IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

20

A Focus On
Dietary Guidance & Processed Food

An annual survey of American consumers to understand perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors surrounding food and food-purchasing decisions. 2026 marks the 21st consecutive year that the International Food Information Council (IFIC) has commissioned the *IFIC Food & Health Survey*.

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IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY OVERVIEW

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

For more than two decades, the International Food Information Council's Food & Health Survey has tracked how Americans think about food, nutrition, health, and the role these factors play in food decisions. Now in its 21st consecutive year, the *2026 IFIC Food & Health Survey* continues that legacy while expanding its reach, with a Canadian sample (n=1006) included for the first time to enable cross-border comparisons between U.S. and Canada consumers.

Key findings from this year's online survey of **3,005 Americans** focus on:

- Familiarity with U.S. Dietary Guidelines and the new Food Pyramid
- "Ultraprocessed foods," including familiarity with the term and criteria used to identify them
- Criteria used to define "healthy" food
- Personal eating patterns, diet scores, and the ease of maintaining dietary habits
- Trust in food information sources, including exposure, use, and impact of social media and artificial intelligence (AI)
- Approaches to sugar consumption and opinions of low- and no-calorie sweeteners
- Food and beverage purchase-drivers, including by income
- Food cost and affordability
- Prescription weight-loss medications, including usage, personal experiences, and perceptions of safety and efficacy
- Confidence in the safety of the food supply, including the top food safety issues and perceived safety of imported and domestic foods
- Safe food-handling practices
- Awareness of state-level food regulation efforts
- Beliefs about agriculture, climate change, environmental sustainability, food production, food technologies, and pesticides

In this report, findings are presented for all U.S. survey respondents (n=3005).

Note: Significant changes in trend vs. 2025 (and/or in some cases, prior years) are indicated using up-and-down arrows and/or call-out boxes.
Note: Totals may not add up or equal 100% due to rounding.

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY OVERVIEW

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

- An online survey of **3,005 Americans**.
- The survey was fielded from **March 22 – April 8, 2026**.
- On average, the survey took **~20 minutes** to complete.
- The survey was conducted via **Dynata's consumer panel**.

SUGGESTED CITATION:
International Food Information Council. 2026 IFIC Food & Health Survey: A Focus on Dietary Guidance & Processed Food. July 2026. https://ific.org/research/2026-ific-food-health-survey-dietary-guidance-processed-food/

WEIGHTING

The results were weighted to ensure that they are reflective of the American population ages 18 to 80 years, as seen in the 2025 Current Population Survey. Specifically, results were weighted by age, education, gender, race/ethnicity, and region.

RESEARCH PARTNER

IFIC commissions Greenwald Research to conduct its annual *Food & Health Survey*.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Focus On Dietary Guidance & Processed Food

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

A FOCUS ON DIETARY GUIDANCE & PROCESSED FOOD

More than four in ten Americans say they know at least a fair amount about the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Familiarity with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* remains moderate in 2026. This year, 42% of Americans say they know a lot (9%) or a fair amount (33%) about the Guidelines. That share is 10 percentage points higher than in 2011, when 32% reported this level of familiarity, but 4 points lower than in 2021, when familiarity reached 46%. The comparison is particularly relevant because the 2011, 2021, and 2026 *IFIC Food & Health Survey* were each conducted within four months of a new Dietary Guidelines release.

The results suggest that awareness of federal nutrition guidance has improved compared with 2011, but the 2026 release did not produce the same level of reported familiarity observed in 2021.

Within three months of its debut, more than eight in ten Americans report having seen the new Food Pyramid.

Reported familiarity to the new Food Pyramid was high within three months of its introduction, with 83% of Americans saying they have seen it. This exceeds reported awareness of MyPlate in both 2024 (76%) and 2025 (77%), representing significant increases of 7 and 6 percentage points, respectively.

These results suggest that the new Food Pyramid has achieved substantial early visibility among Americans, surpassing recent reported awareness of MyPlate. While encouraging, awareness of the national dietary guidance symbol should not be conflated with knowledge and understanding, use, improved diet quality, and/or adherence to its corresponding dietary guidance recommendations.

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

A FOCUS ON DIETARY GUIDANCE & PROCESSED FOOD

Self-reported knowledge of the new Food Pyramid is comparable to MyPlate in 2024 and 2025.

Although the new Food Pyramid image has reached a large share of the public, self-assessed understanding is similar to recent results for MyPlate. In 2026, 54% of Americans say they know at least a fair amount about the new Food Pyramid, including 15% who say they know a lot and 39% who say they know a fair amount. This total matches the 54% who reported knowing at least a fair amount about MyPlate in 2024 and is nearly identical to the 53% reported in 2025.

The contrast between reported exposure and knowledge is notable. It suggests that the new Food Pyramid has generated broader visibility than MyPlate in recent years; however, that visibility has not yet translated into a higher level of perceived knowledge or understanding.

With respect to key dietary guidance messages, half of Americans say they made an effort to eat vegetables and fruits throughout the day and eat real food in the past twelve months.

Americans report pursuing a mix of addition- and reduction-oriented dietary actions over the past year. Among the key messages from the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030*, the most common dietary guidance-related efforts Americans made were eating vegetables and fruits throughout the day (50%) and eating real food (49%). More than four in ten say they tried to limit added sugars (44%) and/or eat the right amount (43%).

More than one in three (36%) reported trying to limit highly processed foods in the past year. Smaller shares report trying to prioritize protein at every meal (28%) and/or limit alcoholic beverages (25%). About one in five tried to limit refined carbohydrates (22%), focus on whole grains (20%), consume dairy (20%), and/or incorporate healthy fats (18%).

These findings suggest that Americans' dietary efforts over the past year spanned multiple dimensions, including adjusting food quantity as well as decreasing certain nutrients and increasing intake of recommended food groups.

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

A FOCUS ON DIETARY GUIDANCE & PROCESSED FOOD

Among Americans who made a dietary guidance-related effort in the past twelve months, consuming dairy was the easiest to do consistently.

The ease of maintaining a new dietary habit varies substantially depending on the action or behavior attempted. Among Americans who made an effort to consume dairy in the past year, 87% say doing so consistently was easy, making it the highest-rated behavior on ease. This was followed by more than three in four who said it was easy for them to focus on whole grains (80%), eat vegetables and fruits throughout the day (79%), eat real food (79%), prioritize protein at every meal (78%), and incorporate healthy fats (76%).

Other actions or behaviors were less often described as easy to consistently maintain. Around six in ten say it was easy for them to eat the right amount (66%), limit highly processed foods (62%), limit added sugars (60%), and limit refined carbohydrates (58%). The pattern suggests that inclusive dietary actions may be easier to sustain than those requiring restriction.

Among Americans who made a dietary guidance-related effort in the past twelve months, eating fruits and vegetables throughout the day was most often reported to have the greatest impact on their health.

When asked which dietary guidance-related effort taken in the past year had the greatest perceived impact on their health, Americans most often say eating vegetables and fruits throughout the day (19%). Eating the right amount and eating real food followed closely, each cited by 16%, while 13% say limiting added sugars had the greatest impact.

Fewer than one in ten reported limiting highly processed foods (9%), limiting alcoholic beverages (8%), prioritizing protein at every meal (8%), limiting refined carbohydrates (4%), consuming dairy (2%), focusing on whole grains (2%), or incorporating healthy fats (2%) had the greatest impact on their health.

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

A FOCUS ON DIETARY GUIDANCE & PROCESSED FOOD

"Fresh" retakes the top spot in how Americans define a healthy food, while "Low in sugar" falls out of the top three for the first time.

Since 2022, the *IFIC Food & Health Survey* has asked Americans to select the top five criteria (out of a list of 20) they use to define a healthy food. Results from this year's survey point to an evolving view. For the fourth time in the last five years, freshness leads the list of criteria Americans associate with healthfulness, while "Low in sugar" no longer appears among the top three.

Compared with 2025, Americans are more likely to connect healthfulness with "Natural" (+4%), "Fresh" (+3%), and/or "Produced in a way that is environmentally sustainable" (+1%). At the same time, fewer Americans cite several nutrient-specific attributes, including "Good source of protein" (-5%), "Low in sugar" (-5%), "Low sodium" (-4%), "Low carbohydrate" (-3%), and/or "Low in saturated fat" (-2%).

These results suggest that nutrient content remains part of how Americans assess a food's healthfulness, but it is not the only lens.

Americans increasingly consider ingredients and processing as criteria for defining a healthy food.

Since 2022, the most notable shifts in the criteria Americans use to define a healthy food are related to ingredients and processing. "Limited or no artificial ingredients or preservatives" (up ten spots and +10%), "Limited number of ingredients" (up three spots and +7%), and "Minimal or no processing" (up three spots and +6%) are the three largest changes over this period.

This shift suggests that Americans are increasingly incorporating ingredient simplicity and degree of processing into their interpretation of what makes a food healthy. This does not mean traditional nutrition criteria have become irrelevant. Rather, the findings indicate that Americans' definition is expanding beyond nutrient content alone.

A FOCUS ON DIETARY GUIDANCE & PROCESSED FOOD

More than half of Americans are familiar with the term “ultraprocessed food,” an 8-point jump from 2025 and a 20-point jump from 2024.

Recognition of the term “ultraprocessed food” has grown substantially over the past two years. In 2026, 52% of Americans say they are familiar with the term, compared with 33% who say they are not familiar and 15% who are not sure.

Familiarity is up 8 percentage points from 2025 (44% to 52%) and 20 points from 2024 (32% to 52%), indicating a significant increases in public awareness in each of the last two years. At the same time, uncertainty has been largely unchanged: 15% are not sure in 2026, compared with 16% in both 2024 and 2025. This combination of rising familiarity and stable uncertainty suggests that the term is becoming more common among Americans.

Among Americans who are familiar with the term “ultraprocessed food,” at least half would look to the ingredients list and/or the Nutrition Facts label to decide whether a food is ultraprocessed.

For Americans familiar with the term “ultraprocessed food,” most say they would look to information that is currently on food packaging when trying to apply the term. At least half say they would use the ingredients list (56%) and/or the Nutrition Facts label (51%) to determine whether a food is ultraprocessed.

At the same time, the 2026 results show growing interest in using other resources to know if a food is ultraprocessed. Compared with 2025, larger shares say they would ask an AI assistant (23%, up 5 points), rely on their own judgment (23%, up 12 points), or ask a friend or family member (11%, up 3 points).

These findings suggest that Americans are open to using a wide range of tools to evaluate processing level, blending existing label information with personal interpretation, social input, and emerging technologies.

A FOCUS ON DIETARY GUIDANCE & PROCESSED FOOD

Nearly three in four Americans consider whether food is processed before buying it, down from 2025.

The prevalence of processing as a food purchasing factor remains high among Americans. Overall, 73% say they take processing into account before buying food, a significant drop from 80% in 2025.

Responses vary when it comes to how the consideration of processing affects consumption. While 13% say they always avoid processed foods, 41% say they sometimes do, indicating that processing is a consideration for many Americans yet not necessarily an exclusion criterion. The other 19% who consider whether a food is processed prior to purchase say they do not avoid processed foods, suggesting that recognition of processing does not always translate into avoidance.

About one in four Americans (24%) say they do not consider processing when buying food, and 3% are unsure what qualifies as a processed food.

Taken together, the findings suggest that food processing is widely considered at the point of purchase, yet its influence on purchasing decisions and consumption is not uniform.

Americans are more likely to say packaged foods and processed foods can be part of a healthy diet than junk foods, highly processed foods, or ultraprocessed foods.

Americans distinguish between different food descriptors when assessing whether a food can fit within a healthy diet.

“Packaged foods” receive the most favorable assessment: 20% say they definitely can fit and 52% say they probably can, while 18% say they probably cannot, and 6% say they definitely cannot.

Views are more mixed for “processed foods,” with 12% saying they definitely can fit and 37% saying they probably can, compared with 28% who say they probably cannot and 16% who say they definitely cannot.

