IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

20

A Focus On ***Food & Nutrition***

26

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

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.

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IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY OVERVIEW

- 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:
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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*.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Focus On Food & Nutrition

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

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Self-reported health is at an all-time low.

Since the inaugural *IFIC Food & Health Survey* in 2006, Americans have self-reported their current health status through a question modeled after one found in the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey. The current trend in the *IFIC Food & Health Survey* goes back to 2012 when the question was revised to more closely match the BRFSS survey question.

In 2026, four in ten Americans (40%) describe their health as excellent (11%) or very good (29%), the lowest combined share recorded since 2012. Conversely, 21% describe their health as fair (18%) or poor (18%) compared with 2025 when just 15% described their health as fair (13%) or poor (2%).

This represents an eight-point decline from 2025 (49%) and continues a *Survey*-long downward movement since the first two years of the current trend, when 60% rated their health as excellent (18%) or very good (42%) in 2012 and 62% (19% excellent, 43% very good) did so in 2013.

The combined share rating their health as excellent or very good remained above 50% from 2012-2022 before falling to 49% in 2023, 47% in 2024, 49% in 2025, and 40% in 2026. Both components also reached their lowest levels since 2012 this year, with 11% describing their health as excellent and 29% as very good.

Americans rate their diets as less healthy in 2026 than in previous years.

In three of the 21 *IFIC Food & Health Surveys* (2020, 2025, and 2026), Americans have rated the healthfulness of their overall diets.

In the *2020 IFIC Food & Health Survey*, the average diet rating was 59.0 out of 100, a score that closely aligned with the Healthy Eating Index 2020 score. In the 2025 *Survey*, Americans rated their diets healthier than in 2020, as the average self-rating rose four points to 63.3. In the 2026 *Survey*, the average rating fell nearly seven points to 56.4. The median also declined from 75 in 2025 to 70 in 2026, matching 2020.

The shift is especially apparent at the lower end of the scale: one-third of Americans (33%) now rate their diet below 50, compared with 22% in 2025 and 27% in 2020. More also give their diet a single-digit rating (22% vs. 14% in 2025 and 16% in 2020). In contrast, the share rating their diet 90 or higher remains similar across years (18% in 2026 and 2025; 16% in 2020).

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Nearly two-thirds of Americans followed a specific eating pattern or diet in the past year, continuing an upward trend since 2018.

For the ninth consecutive year, the *IFIC Food & Health Survey* has asked Americans which specific eating patterns or diets they have attempted to follow in the past year.

In 2026, nearly two-thirds of Americans (64%) report following at least one specific eating pattern or diet in the past year, continuing an upward trend since 2018. High protein remains the most common dietary approach for a fourth consecutive year (27%), rising from 23% in 2025, 20% in 2025, 18% in 2023, and 4% in 2018.

After high protein, the leading eating patterns include low-sugar or sugar-free (22%), mindful eating (21%), clean eating (17%), calorie counting (16%), and intermittent fasting (15%). Mindful eating increased from 19% in 2025, while clean eating rose from 13%.

Overall, the findings point to continued interest in protein-focused eating alongside a diverse mix of approaches that shape Americans' reported dietary patterns.

Healthy aging is now the top health benefit Americans seek from their diet, while energy falls from the top spot after four years.

In 2026, healthy aging emerged as the top health benefit Americans seek from foods, beverages, or nutrients, replacing energy after four years in the top position. Energy declined four points from 40% in 2025 to 36% in 2026. Interest in heart/cardiovascular health (29%) and immune health (24%) also declined from last year, by three and four points, respectively.

The five-year trend shows growing interest in several other benefits. Compared with 2022, more Americans seek weight loss or management (+7 points), digestive/gut health (+6), muscle health/strength and endurance (+6), brain function (+5), and improved sleep (+4). Over the same period, the share seeking no health benefits declined five points to 12%.

Priorities differ by generation. Healthy aging leads among Baby Boomers (53%), while weight loss/weight maintenance ranks first among Gen X (43%) and Gen Z (35%). Among Millennials, energy is the top benefit sought (37%).

Together, the findings highlight an increasingly varied set of health priorities, with notable differences across generations.

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Six in ten Americans snack at least once a day.

Since 2019, the *IFIC Food & Health Survey* has tracked Americans' snacking habits. Daily snacking remains common, although it has declined for two consecutive years.

In 2026, 61% of Americans say they snack at least once a day, down from 70% in 2025 and 73% in 2024. About one-quarter snack once a day (27%) or twice a day (24%), while 10% snack three or more times daily.

At the same time, more Americans report snacking less frequently. More than one-quarter (28%) say they snack a few days a week, up from 22% in 2025, while 8% snack once a week or less, up from 6%. Only 2% say they never snack, a share that has remained consistent since 2023.

Together, the findings suggest Americans are not moving away from snacking yet are doing so less frequently than in recent years.

Nearly six in ten Americans replace traditional meals with snacks or smaller meals at least occasionally, down from 2025.

Over four survey years, Americans have been asked about replacing traditional meals with snacking or eating smaller meals. This emerging eating behavior was first measured in the *2020 IFIC Food & Health Survey*, then again in each survey since 2024.

In 2026, nearly six in ten Americans (58%) say they replace traditional meals with snacks or smaller meals at least occasionally, including 15% who do so regularly and 43% occasionally.

Meal replacement through snacking or smaller meals has become considerably more common over time, rising from 38% in 2020 to 56% in 2024 and 62% in 2025 before declining to 58% in 2026. Another 18% say they do not replace meals in this way yet sometimes skip meals entirely, while 22% rarely skip meals and 2% are not sure.

Although down from last year, replacing meals with snacks or smaller meals remains substantially more prevalent than in 2020.

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"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.

Protein leads nutrients Americans try to consume for a sixth straight year, while sodium leads those they limit or avoid for an eighth straight year.

Since 2019, the *IFIC Food & Health Survey* has asked Americans about nutrients they try to consume, limit, or avoid. Since 2024, they have been asked to report on twelve nutrients identified in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025* as dietary components of public health concern for under- and overconsumption across the lifespan.

Protein continues to set the pace, standing out as the nutrient Americans most actively seek. In 2026, 70% say they try to consume it, compared with just 7% who try to limit or avoid it, a net difference of +63 points. Fiber (62% try to consume; 8% try to limit/avoid) and vitamin D (61%; 7%) also skew strongly toward consumption.

When it comes to the nutrients Americans try to limit or avoid, sodium (12% try to consume; 46% try to limit/avoid) and saturated fat (10%; 40%) show the strongest skew toward restriction, at −34 and −30 points, respectively. Compared with 2025, more Americans now report trying to consume sodium (12% vs. 9%) and saturated fat (10% vs. 7%), while fewer report trying to limit or avoid them (46% vs. 52% and 40% vs. 45%).

