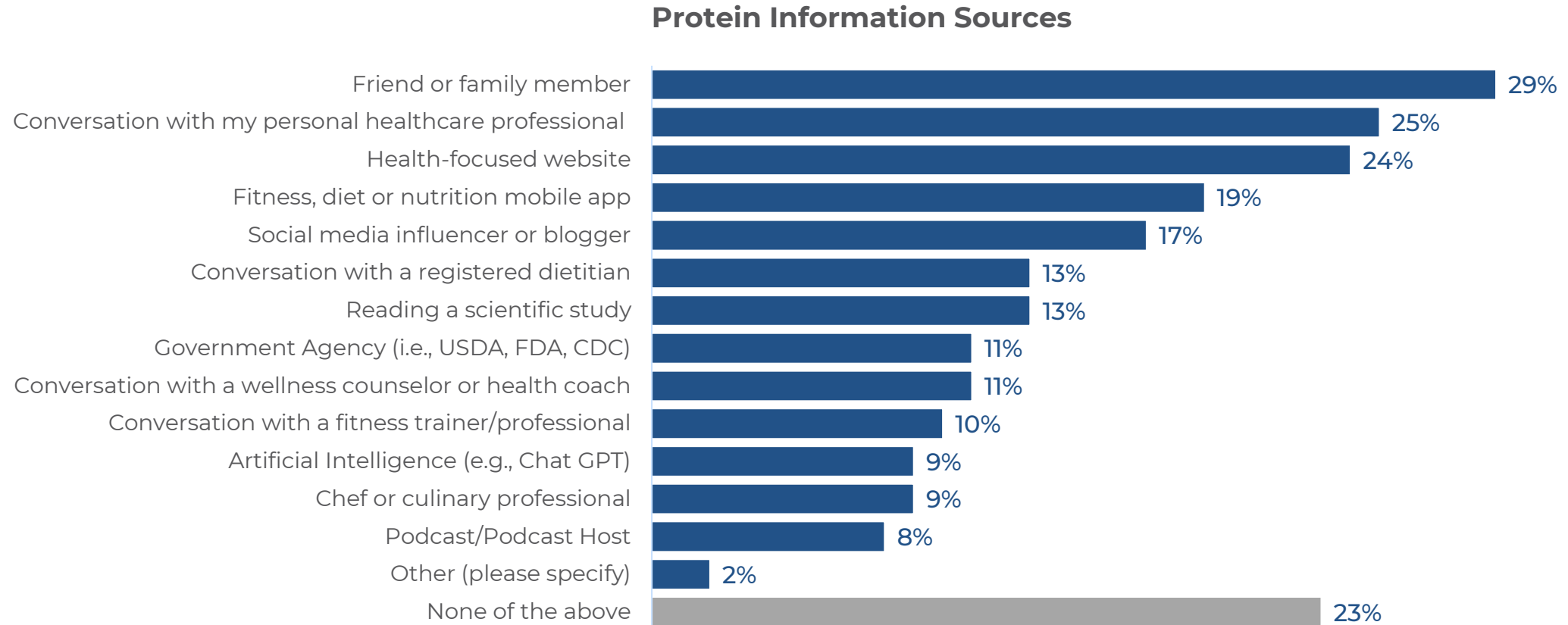
**Factors that Influence Protein Choice**





# Friends and family, healthcare professionals, and health-focused websites are top sources of protein information.

1 in 4 (23%) say they do not get protein information from any of the sources listed.







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