Foods described as “junk,” “highly processed,” or “ultraprocessed” are viewed less favorably. For “junk foods,” 37% say they definitely (10%) or probably can (26%) fit, while 60% say they probably (28%) or definitely (32%) cannot. Similarly, 32% say “highly processed foods” definitely (9%) or probably (24%) can fit, compared with 59% who say they probably (30%) or definitely (29%) cannot.

“Ultraprocessed foods” receive the lowest acceptance and most uncertainty, with 30% saying they definitely (8%) or probably (21%) can fit, and 54% saying they probably (25%) or definitely (29%) cannot. Nearly two in ten (17%) are unsure whether “ultraprocessed foods” can fit within a healthy diet.

A FOCUS ON DIETARY GUIDANCE & PROCESSED FOOD

For the first time in the 21-year history of the *IFIC Food & Health Survey*, convenience surpasses healthfulness as a top purchase driver.

For 20 consecutive years (2006-2025), the rank order of factors that influence Americans' food and beverage purchasing decision-making has been taste, price, healthfulness, and convenience. Since being included in this list in 2011, sustainability (which was updated to environmental sustainability in 2019) has been consistently reported as the least influential.

In 2026, purchase decisions continue to be shaped most strongly by taste and price, and least by environmental sustainability. While nearly nine in ten (88%) Americans say taste has a high impact on what they buy and 78% say the same of price, just one in three (30%) are compelled by environmental sustainability.

A notable shift occurred below the two leading purchase drivers as convenience (61%) surpassed healthfulness (56%). This is the first time in the 21-year history of the *IFIC Food & Health Survey* that this order has changed.

The results reinforce the durability of taste and price as dominant considerations, while also showing that ease, time, and practicality have become especially salient.

Higher-income Americans place greater emphasis on taste and healthfulness and less on price and convenience.

Household income is associated with clear differences in the factors influencing Americans' food and beverage purchases. As household income rises, taste and healthfulness become significantly more influential, while price and convenience become less so.

Among households earning $100,000 or more, 93% say taste has a high impact on their purchases compared with 89% of those earning $50,000-99,999 and 87% earning less than $50,000. Healthfulness follows the same pattern, increasing from 50% among the lowest-income households to 58% among middle-income households and 64% among the highest-income households.

Price remains an important purchase driver across all income levels but declines from 80% among the lowest-income households to 79% among middle-income households and 73% among the highest-income households. Convenience follows a similar pattern (63%, 62%, and 57% respectively). As a result, healthfulness surpasses convenience only among households earning $100,000 or more, reversing the overall pattern.

Environmental sustainability stands out as the factor least associated with income, with similar shares of highest- and lowest-income households citing a high impact (32% vs. 31%).

KEY FINDINGS

A Focus On Dietary Guidance & Processed Food

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

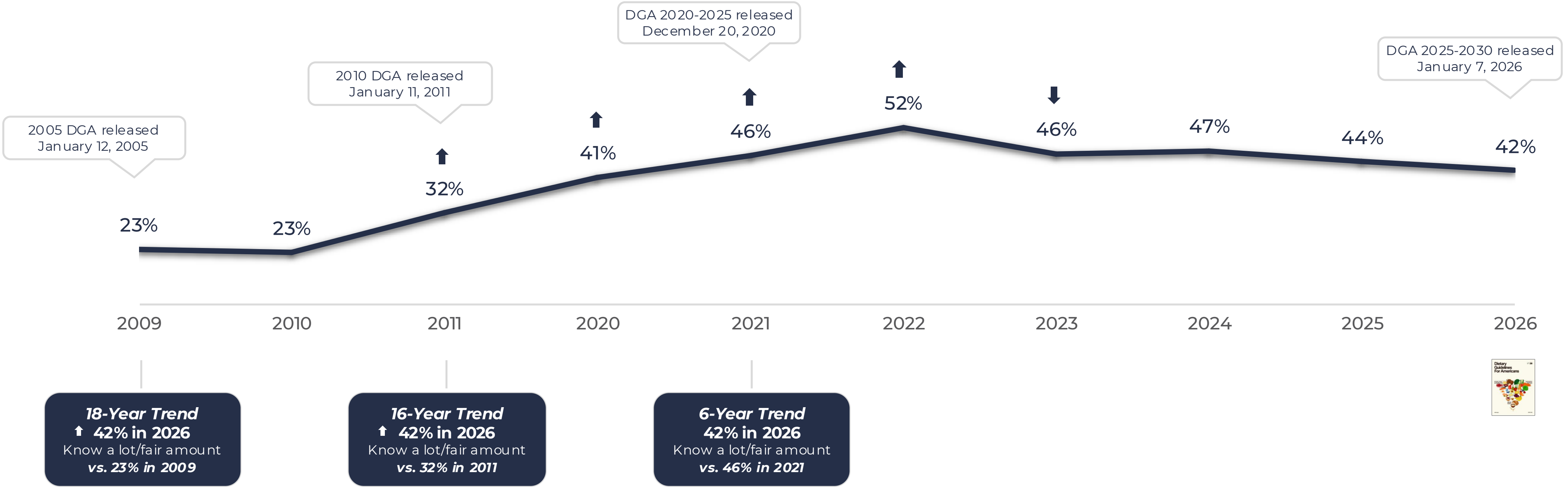
2026

More than four in ten Americans say they know at least a fair amount about the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

At 42%, familiarity with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* remains above 2011 levels (32%) but below 2021 (46%).
The 2011, 2021, and 2026 *IFIC Food & Health Surveys* were each fielded within four months of a new Dietary Guidelines release.

Knowledge Of The *Dietary Guidelines For Americans*

Americans who report knowing a lot/fair amount

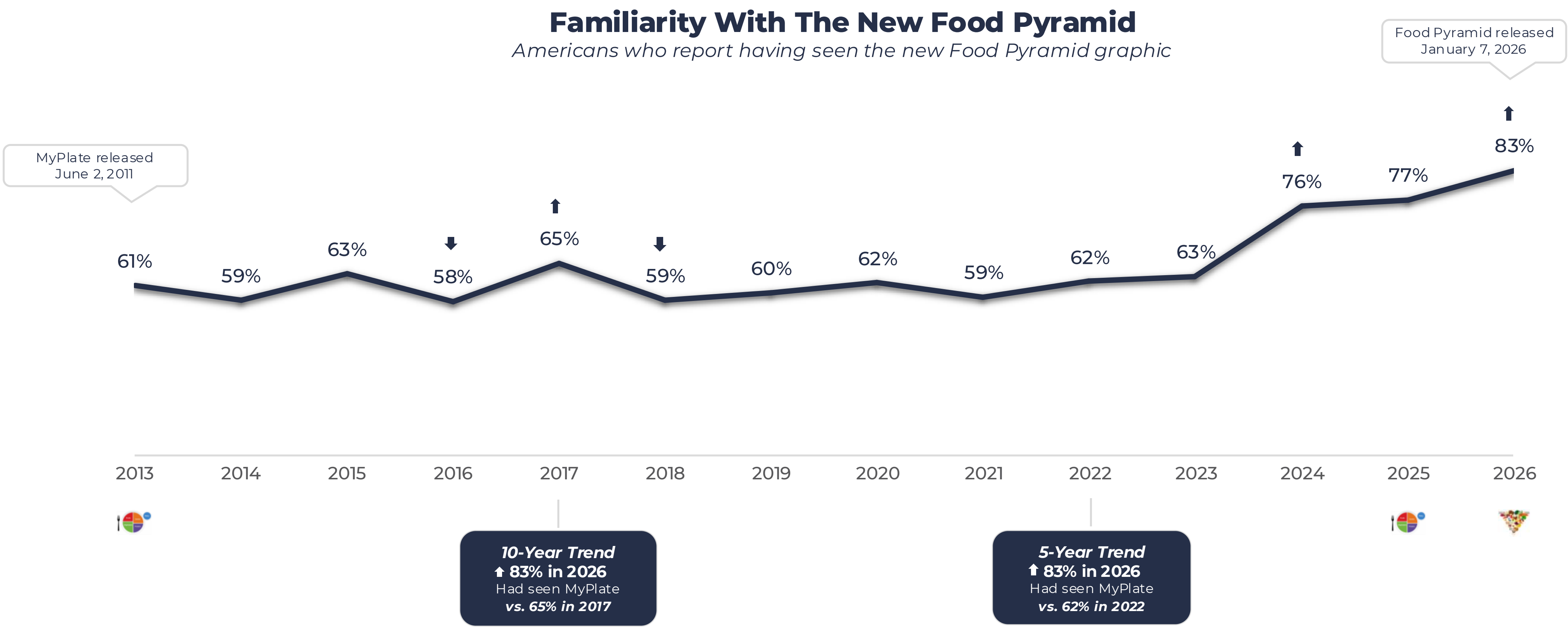


IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2009-20011/2020-2026] *Which of the following best describes your familiarity with the "Dietary Guidelines for Americans" (US government-approved food and nutrition guidelines)? (n=3005)*
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. the previous year (chart) or year noted (callout box).

Within three months of its debut, more than eight in ten Americans report having seen the new Food Pyramid.

Awareness of the new Food Pyramid reached 83% in 2026, exceeding reported awareness of MyPlate in 2024 (76%) and 2025 (77%).



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

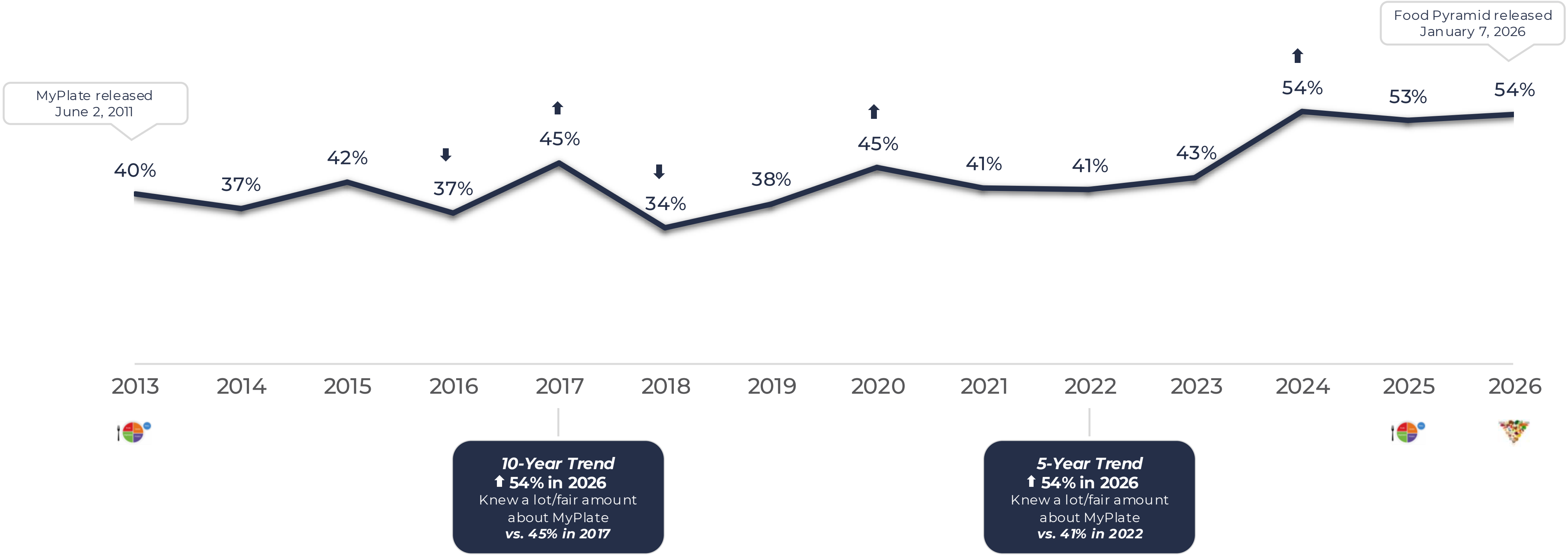
[TREND 2013-2025; NEW 2026] How familiar are you, if at all, with the following graphic? (n=3005) [Food Pyramid graphic shown in 2026]
Note: Results from 2013–2025 reflect MyPlate; 2026 reflects the new Food Pyramid. Five- and 10-year comparisons are between the two graphics.
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. the previous year (chart) or year noted (callout box).
Note: The 2026 IFIC Food & Health Survey was fielded March 22-April 8, 2026.