Protein has ranked first for consumption for six consecutive years (2021-2026), while sodium has led limiting or avoidance for eight (2019-2026).

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Among Americans trying to consume protein, eggs and poultry are the top sources they actively include in their diets.

In the *2016 IFIC Food & Health Survey*, Americans who reported trying to consume protein were asked about the food sources they seek it from. In 2026, survey respondents were asked again after its exclusion from 2017-2025.

Among Americans trying to consume protein in 2026, eggs (73%) and poultry (70%) are the sources most often included to obtain protein. Beef and dairy foods follow at 61% each, alongside beans and legumes (60%), nuts and seeds (53%), seafood (49%), and dairy milk (46%). Other protein sources sought out include pork (37%), protein bars or fortified snacks (34%), protein powders or shakes (29%), processed meats (23%), plant-based milk alternatives (19%), plant-based meat alternatives (12%), and soy foods (11%).

Compared with 2016, fewer protein seekers include seafood (49% vs. 66%), nuts and seeds (53% vs. 68%), or poultry (70% vs. 76%), while more include beef (61% vs. 53%).

Among Americans limiting or avoiding saturated fat, processed meats and baked goods and desserts are most often restricted.

In the *2024 IFIC Food & Health Survey*, Americans who reported trying to limit or avoid saturated fat were asked to rank the top three foods they avoid to reduce saturated fat intake. In 2026, saturated fat avoiders were now asked to select all the food sources they avoid to reduce saturated fat in their diet.

In 2026, processed meats (56%) and baked goods and desserts (50%) are the foods most commonly restricted to reduce saturated fat intake. Cream or cream-based sauces follow (42%), along with whole milk (35%), butter (32%), full-fat dairy foods (30%), tropical oils (25%), beef (24%), pork (23%), and vegetable oils (21%). Smaller shares limit or avoid eggs (13%), seafood (10%), nuts and seeds (10%), beans and legumes (9%), or poultry (8%), while 8% select none of these.

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About half of Americans are concerned about the amount of sodium or saturated fat in their diet.

In three of the 21 *IFIC Food & Health Surveys* (2011, 2025, and 2026), Americans have reported their level of concern about the amount of sodium in their diet. In 2026, about half (49%) are extremely (13%) or somewhat (36%) concerned, statistically similar to 2025 (52%) and 2011 (53%).

Although overall sodium concern has remained stable, its intensity has shifted. Fewer Americans are extremely concerned than in 2011 (13% vs. 18%), while the share who are somewhat concerned declined from 40% in 2025 to 36% in 2026. Meanwhile, the share who are neither concerned nor unconcerned increased from 22% in 2025 to 26%.

For the first time in 2026, the *IFIC Food & Health Survey* also measured concern about saturated fat intake. Nearly half (46%) are extremely (10%) or somewhat (36%) concerned, while 29% are neither concerned nor unconcerned and 24% are not very (16%) or not at all concerned (8%).

Overall, Americans express similar levels of concern about sodium and saturated fat, with overall sodium concern remaining remarkably consistent over time.

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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 in the *IFIC Food & Health Survey* (2006-2025), the rank order of factors influencing Americans' food and beverage purchasing decisions was remarkably consistent: taste, price, healthfulness, and convenience. Since its inclusion in this list in 2011, sustainability (updated to environmental sustainability in 2019) has been 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 an 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%).

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More than half of Americans have noticed a major increase in the cost of food and beverages in the last year.

For the fifth straight *IFIC Food & Health Survey* Americans have been asked whether they have noticed a change in the cost of food and beverages. While most Americans continue to notice higher food and beverage costs, fewer describe the increase as major compared to recent years.

In 2026, 84% noticed some increase in costs over the past year, including 54% who noticed a major increase and 30% a minor increase. The share reporting a major increase has declined from 72% in 2023, 64% in 2024, and 62% in 2025, reaching its lowest level across the five years measured.

At the same time, the share reporting a minor increase rose to 30%, significantly higher than in every year from 2022 through 2025. Nine percent report no change, while only 5% noticed either a minor (3%) or major (2%) decrease.

Thus, perceptions of food and beverage cost appears to be shifting from major toward more modest increases, while reports of declining costs remain uncommon.

Less than half of Americans say food was affordable for their household in the past month, while three in ten say it was unaffordable.

For the first time in the *IFIC Food & Health Survey*, Americans were asked how affordable food had been for their household during the past month.

Overall, 46% say food was very (13%) or somewhat (33%) affordable, compared with 30% who describe it as somewhat (22%) or very (8%) unaffordable. Another 24% say food was neither affordable nor unaffordable.

Perceptions of affordability vary notably across groups. Americans with annual household incomes of $100,000 or more (57%) and $50,000–$99,999 (51%) are more likely than those earning less than $50,000 (36%) to describe food as affordable in the past month. Those willing to pay more for sustainably produced food are also more likely to describe it as affordable (55% vs. 41% who are not).

Reported affordability is also higher among those who rate the healthfulness of their diet at 90–100 (65%), rate their health as excellent (62%) or very good (57%), are confident in the safety of the U.S. food supply (55%), or are college graduates (54%).

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Online grocery shopping increased in 2026, while in-person grocery shopping remains steady.

In seven of the last eight *IFIC Food & Health Surveys* (2019–2023 and 2025–2026), Americans have been asked about their grocery shopping behaviors.

In 2026, 24% report buying groceries online at least once a week, up significantly from 18% in 2025 and nearly double the 13% reported in 2019. This increase reflects growth in shopping online multiple times a week (8% vs. 5% in 2025) and once a week (16% vs. 13%).

Buying groceries online several times a month also increased (15% vs. 12%), while the share who never do so fell from 42% to 34%, well below 61% in 2019 and 52% in 2020. Weekly online grocery shopping is now just below its 2022 peak (25%).

By comparison, in-person grocery shopping remains more common and relatively stable. More than two-thirds of Americans (69%) buy groceries in person at least weekly, unchanged from 2025 and matching 2019, after dipping to 63% during the early COVID-19 restrictions in April 2020.

Nearly eight in ten Americans cook at home multiple times a week. Eating out and ordering takeout are less common.

For the second consecutive year, the *2026 IFIC Food & Health Survey* asked Americans about their mealtime behaviors. Cooking at home remains by far the most common, with 87% doing so at least once a week, unchanged from 2025, including 79% who cook at home multiple times a week.

Eating out and ordering takeout are less common. Thirty-seven percent report going out to eat at least once a week, similar to 35% in 2025, although the share doing so multiple times a week increased from 10% to 14%.