Self-reported knowledge of the new Food Pyramid is comparable to MyPlate in 2024 and 2025.

Three months after its debut, 54% of Americans report knowing a lot (15%) or a fair amount (39%) about the new Food Pyramid, similar to reported knowledge of MyPlate in 2024 (54%) and 2025 (53%).

Knowledge Of The New Food Pyramid

Americans who report knowing a lot/fair amount about the new Food Pyramid



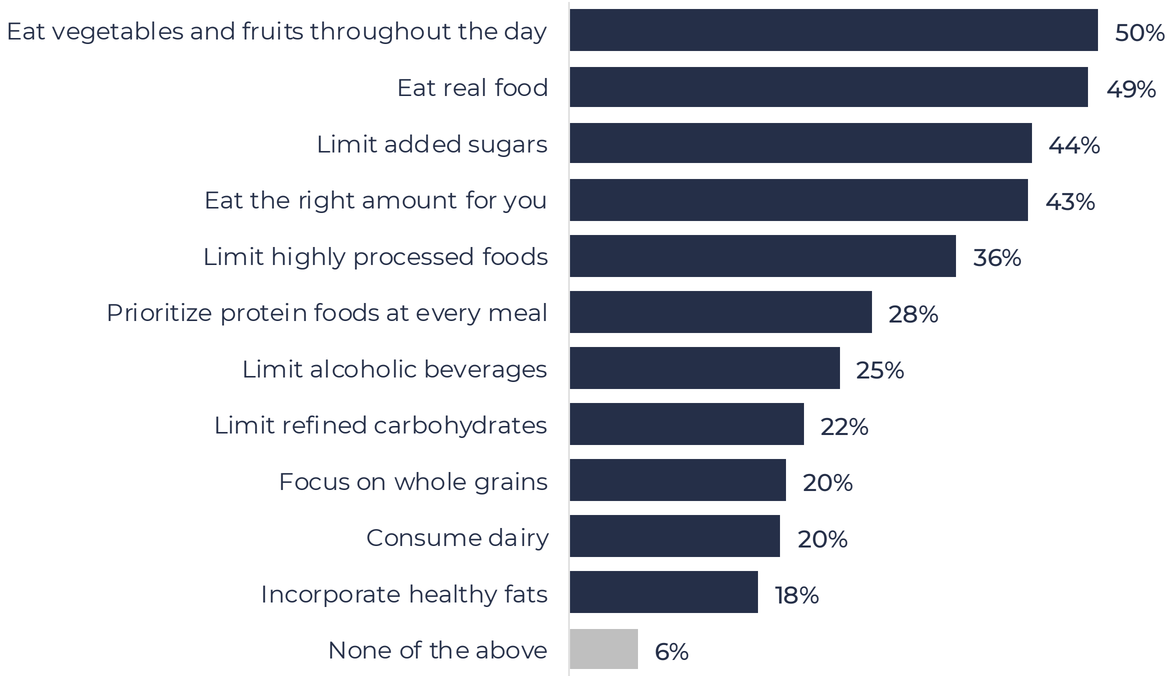
IFIC
FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

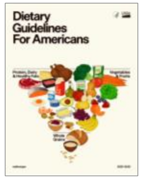
*[**TREND 2013-2025; NEW 2026**] How familiar are you, if at all, with the following graphic? (n=3005) [Food Pyramid graphic shown in 2026]*
Note: New Food Pyramid debuted on January 7, 2026. The 2026 IFIC Food & Health Survey was conducted March 22-April 8, 2026.
Note: 2013-2025 results are for MyPlate, 2026 is for the new Food Pyramid. Five and 10-year trend comparisons are made between the new Food Pyramid and MyPlate.
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. the previous year.

With respect to key dietary guidance messages, half of Americans say they made an effort to eat vegetables and fruits throughout the day and eat real food in the past twelve months.

More than four in ten say they tried to limit added sugars (44%) and/or eat the right amount (43%) in the past twelve months. About one in three say they tried to limit highly processed foods (36%), while one in four tried to prioritize protein at every meal (28%) and/or limit alcoholic beverages (25%). About two in ten tried to limit refined carbohydrates (22%), focus on whole grains (20%), consume dairy (20%), and/or incorporate healthy fats (18%).

Dietary Guidance Efforts Made By Americans In The Past 12 Months





IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

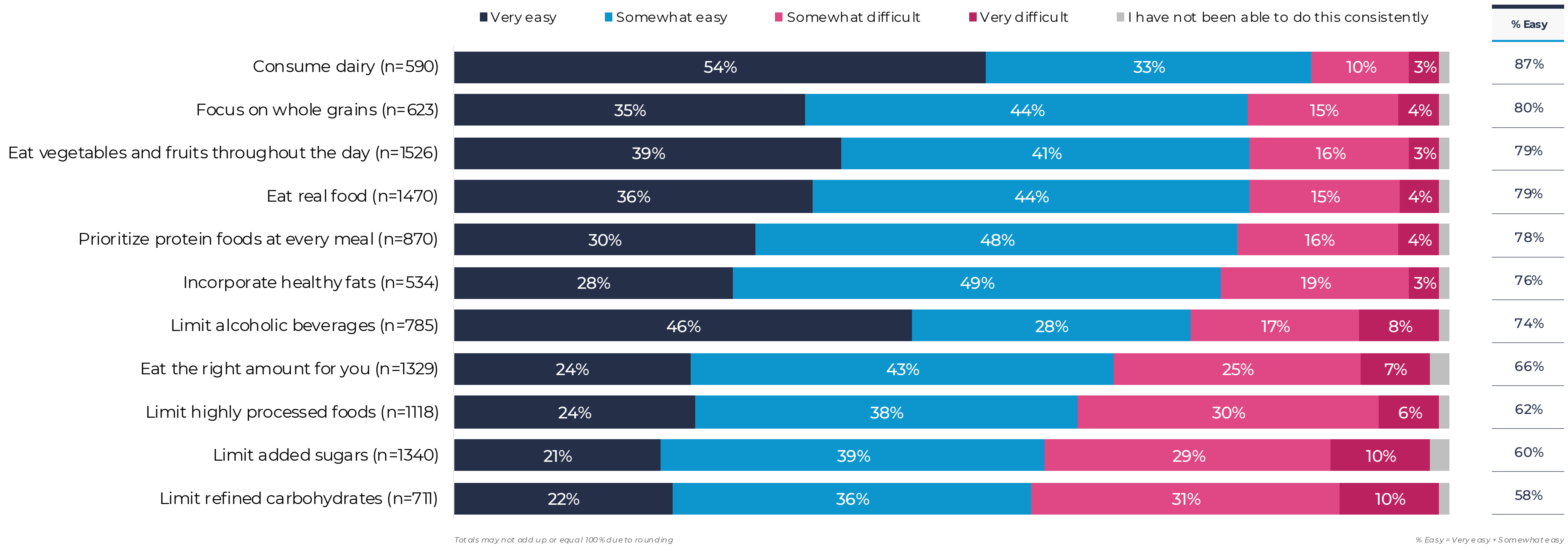
[NEW 2026] Over the past 12 months, which of the following, if any, have you made an effort to do? Select all that apply. (n=3005)
Note: U.S. respondents selected from the key messages reproduced verbatim from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030.

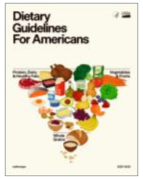
Among Americans who made a dietary guidance-related effort in the past twelve months, consuming dairy was the easiest to maintain.

While consuming dairy was reported as the easiest dietary guidance-related effort to do consistently, limiting refined carbohydrates, added sugars, and highly processed foods, as well as eating the right amount were the most difficult.

Ease Of Maintaining Dietary Guidance Efforts By Americans

Among those who made the effort in the past 12 months





IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[NEW 2026] Of the actions you made an effort to do in the past 12 months, how easy or difficult has it been to do each consistently?
(FILTER: Made an effort to do in the past 12 months)
Note: U.S. respondents selected from the key messages reproduced verbatim from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030.
Note: Sample sizes are provided for each reported dietary effort made in the past 12 months.

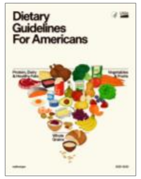
Among Americans who made a dietary guidance-related effort in the past twelve months, eating fruits and vegetables throughout the day was most often reported to have the greatest impact on their health.

Nearly two in ten (19%) say eating fruits and vegetables throughout the day had the greatest impact on their health, while slightly fewer cite eating the right amount (16%), eating real food (16%), and limiting added sugars (13%).

Dietary Action With Greatest Impact Overall Health

Among Americans who made the effort in the past 12 months

Totals may not add up or equal 100% due to rounding



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

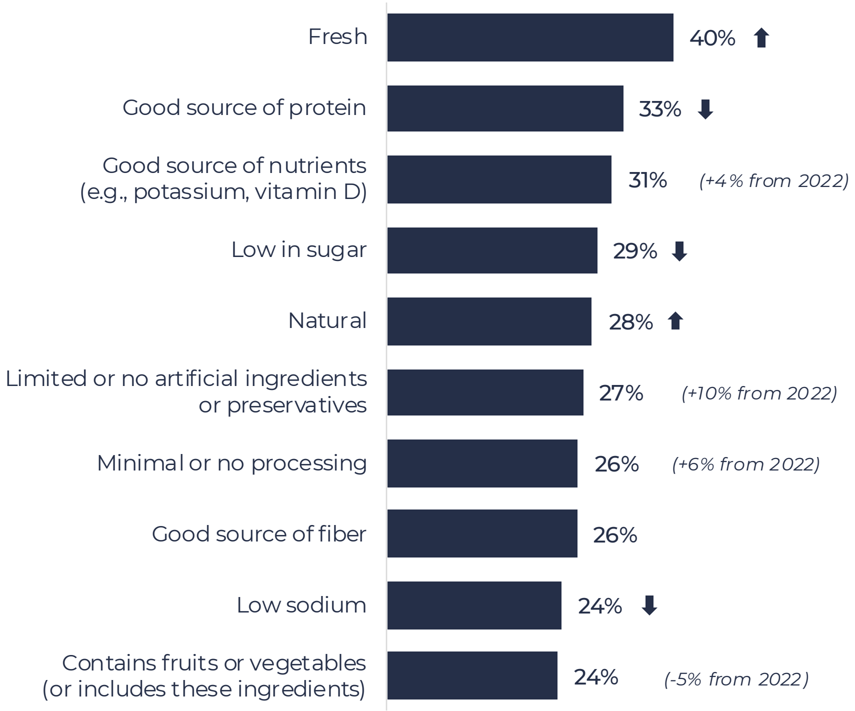
[NEW 2026] *Of the actions you made an effort to do in the past 12 months, which one do you believe has had the greatest impact on your overall health? Select one.*
(n=2812; FILTER: Made an effort to do in past 12 months)
Note: U.S. respondents selected from the key messages reproduced verbatim from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030.

“Fresh” retakes the top spot in how Americans define a healthy food, while “Low in sugar” falls out of the top three for the first time.

Compared with 2025, more Americans use “Natural,” “Fresh,” and/or “Produced in a way that is environmentally sustainable” to define a healthy food. Fewer use “Good source of protein,” “Low in sugar,” “Low sodium,” “Low carbohydrate,” and/or “Low in saturated fat.” Ingredient- and processing-related considerations have risen the most since 2022.