Ordering takeout at least once a week increased from 30% in 2025 to 35% in 2026, alongside an increase in those doing so multiple times a week (12% vs. 9%).

Overall, cooking at home continues to dominate Americans' weekly mealtime behaviors, while takeout became more common in 2026, as did eating out multiple times a week.

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More than half of Americans say they use nutrition information at least sometimes when ordering food away from home.

With the prominence of eating away from home and ordering through food delivery services, for the first time the *IFIC Food & Health Survey* assessed the frequency with which Americans use nutrition information when eating away from home.

More than half of Americans (54%) say they use nutrition information at least sometimes when deciding what food to order away from home. More than one-quarter (27%) use information such as calories regularly, including 7% who always and 20% who often use it, while another 27% do so sometimes.

At the other end of the spectrum, nearly half say they rarely (22%) or never (24%) use nutrition information when ordering from restaurants, fast-food outlets, cafeterias, delivery apps, or other away-from-home sources.

The findings reveal a nearly even divide between Americans who incorporate nutrition information into away-from-home choices with some regularity and those for whom it plays little or no role.

Although trust in registered dietitians and healthcare professionals is down this year, they continue to be the most trusted sources for information about which foods to eat and avoid.

The *IFIC Food & Health Survey* has measured trust in food information sources about what foods to eat and avoid in six of the last 10 years.

In 2026, personal healthcare professionals and Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) remain the most trusted sources. More than two in three Americans (68%) have high trust in each, compared with about one in ten who have low trust (10% and 11%), producing the highest net trust scores (+58 and +57, respectively). National health organizations, such as the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and American Diabetes Association, follow (+46), along with wellness counselors or health coaches (+40) and scientific studies (+36).

By contrast, net trust is negative for social media influencers (−36), podcasters (−33), food companies (−19), AI tools (−18), and news sources (−5).

Compared with 2025, “a lot” of trust declined for personal healthcare professionals and RDNs (-4 points each), while increasing for chefs (+3), food companies (+2), podcasters (+2), and social media influencers (+2). Despite these shifts, health professionals remain clearly differentiated from media, commercial, and digital sources of food guidance.

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Half of Americans have come across food and nutrition content on social media in the past year, on par with 2025.

Since 2023, the *IFIC Food & Health Survey* has measured Americans' exposure to food and nutrition content on social media.

In 2026, just over half of Americans (52%) say they came across food or nutrition content on social media in the past year. Exposure remains significantly higher than in 2023 (42%) and is similar to 2024 (54%) and 2025 (50%).

About one-quarter (26%) say they did not encounter this type of content, down from 30% in 2025, 33% in 2023, and similar to 25% in 2024. Another 14% are not sure whether they encountered food and nutrition content, up from 11% in 2025, while 7% say they do not use social media.

Across the four years measured, exposure increased sharply between 2023 and 2024 and has remained around half of Americans since then.

Two in three Americans trust the food and nutrition information they encountered on social media in the past year.

Among Americans who encountered food and nutrition content on social media, nearly two-thirds (64%) say they trust it at least a little, including 15% who trust it a lot and 49% who trust it a little. Overall trust has remained relatively consistent, totaling 67% in 2023, 68% in 2024, and 65% in 2025. In 2026, 8% say they do not trust this content, while 27% say their trust depends on who posted it and 1% are not sure.

Trust varies notably across groups. Millennials (68%) and Gen Z (65%) are more likely than Baby Boomers (57%) to trust the food and nutrition content they encounter on social media, with Millennials also more likely than Gen X (59%). Trust is also higher among those who use Artificial Intelligence (AI) for food decisions at least weekly (75%) than among less-frequent users (66%) or non-users (49%). Similarly, those who rate their health as excellent are more likely to trust this content than those with lower self-rated health, with the largest gap between those reporting excellent and poor health (78% vs. 42%).

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Half of Americans who saw food and nutrition content on social media tried a new recipe, while four in ten tried a new type of food.

For the first time in 2026, the *IFIC Food & Health Survey* asked Americans who encountered food and nutrition content on social media what actions, if any, they took as a result, helping assess the potential for this content, and the trust placed in it, to influence behavior.

Nearly half say the content led them to try a new recipe (48%), while 39% tried a new type of food and 31% discussed the content with others. About three in ten changed how much of certain foods they consume (30%), reduced or avoided highly processed foods (29%), and/or reduced or avoided certain ingredients or additives (26%).

Other reported actions include looking for specific labels or certifications (22%), changing the types of foods purchased (21%), switching brands (19%), starting a new diet or eating pattern (14%), and posting or reposting related content (14%). Only 11% say the content did not lead them to take any of the actions measured.

Nearly three in ten Americans use Artificial Intelligence to help make food decisions at least weekly, while half say they never use it.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is quickly becoming part of everyday life, including food decision-making. Reflecting this shift, the *2026 IFIC Food & Health Survey* asked Americans for the first time about the frequency, purpose, and influence of AI on their food choices.

Overall, three in ten Americans (29%) use AI at least once a week to help decide what to eat, what groceries to buy, or where to eat. This includes 8% who use AI multiple times per day, 9% about once a day, and 13% about once a week. Half (50%) say they never use AI for food decisions.

Use varies sharply by generation. Millennials (44%) and Gen Z (40%) are more likely than Gen X (27%) and Baby Boomers (11%) to use AI at least once a week. Gen Z and Millennials are also more likely than Gen X and Baby Boomers to use AI about once a day (13% each vs. 8% and 3%) or about once a week (18% and 17% vs. 12% and 7%). Conversely, 72% of Baby Boomers never use AI for food decisions, compared with 50% of Gen X, 38% of Millennials, and 33% of Gen Z.

Weekly AI use is also higher among those taking prescription weight-loss medications (47% vs. 26%) and those willing to pay more for sustainably produced food (44% vs. 19%).

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Among Americans who use Artificial Intelligence for food decisions, recipes and cooking tips are the most common use.

Among the 50% of Americans who report using Artificial Intelligence (AI) for food-related decisions, finding recipes or cooking tips is the most common use (36%). About three in ten use AI to get nutrition or health information (31%), find the best prices or deals (30%), or plan meals (28%), while 26% use it to compare food products.

AI also plays a role in evaluating foods themselves: one in five users turn to it to determine whether a food is safe to eat (20%) or healthy to eat (20%), and 16% use it to assess how processed a food is.

These findings show that food-related AI use extends from practical planning and shopping to nutrition information and judgments about food characteristics.

Among Americans who use Artificial Intelligence for food decisions, seven in ten say it is at least moderately influential.

Among the 50% of Americans who report using Artificial Intelligence (AI) for food-related decisions, seven in ten (71%) say it has at least a moderate influence on their final decisions. More than four in ten (43%) say AI influences them a great deal (17%) or a fair amount (26%), while another 27% report a moderate amount of influence. By comparison, 22% say AI has only a little influence, 6% say none at all, and 1% are not sure.

Stronger influence varies notably across groups. Nearly two-thirds of those who rate their health as excellent (64%) say AI influences their final food decisions a great deal or a fair amount, compared with 49% reporting very good health, 37% good, 30% fair, and 33% poor health. The same level of influence is reported by 64% of those who rate their diet healthfulness at 90–100, higher than among those rating it in the single digits (40%) or from 10–49 (35%). Influence of AI is also higher among those taking prescription weight-loss medications (58% vs. 40%), college graduates (53% vs. 37%), and those willing to pay more for sustainably produced food (53% vs. 31%).

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Nearly eight in ten Americans say nutrition information seems to keep changing, making it hard to know what to believe.

In the *2012 IFIC Food & Health Survey*, Americans were asked about their agreement with the following statement: "Because nutrition information seems to keep changing, it's hard to know what to believe." Subsequent surveys in 2022, 2025, and 2026 also measured agreement to this statement.

In 2026, nearly eight in ten Americans (79%) strongly (28%) or somewhat (51%) agree, while 17% somewhat (13%) or strongly (4%) disagree, while 4% are not sure. Agreement is unchanged from 2025 (79%) and higher than the 71% recorded in 2022. Across all four survey years dating back to 2012, at least seven in ten Americans have agreed with the statement, underscoring the persistence of this perception over time.

The findings point to an enduring challenge in how Americans perceive the consistency and clarity of nutrition information, and the frequency with which it seems to change.

Nearly four in ten Americans say facts about food safety and nutrition would give them the most confidence in their food choices.

New to the *IFIC Food & Health Survey* in 2026 is an assessment of factors that would make Americans feel more confident about their food choices. Survey respondents were asked to select between facts about food safety and nutrition, practical actions they can take, evidence from scientific research, or none of them.

Nearly four in ten (38%) say facts about food safety and nutrition would make them most confident in their food choices. About three in ten say practical actions they can take (29%) and evidence from scientific research (28%), while 5% say none of them.

These findings suggest that confidence in food choices draws on multiple types of information: Americans value foundational facts most, while also placing substantial importance on actionable guidance and scientific confirmation.

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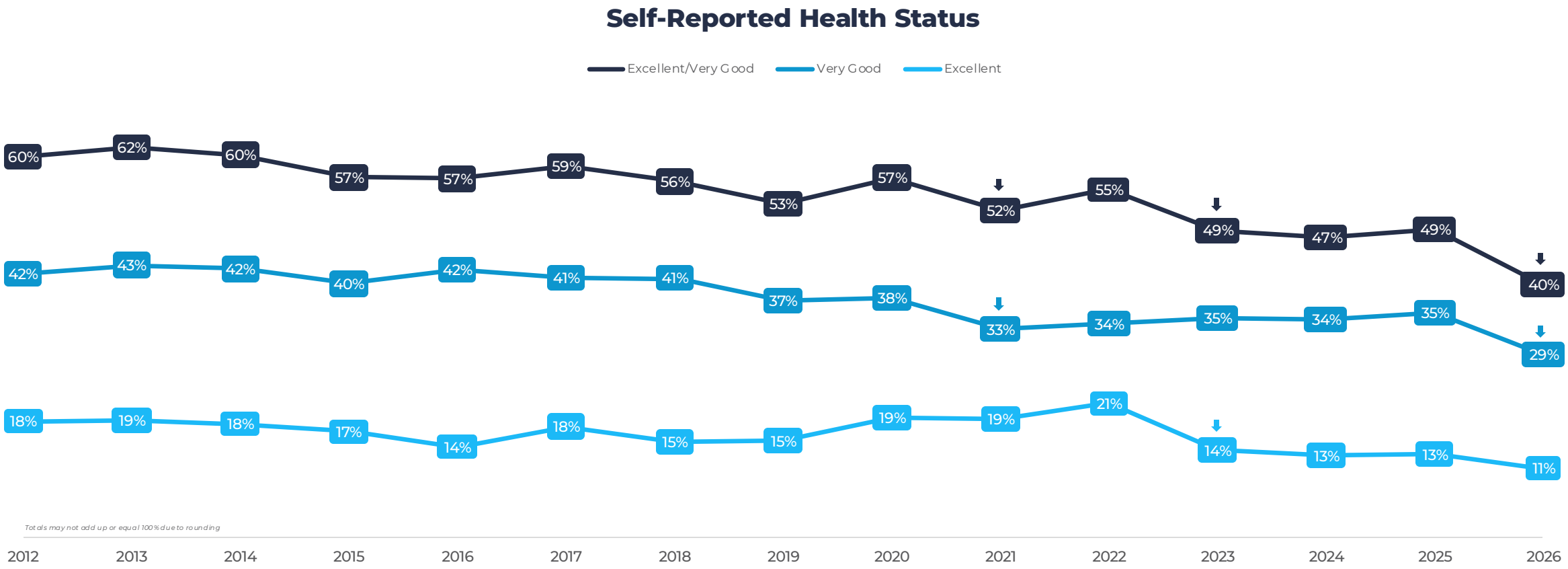
HEALTH STATUS

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

2026

Self-reported health is at an all-time low.

In 2026, 40% describe their health as excellent (11%) or very good (29%) compared with 49% who described their health as excellent or very good in 2025. This continues a declining 15-year trend as evidenced by a 15-point drop from 2022 (55%), 18-point drop from 2017 (59%), and 20-point drop from 2012 (60%).



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[TREND 2006-2011/2012-2026] *How would you describe your own health, in general? (n=3005)*
Note: This IFIC Food & Health Survey question is modeled after a CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey question. See 2025 BRFSS data here.
Note: Question wording was revised in 2012. 2006-2011 results are not shown.
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. the previous year.