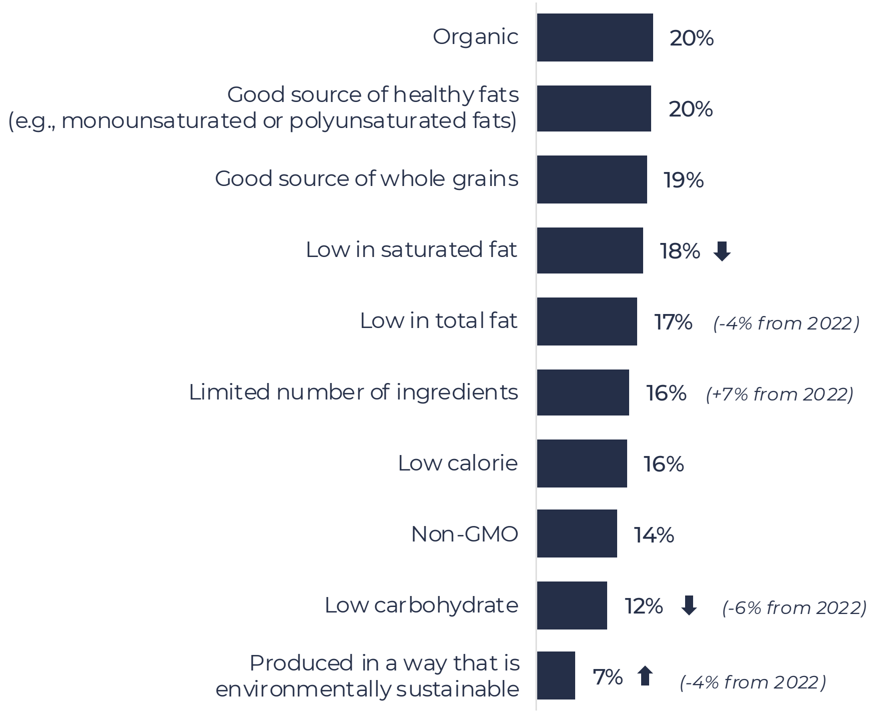
Criteria Americans Use To Define A Healthy Food

Top 10



Criteria Americans Use To Define A Healthy Food

Bottom 10



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

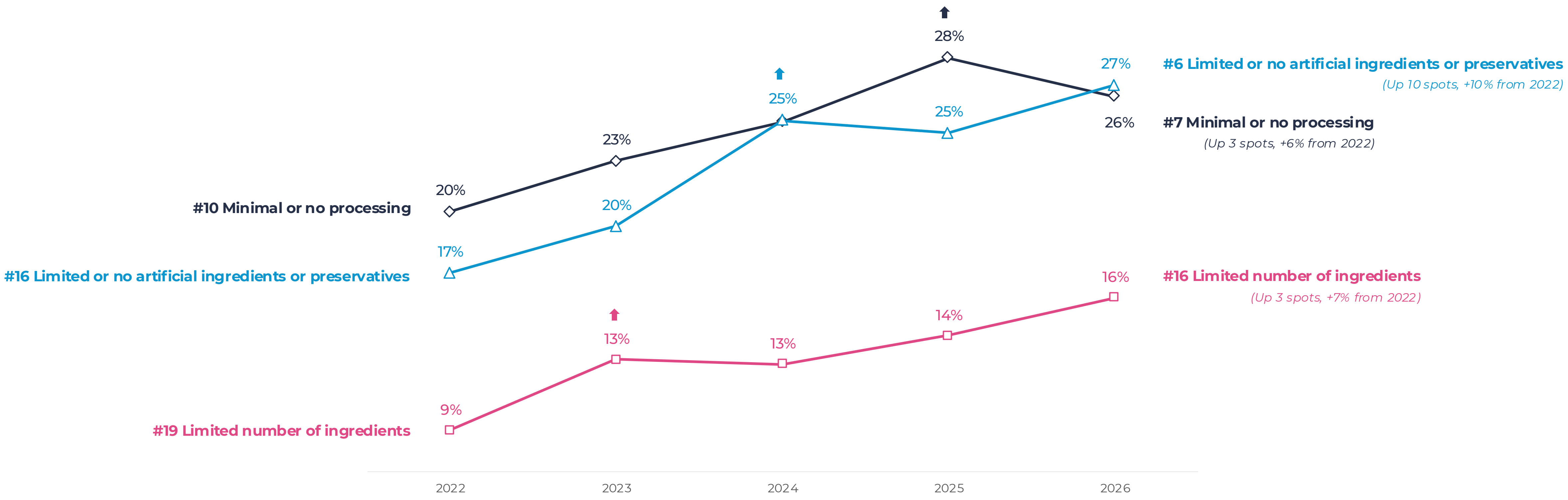
[TREND 2022-2026] Which of the following best define a healthy food to you? Please select up to 5 choices (n=3005)
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. 2025. Differences in parentheses indicate statistical significance vs. 2022.
Note: Respondents had 19 items to choose from in 2022 and 20 items in 2026. “Good source of whole grains” was added in 2023.
Note: “Other” (<0.5%) and “None of the above” (1%) are not shown.

Americans increasingly consider ingredient- and processing-related criteria for defining a healthy food.

Compared to 2022, the three biggest changes among criteria Americans use to define a healthy food are “Limited or no artificial ingredients or preservatives” (+10%), “Limited number of ingredients” (+7%), and “Minimal or no processing” (+6%).

Ingredient- & Processing-Related Criteria Used To Define A Healthy Food

Percent selecting as a top 5 criteria to define a healthy food



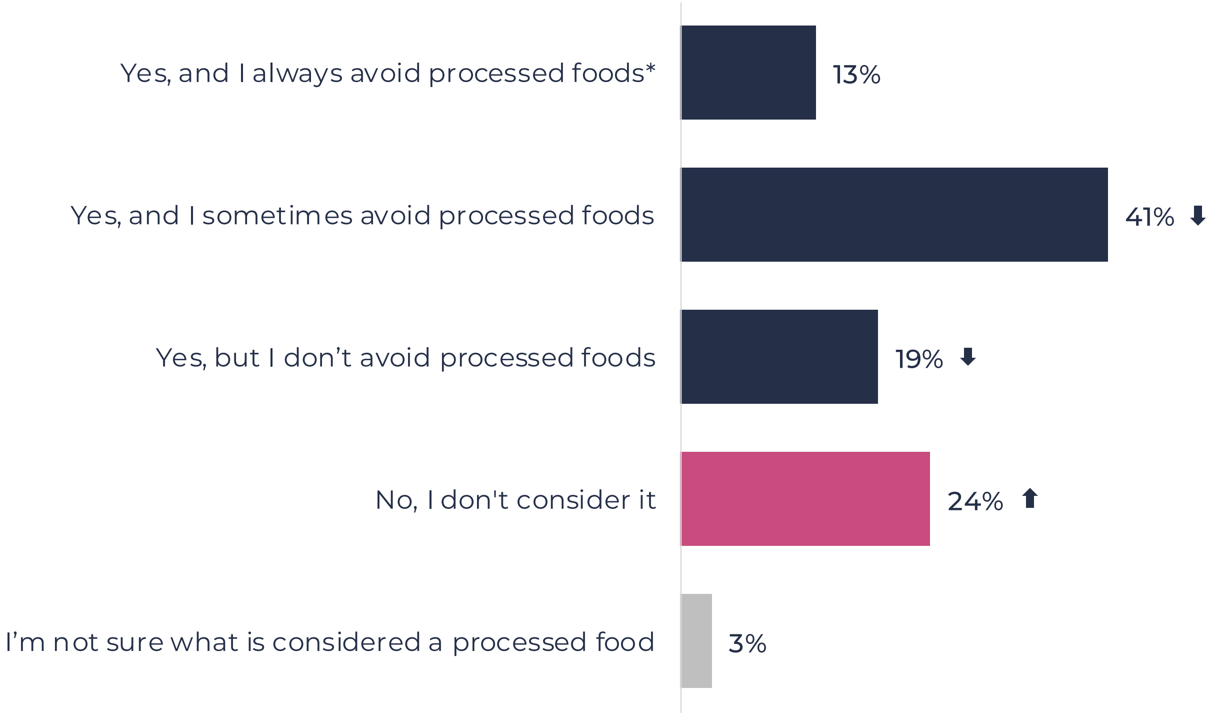
IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2022-2026] Which of the following best define a healthy food to you? Please select up to 5 choices (n=3005)
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. the previous year. Differences in parentheses indicate statistical significance vs. 2022.
Note: # indicates each item’s rank among 19 items in 2022 and 20 items in 2026, based on the share of respondents who selected each item.

Nearly three in four Americans consider whether food is processed before buying it, down from 2025.

In 2026, 73% say processing factors into their food purchase decisions, down from 80% in 2025. More than four in ten (43%) either consider processing but do not avoid processed foods (19%) or do not consider processing when buying food (24%), while just 3% are unsure what qualifies as processed.

Considers Whether Food Is Processed Prior To Purchase



73%
Consider the processed status of food before purchasing it
80% in 2025
79% in 2024
76% in 2023

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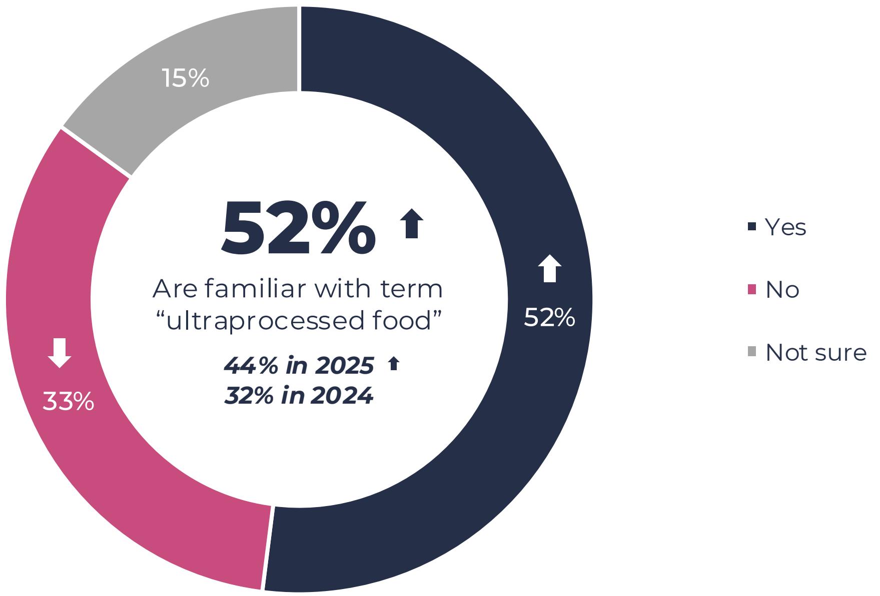
[TREND 2023-2026] *When shopping for foods and beverages, do you consider whether the food is processed before purchasing that product? (n=3005)*
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. 2025.
**Edited in 2025 to include "always"*

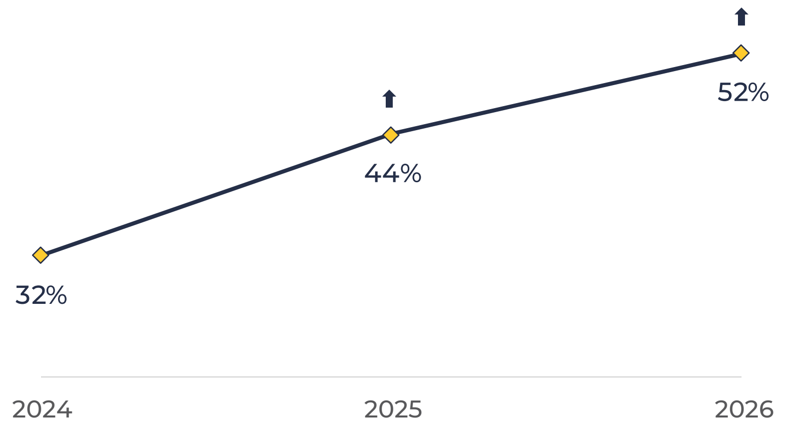
More than half of Americans are familiar with the term "ultraprocessed food," an 8-point jump from 2025 and a 20-point jump from 2024.