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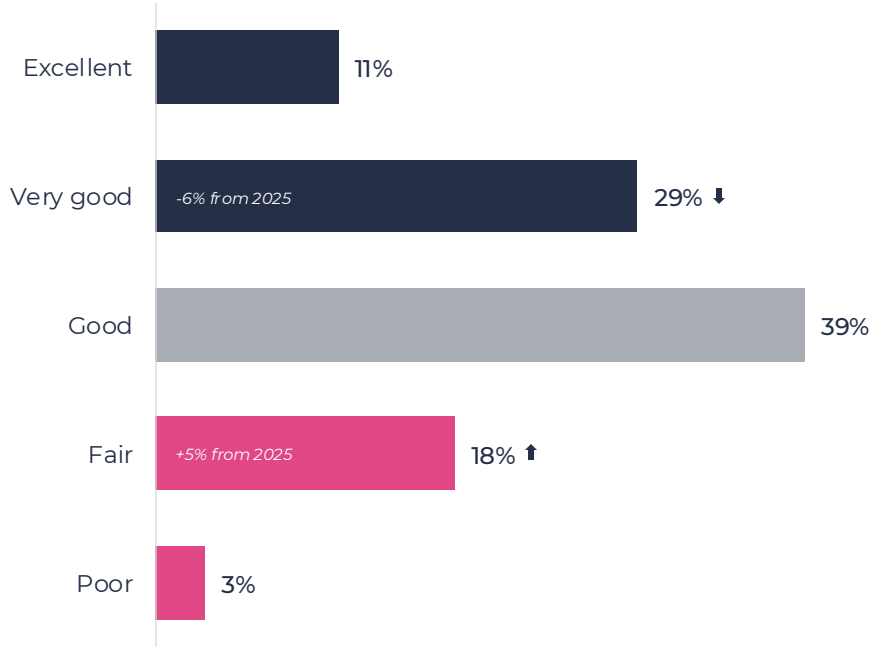
Four in ten Americans describe their health as excellent or very good, significantly down from last year.

In 2026, 40% describe their health as excellent (11%) or very good (29%) compared with 2025 when 49% described their health as excellent (13%) or very good (35%). Conversely, 21% describe their health as fair (18%) or poor (18%) compared with 2025 when 15% described their health as fair (13%) or poor (2%).

Self-Reported Health Status



40% ⬇
Describe their health as Excellent or Very Good
49% in 2025

21% ⬆
Describe their health as Fair or Poor
15% in 2025

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2006-2011/2012-2026] *How would you describe your own health, in general? (n=3005)*
Note: This IFIC Food & Health Survey question is modeled after a CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey question. See 2025 BRFSS data here.
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. 2025.

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DIETARY PATTERNS

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

2026

Americans rate their diets as less healthy in 2026 than previous years.

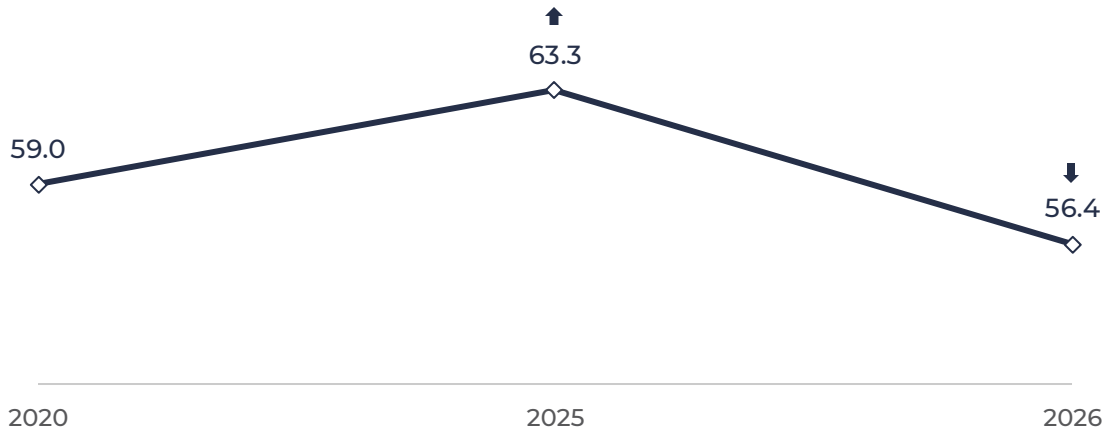
The average diet healthfulness rating (0-100) fell nearly seven points, from 63.3 in 2025 to 56.4 in 2026. More Americans now rate their diet below 50 (33% vs. 22% in 2025 and 27% in 2020), including 22% who give a single-digit rating (vs. 14% and 16%). Meanwhile, the share rating their diet 90 or higher remains similar to 2025 (18%) and 2020 (16%).

Self-Reported Diet Healthfulness

Mean rating on a scale of 0 to 100

18%
Rate their diets' healthfulness 90-100
2025: 18%
2020: 16%

22% ⬆
Rate their diets' Healthfulness 0-9
2025: 14%
2020: 16%



67% ⬇
Rate their diets' healthfulness 50+
2025: 78% ⬆
2020: 73%

33% ⬆
Rate their diets' healthfulness <50
2025: 22% ⬇
2020: 27%

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2020/2025-2026] *How would you rate the healthfulness of your overall diet on a scale of 0 to 100 (where 0 means "very poor" and 100 means "excellent")? (n=3005)*
**The HEI-2020 score assessed from WWEIA/NHANES (2017-2018) is 58 for Americans ages 2+ years, 57 for ages 19-59, and 61 for ages 60+ years.*
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. the previous measurement.

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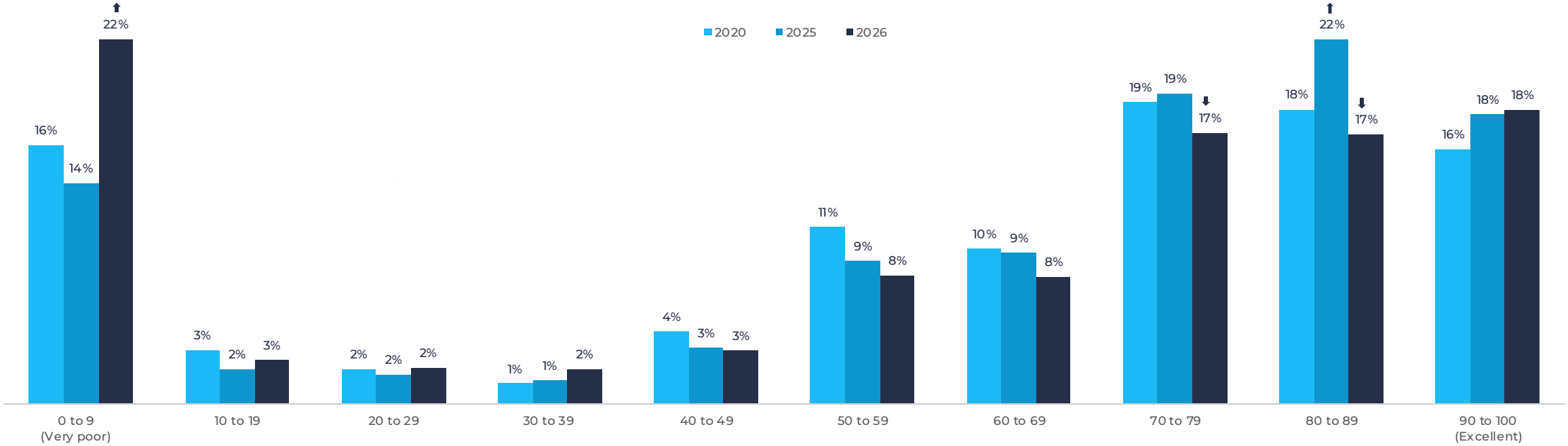
Americans rate their diets as less healthy in 2026 than previous years.