Familiarity with the term "ultraprocessed food" continues to rise, with 52% of Americans reporting familiarity compared with 33% reporting unfamiliarity. Meanwhile, uncertainty remains steady, with 15% saying they are not sure (16% in 2024 and 2025).

Familiarity With The Term "Ultraprocessed Food"



3-Year Trend



[TREND 2024-2026] Are you familiar with the term "ultraprocessed food"? (n=3005)
Note: Arrows in the chart indicate statistical significance vs. previous year.

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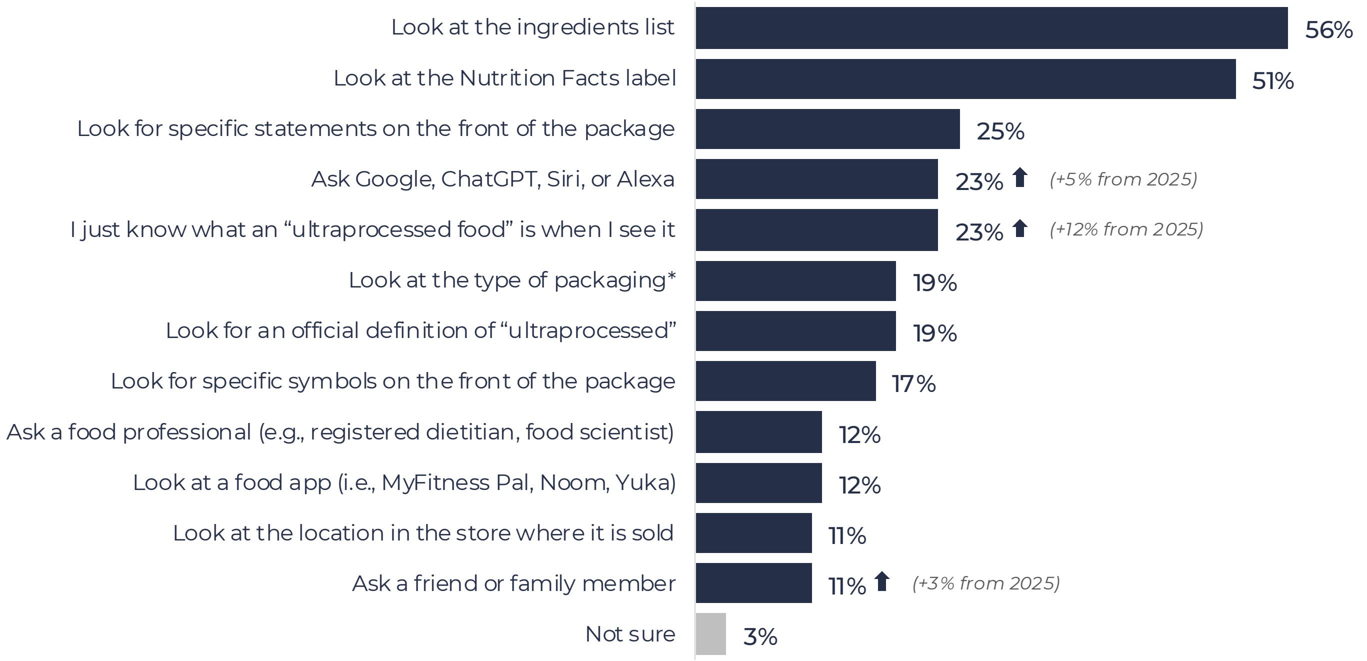
Among Americans who are familiar with the term "ultraprocessed food," at least half would look to the ingredients list and/or the Nutrition Facts label to decide whether a food is ultraprocessed.

Compared with 2025, more Americans say they would use an AI assistant (23%), use their own judgement (23%), or consult a friend or family member (11%) to determine whether a food is ultraprocessed.

Approaches To Identifying Ultraprocessed Food

Of those familiar with the term "ultraprocessed food"



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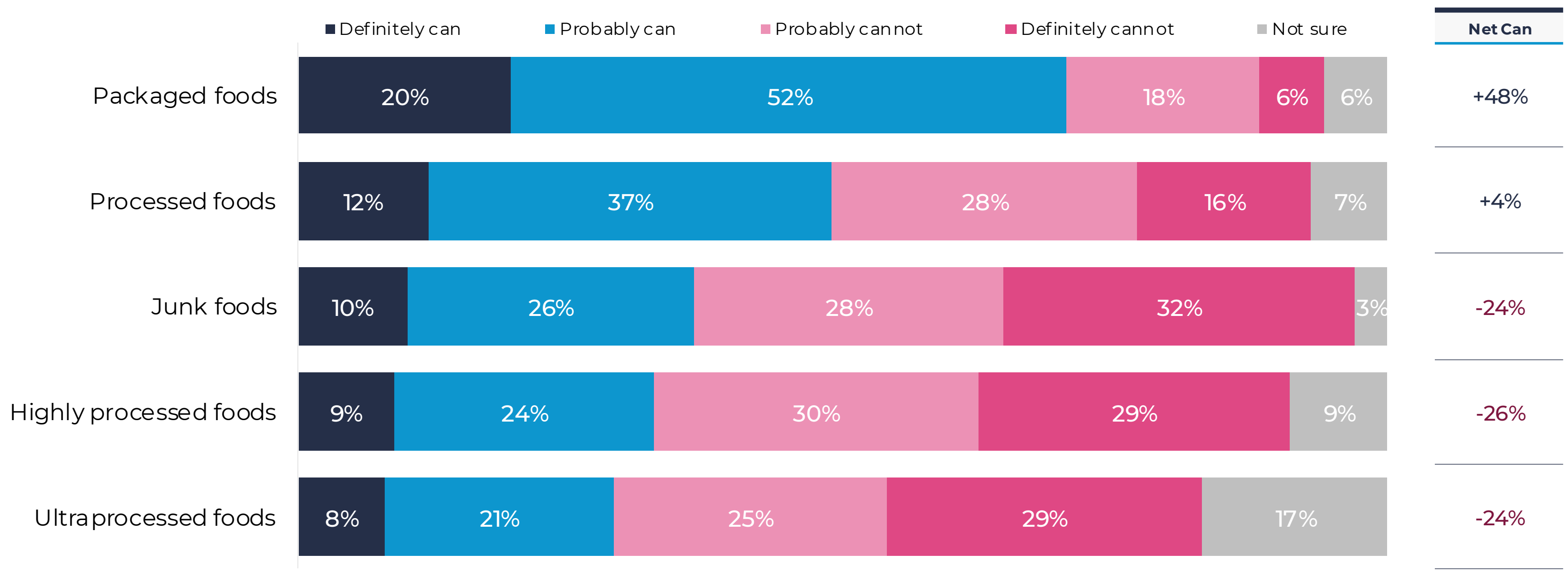
[TREND 2025-2026] How would you decide whether a food is "ultraprocessed"? Select all that apply. (n=1573; FILTER: familiar with the term "ultraprocessed food")
Note: Arrows and parenthesis indicate statistically significant changes vs. 2025.
**New item 2026*

Americans are more likely to say packaged foods and processed foods can be part of a healthy diet than junk foods, highly processed foods, or ultraprocessed foods.

More than seven in ten Americans (71%) say packaged foods can be part of a healthy diet, and half (49%) say the same of processed foods. Fewer say junk foods (36%), highly processed foods (33%), and ultraprocessed foods (29%) can fit.

Can The Following Foods Be Part Of A Healthy Diet?



Totals may not add up or equal 100% due to rounding

Net Can = (Definitely Can + Probably Can) – (Definitely Cannot + Probably Cannot)

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

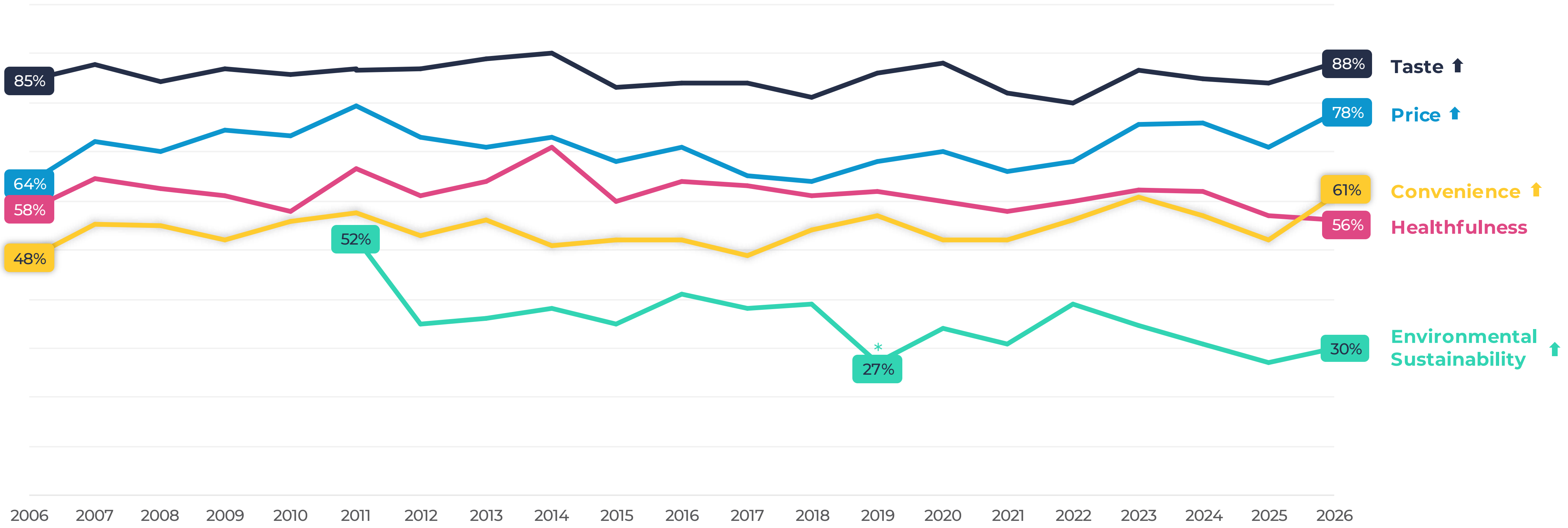
[NEW 2026] *In your opinion, can foods in the following categories be part of a healthy diet, at least occasionally? (n=3005)*

For the first time in the 21-year history of the *IFIC Food & Health Survey*, convenience surpasses healthfulness as a top purchase driver.

Taste (88%) and price (78%) continue to have the greatest impact on food and beverage purchase decisions in 2026, while convenience ranks ahead of healthfulness (61% vs. 56%) and environmental sustainability remains the least influential (30%).

Food & Beverage Purchase Drivers Over Time

Americans reporting an impact of 4 or 5 on a 5-pt scale

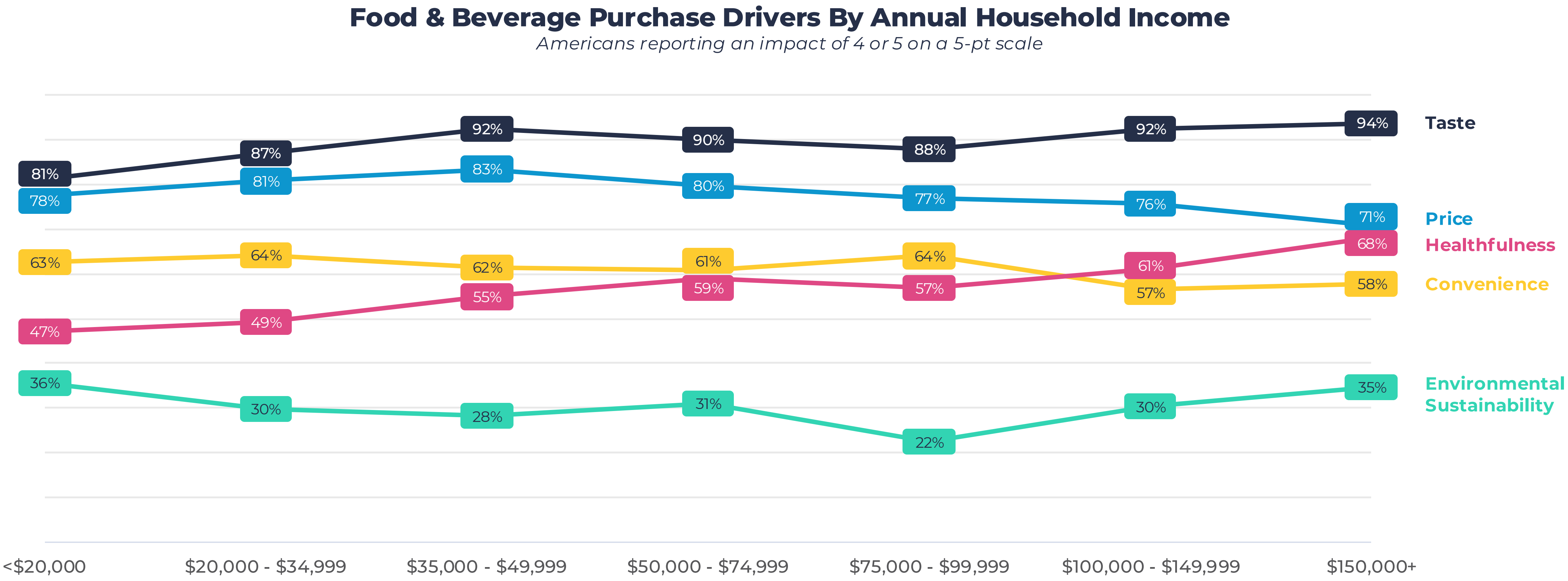


IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2006-2026] How much of an impact do the following have on your decision to buy foods and beverages? (n=3005)
Note: Responses were rated on a 1-5 scale, where 1 = "No impact" and 5 = "A great impact"
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. 2025
**In 2019, "Sustainability" was changed to "Environmental Sustainability"*

Higher-income Americans place greater emphasis on taste and healthfulness and less on price and convenience.

The influence of taste and healthfulness increases as household income rises, while price and convenience become less influential. Among households earning $100,000 or more, healthfulness surpasses convenience, unlike the overall population.



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

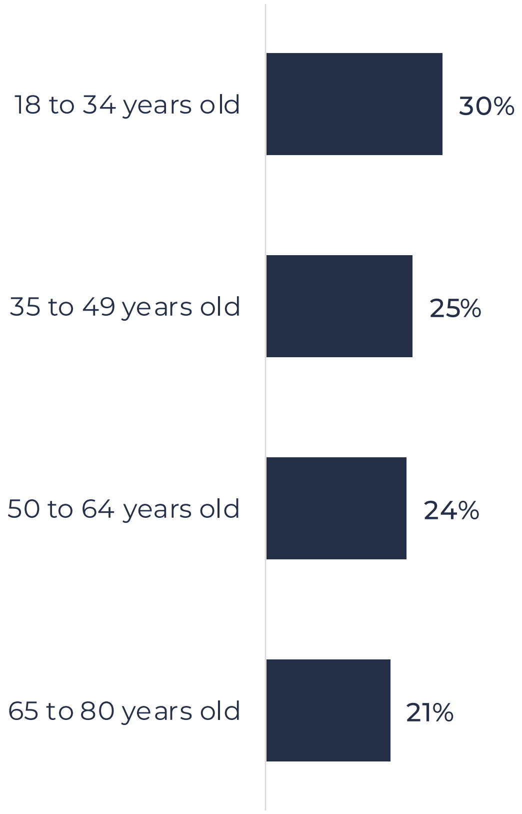
[TREND 2006-2026] How much of an impact do the following have on your decision to buy foods and beverages? (n=3005)
Note: Responses were rated on a 1-5 scale, where 1 = "No impact" and 5 = "A great impact"

DEMOGRAPHICS

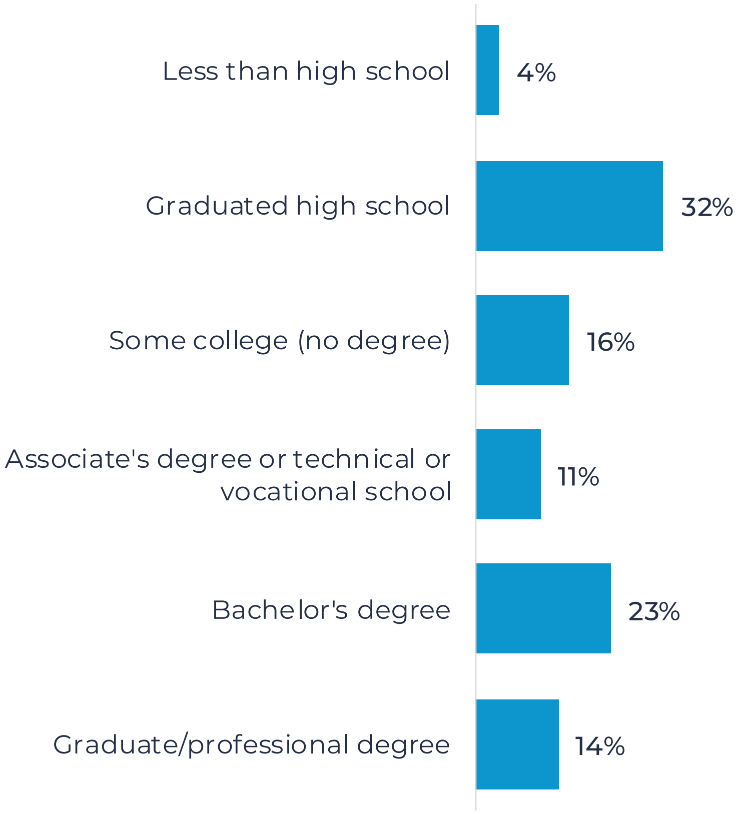
IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE



EDUCATION

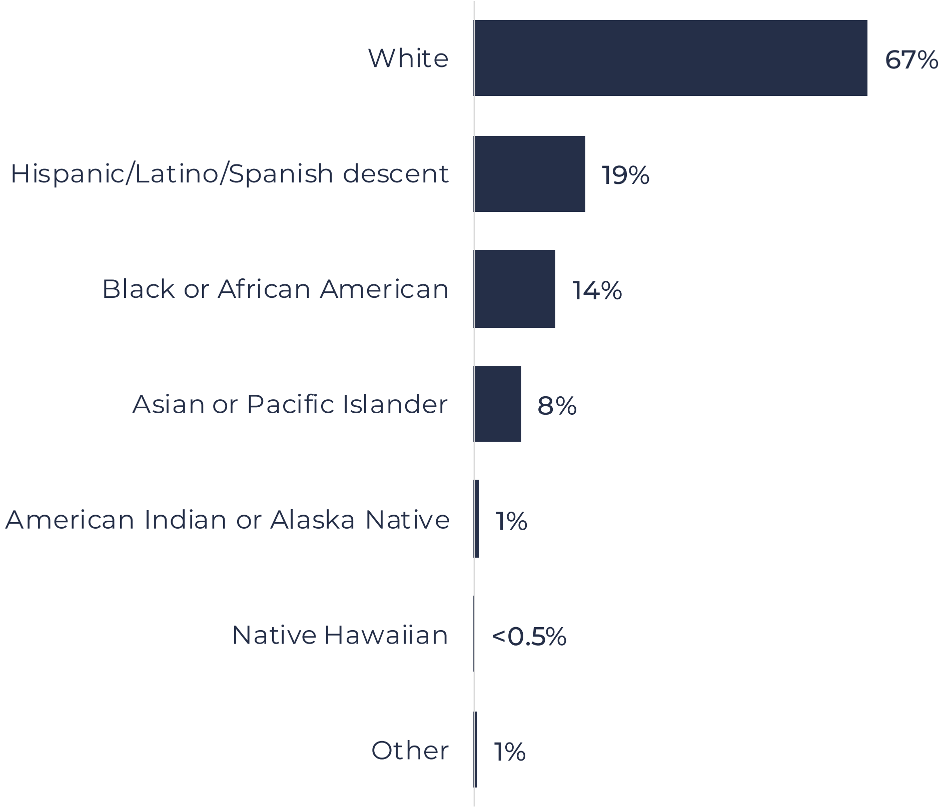


IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

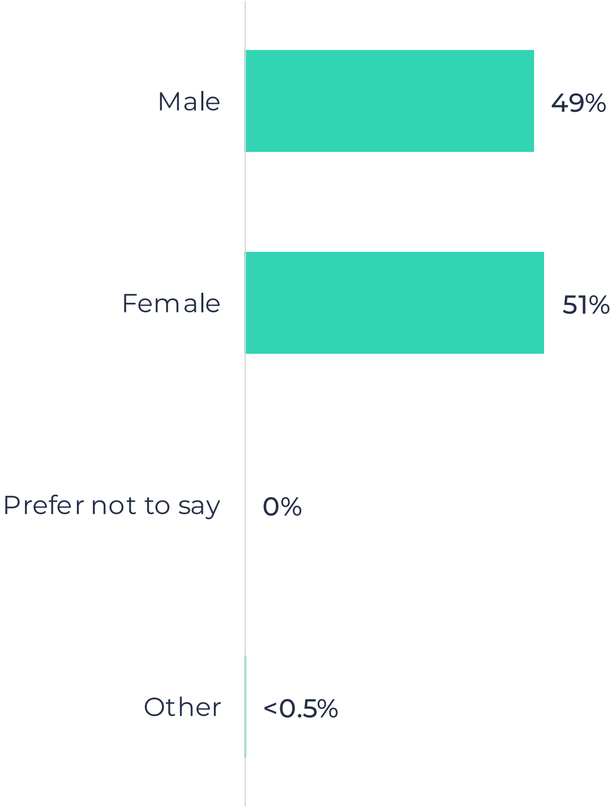
S1 What is your age? (n=3005)
S2 What is the highest level of education you have completed? (n=3005)