The average diet healthfulness rating fell nearly seven points, from 63.3 in 2025 to 56.4 in 2026. More Americans now rate their diet below 50 (33% vs. 22% in 2025 and 27% in 2020), including 22% who give a single-digit rating (vs. 14% and 16%). Meanwhile, the share rating their diet 90 or higher remains similar to 2025 (18%) and 2020 (16%).

Self-Reported Diet Healthfulness

Rated on a scale of 0 to 100



33% Rate their diets' healthfulness <50
2020: 27% *2025: 22%*

67% Rate their diets' healthfulness 50+
2020: 73% *2025: 78%*

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2020/2025-2026] *How would you rate the healthfulness of your overall diet on a scale of 0 to 100 (where 0 means "very poor" and 100 means "excellent")? (n=3005)*
**The HEI-2020 score assessed from WWEIA/NHANES (2017-2018) is 58 for Americans ages 2+ years, 57 for ages 19-59, and 61 for ages 60+ years.*
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. the previous measurement.

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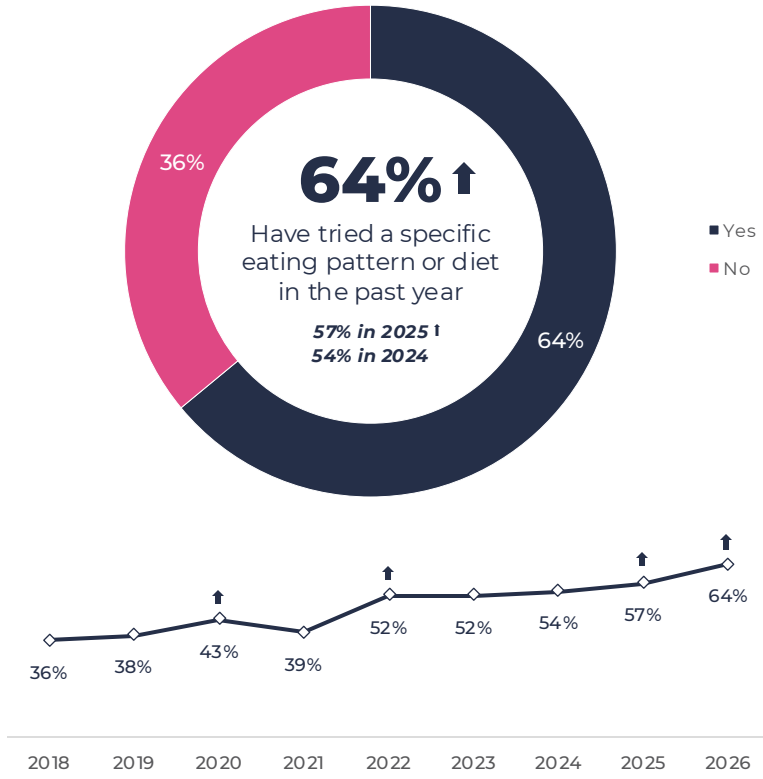
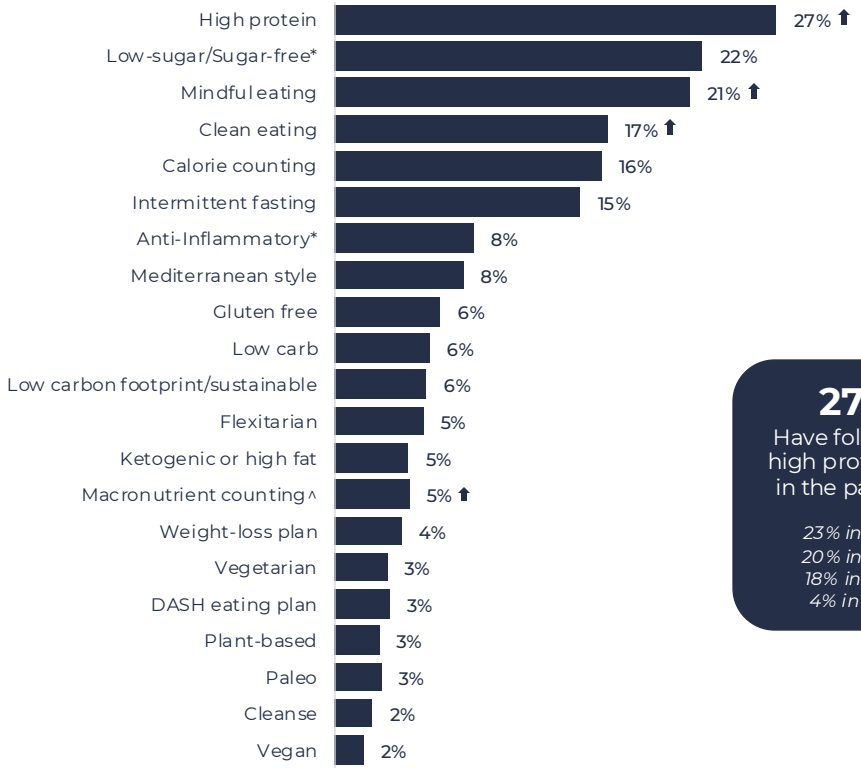
Nearly two-thirds of Americans followed a specific eating pattern or diet in the past year, continuing an upward trend since 2018.

In 2026, the top eating patterns are high protein (27%), low-sugar/sugar-free (22%), mindful eating (21%), clean eating (17%), calorie counting (16%), and intermittent fasting (15%). High protein rose 4 points and ranked first for the fourth straight year.