DEMOGRAPHICS

RACE/ETHNICITY



GENDER

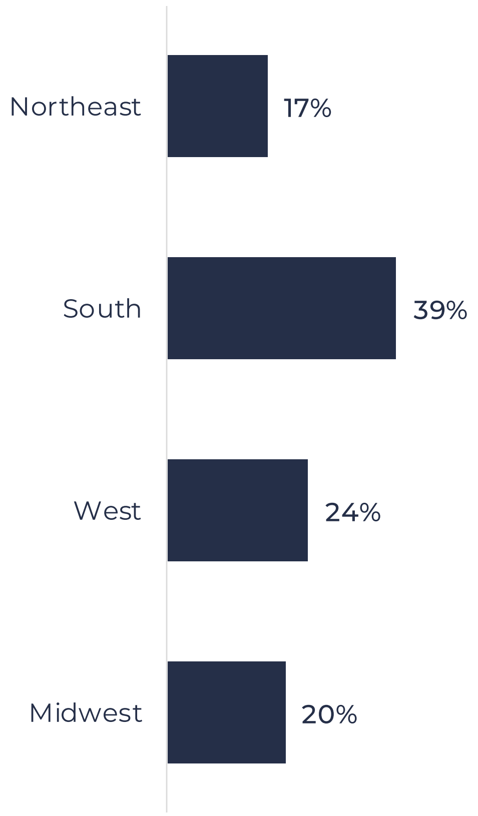


IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

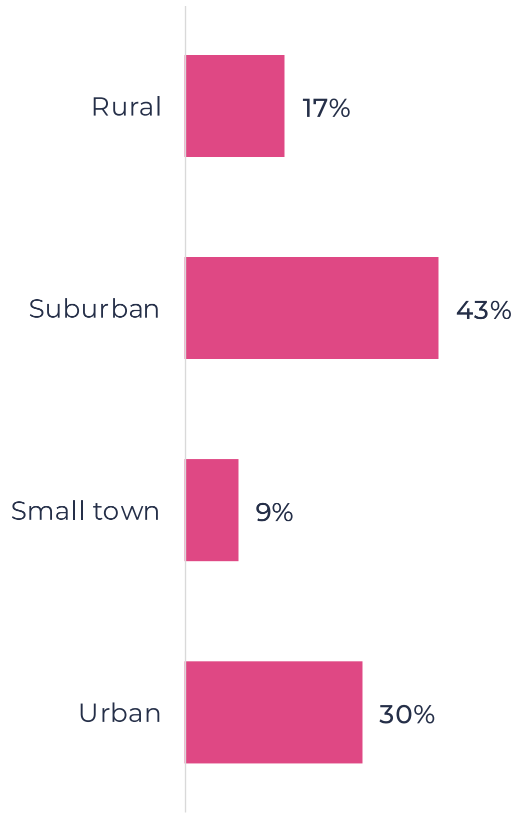
S3 Which of the following best describe(s) your race or ethnicity? (Select all that apply) (n=3005)
S4 What is your gender? (n=3005)

DEMOGRAPHICS

REGION



COMMUNITY

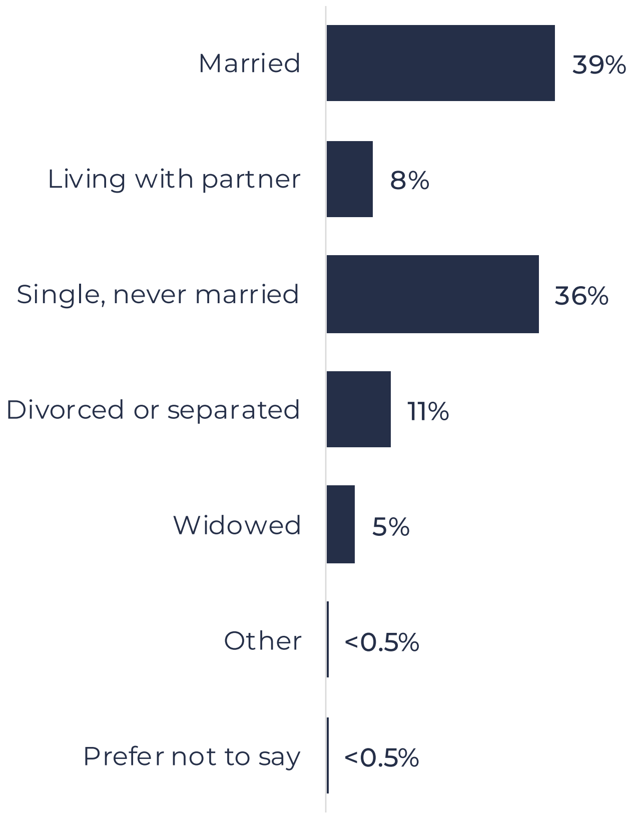


IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

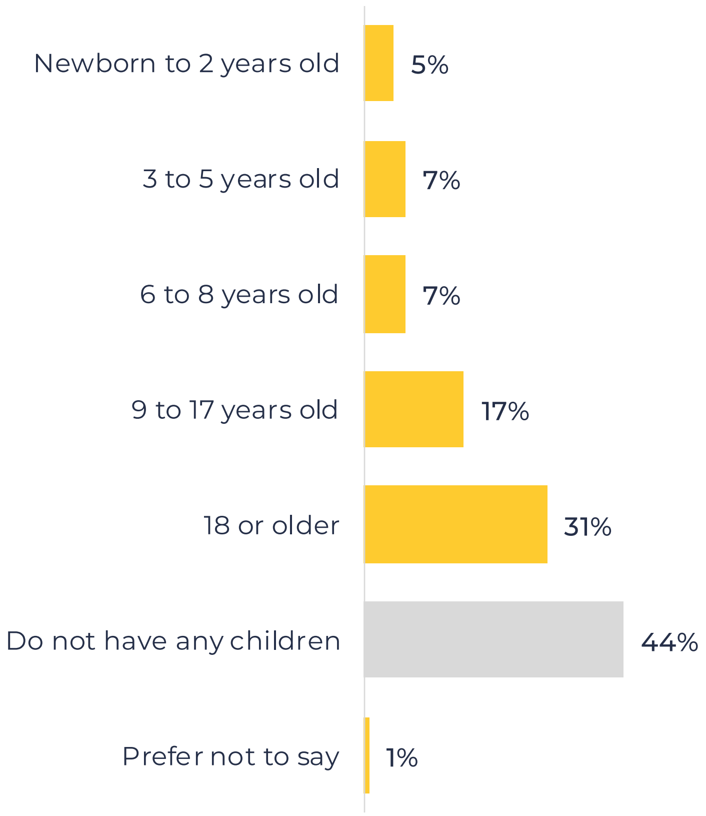
S5 In which state do you currently live? (n=3005)
S8 Which of the following best describes the area in which you live? (n=3005)

DEMOGRAPHICS

MARITAL STATUS



CHILDREN

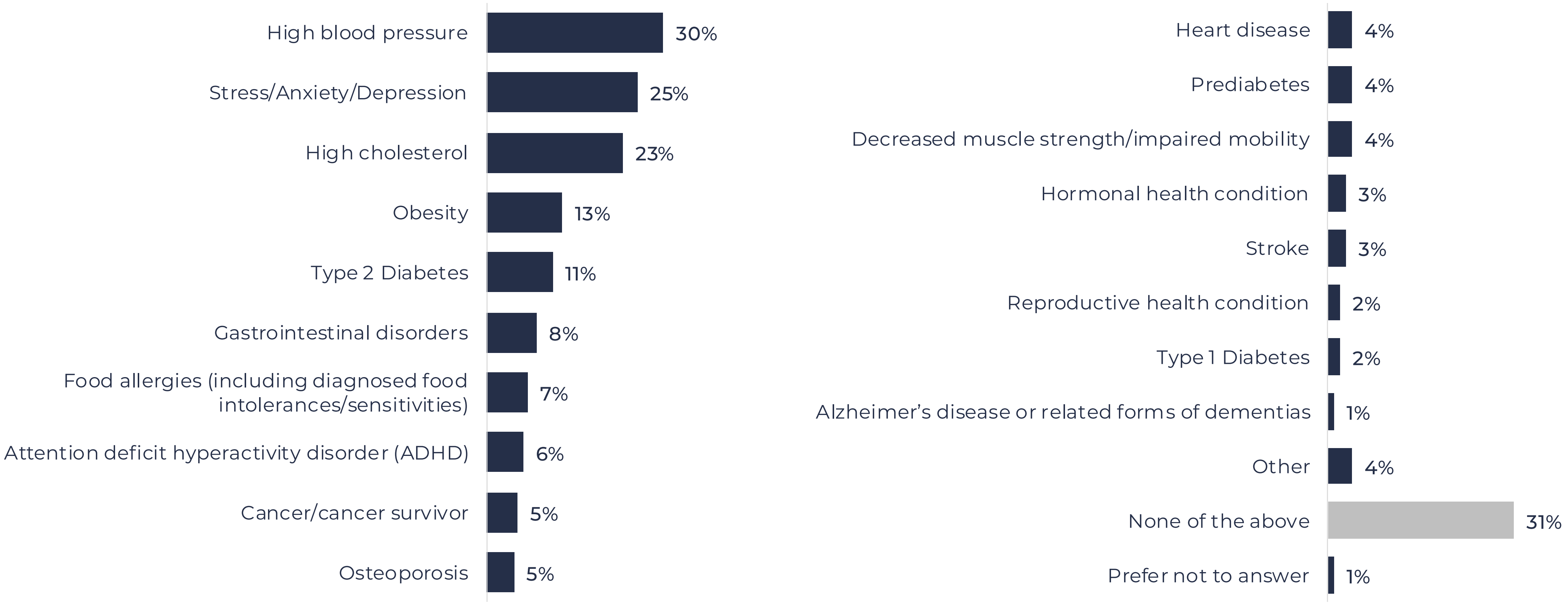


IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

S6 What is your marital status? (n=3005)
S7 Do you have any children between the ages of...? (Select all that apply.) (n=3005)