Followed A Specific Diet In The Past Year



Type Of Diet Followed In The Past Year



27%
Have followed a high protein diet in the past year

23% in 2025
20% in 2024
18% in 2023
4% in 2018

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2018-2026] *Have you followed any specific eating pattern or diet at any time in the past year? Select all that apply. (n=3005)*
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. the previous year.
Note: "High protein" was not assessed from 2019-2022.
Note: "Other" (2%) is not shown.
**New item 2026. ^Previous item reintroduced in 2026*

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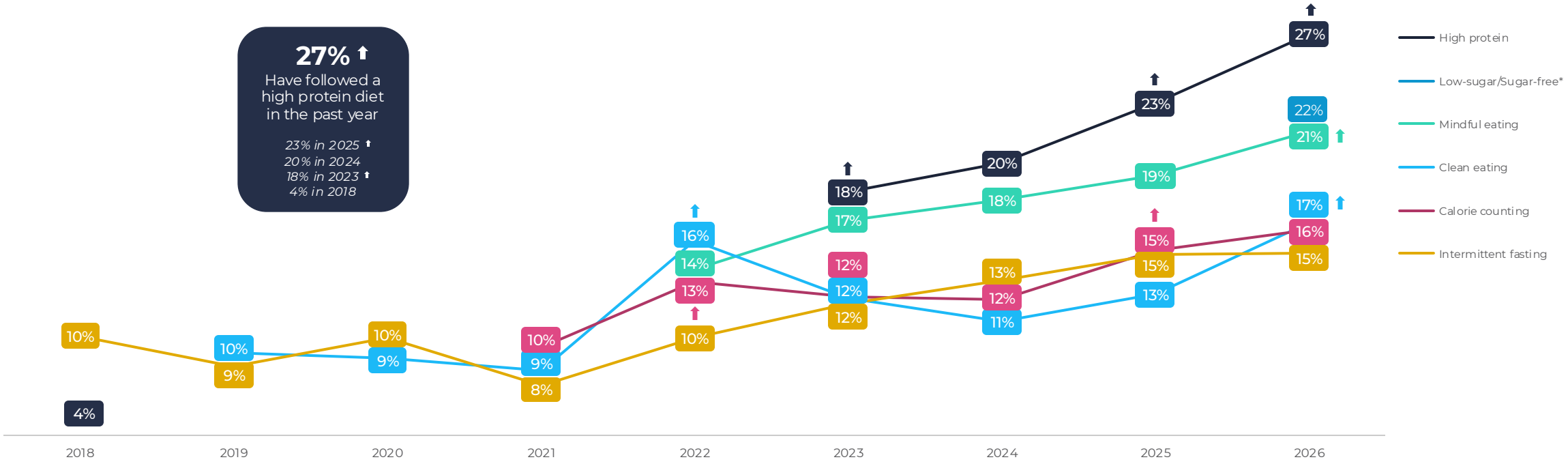
For the fourth consecutive year, high protein is the most common eating pattern Americans report following.

After high protein (27%), the top reported eating patterns in 2026 are low-sugar/sugar-free (22%), mindful eating (21%), clean eating (17%), calorie counting (16%), and intermittent fasting (15%). Mindful eating increased from 19% in 2025, while clean eating rose from 13%.

Type Of Diet Followed In The Past Year



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2018-2026] Have you followed any specific eating pattern or diet at any time in the past year? Select all that apply. (n=3005)
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. the previous measurement.
Note: "High protein" was not assessed from 2019-2022.
Note: Only the six most common eating patterns in 2026 are shown.
**New item 2026 ^Previous item reintroduced in 2026*

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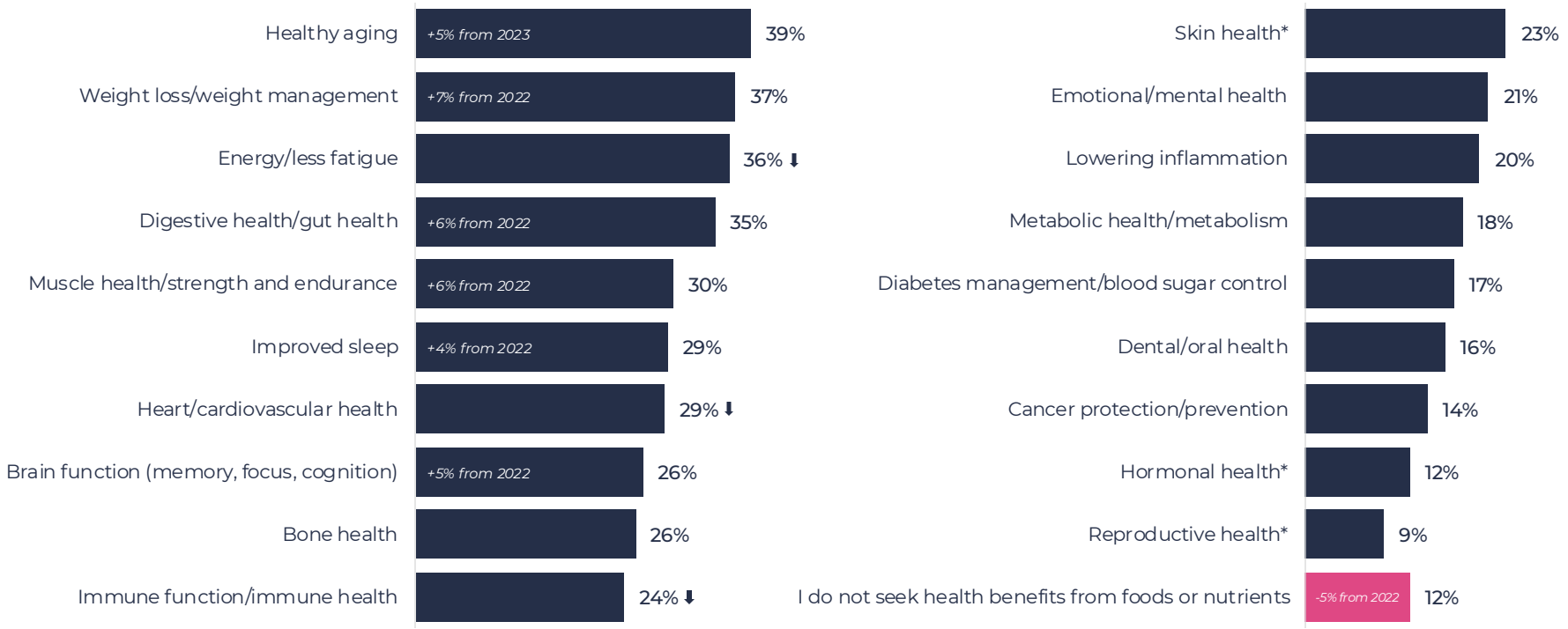
Healthy aging is now the top health benefit Americans seek from their diet, while energy falls from the top spot after four years.

Compared with 2025, fewer Americans report seeking energy (−4 points), immune health (−4), and heart health (−3) from their diet. Compared with 2022, more seek weight loss or weight management (+7), gut health (+6), muscle health (+6), brain function (+5), and improved sleep (+4), while fewer say they are not seeking any health benefits (−5).