DEMOGRAPHICS

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

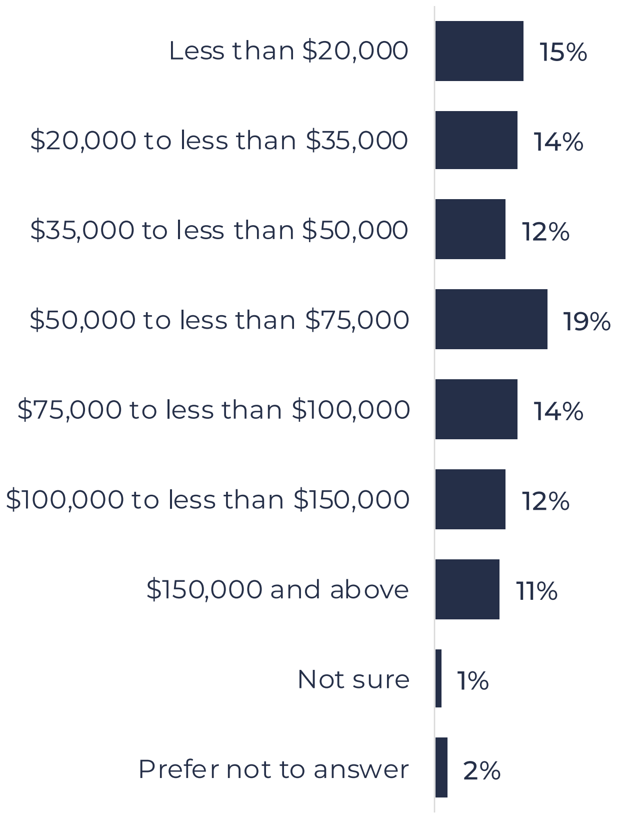


IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

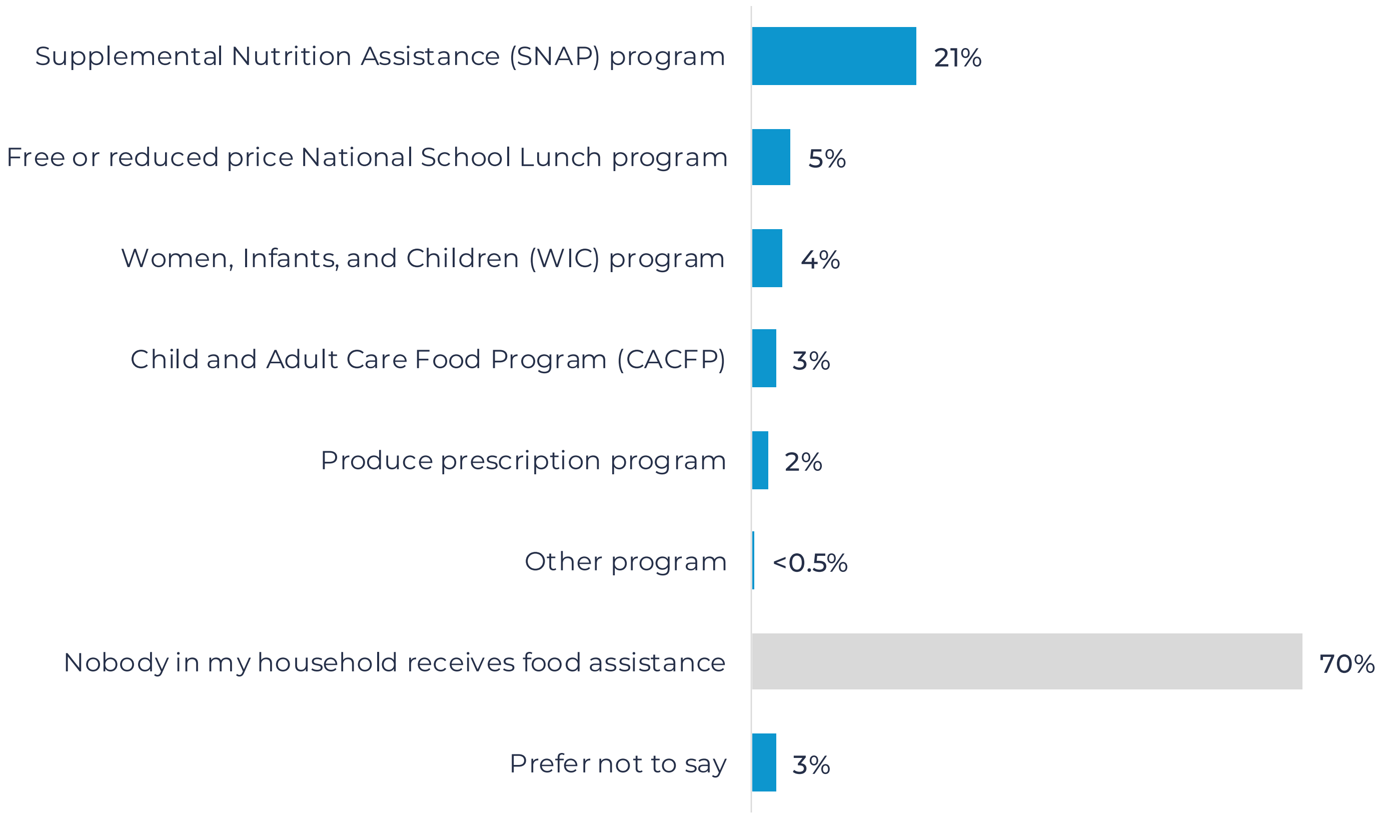
D5 Which of the following medical conditions, if any, have you been diagnosed with having? (Select all that apply.) (n=3005)

DEMOGRAPHICS

HOUSEHOLD INCOME



GOVERNMENT FOOD ASSISTANCE



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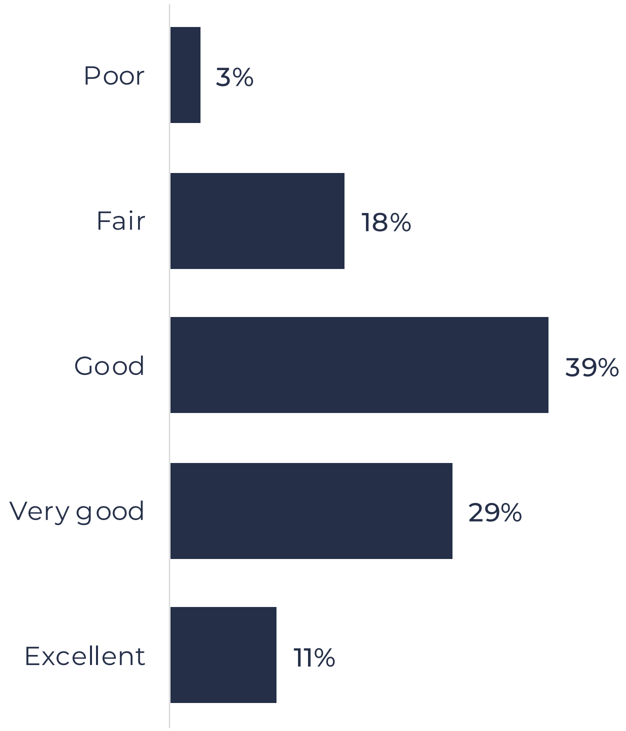
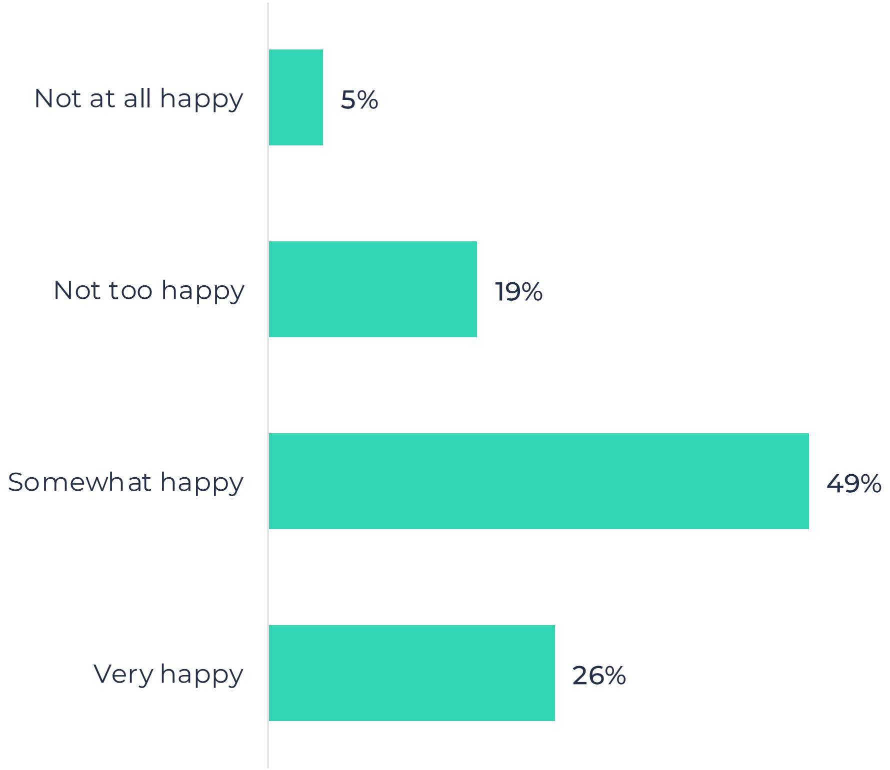
D7 How much is your total annual household income? (n=3005)
D8 Does anyone in your household receive food assistance through any of the following government programs? (n=3005)

DEMOGRAPHICS

HEALTH STATUS



HAPPINESS

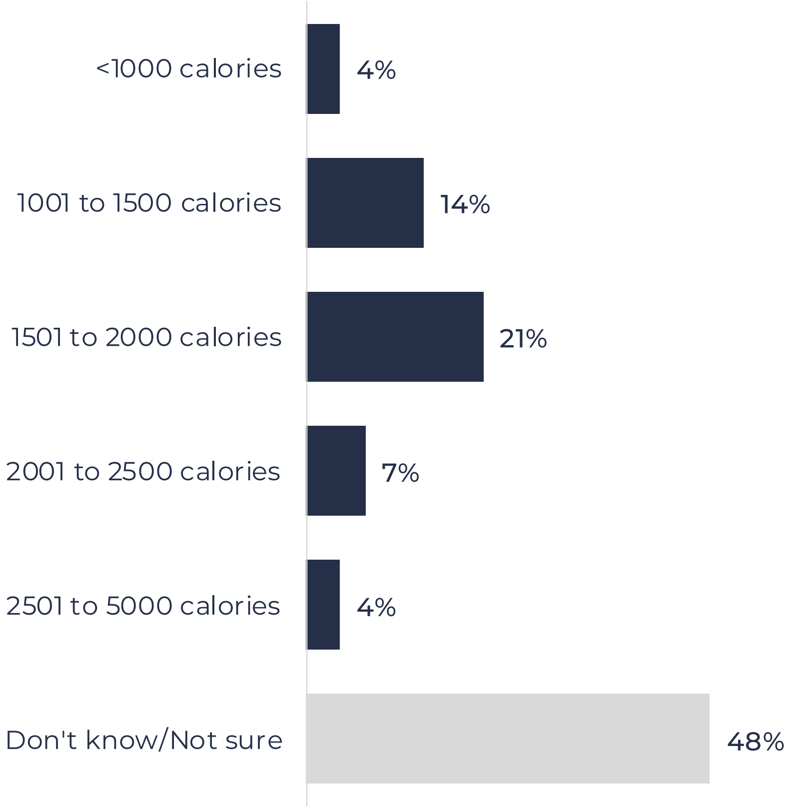


IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

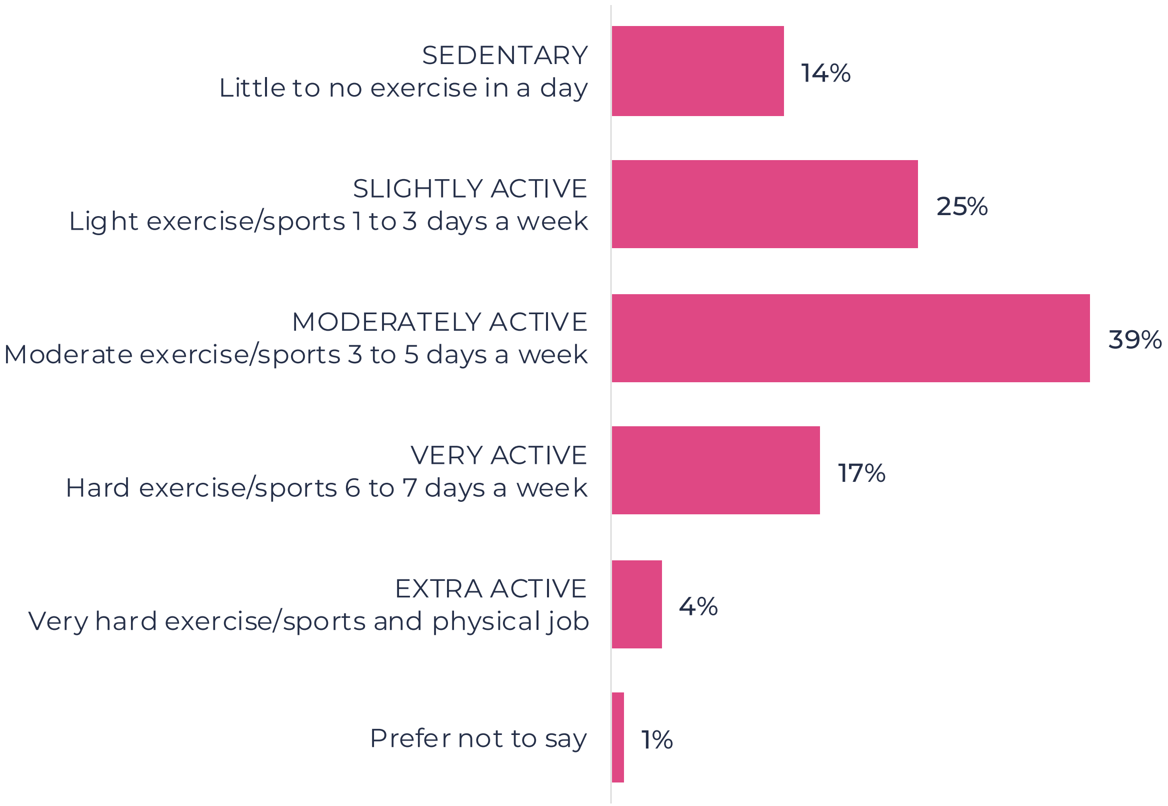
G1 How would you describe your own health, in general? (n=3005)
Note: Question G1 is modeled after a question in the CDC Behavioral Risk Surveillance System (BRFSS) Survey. Compare to 2024 CDC data here.
D1 How happy have you been in the past six months? (n=3005)

DEMOGRAPHICS

ESTIMATED DAILY CALORIE NEEDS FOR WEIGHT MAINTENANCE



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVEL



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

G6 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? (n=2796)
D11 How would you describe your level of physical activity? (n=3005)

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