Health Benefits Americans Seek From Their Diet



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2022-2026] Which of the following health benefits, if any, are you seeking to get from foods, beverages, or nutrients? Select all that apply. (n=3005)
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. 2025. Differences noted in the bar chart indicate statistical significance vs. 2022 or 2023.
Note: "Other" (<0.5%) is not shown.
**New items 2026*

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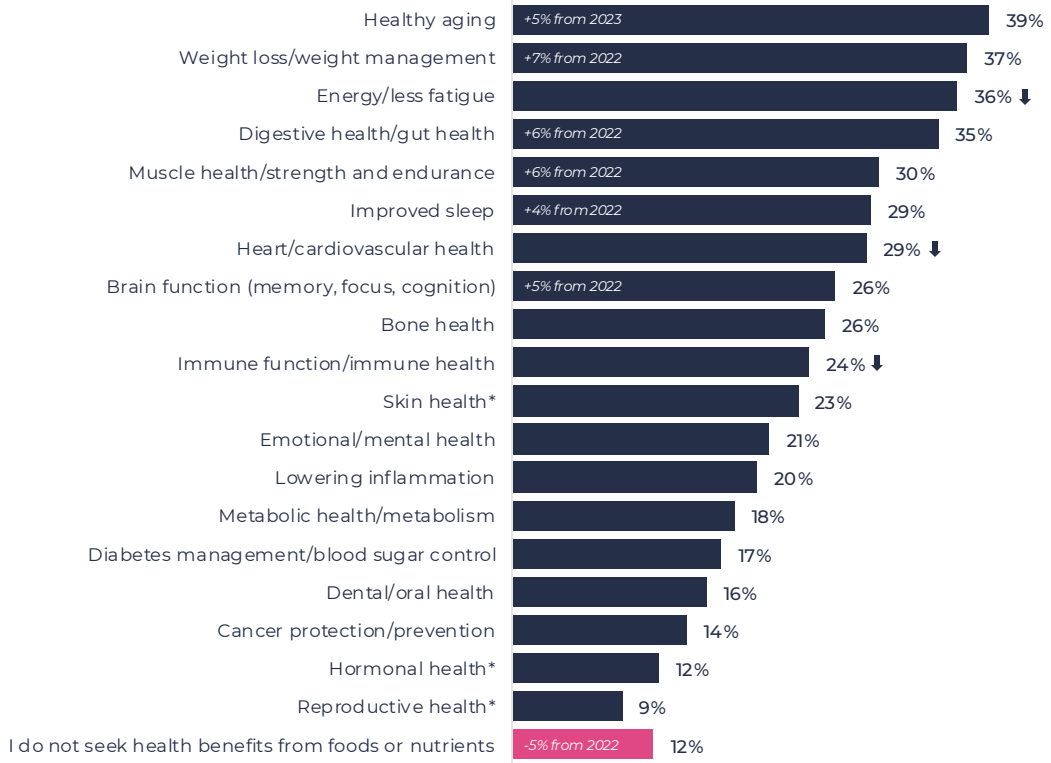
Health Benefits Americans Seek From Their Diet



Top Six Benefits Sought From Diet By Generation

Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X	Boomer
35% Body Weight	**37%** Energy	**43%** Body Weight	**53%** Healthy aging
34% Energy	**35%** Body Weight	**40%** Energy	**37%** Heart health
33% Improved sleep	**33%** Gut health	**40%** Healthy aging	**36%** Gut health
31% Gut health	**33%** Muscle health	**37%** Gut health	**36%** Body Weight
29% Muscle health	**32%** Healthy aging	**31%** Heart health	**35%** Energy
28% Skin health	**31%** Improved sleep	**31%** Improved sleep	**34%** Bone health

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2022-2026] Which of the following health benefits, if any, are you seeking to get from foods, beverages, or nutrients? Select all that apply. (n=3005)
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. 2025. Differences noted in the bar chart indicate statistical significance vs. 2022 or 2023.
Note: "Other" (<0.5%) is not shown.
**New items 2026*

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SNACKING

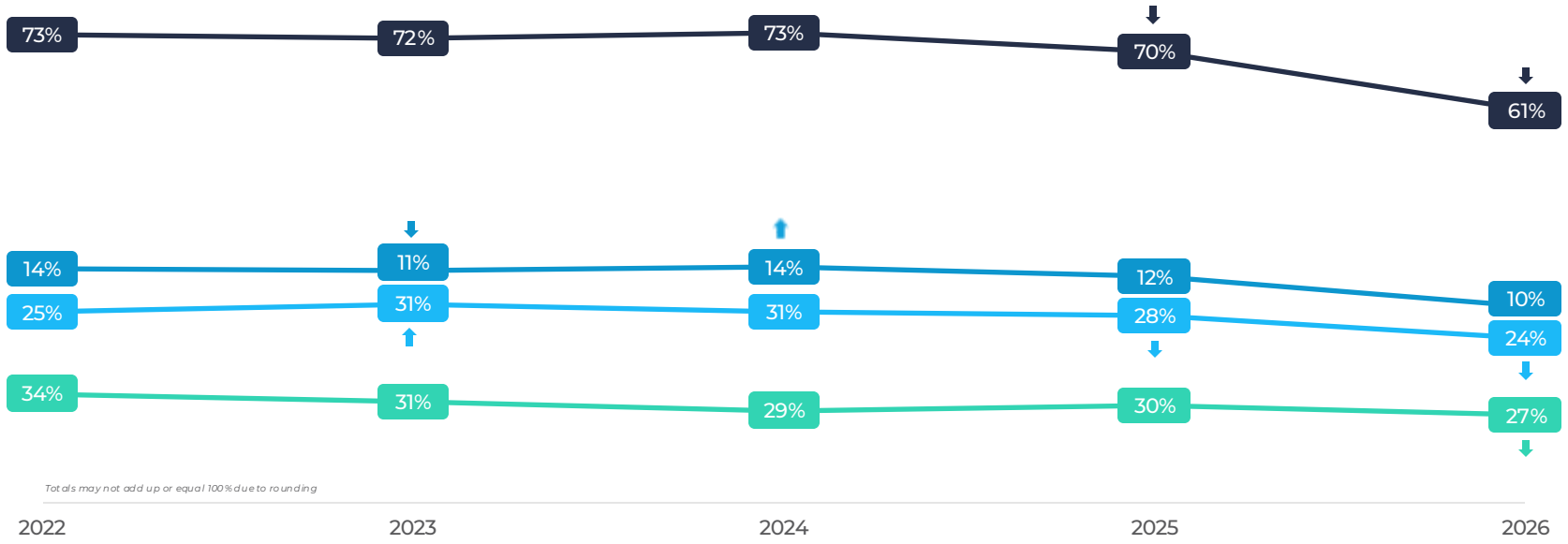
IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

2026

Six in ten Americans snack at least once a day.

The share of Americans who snack at least once a day has declined for two consecutive years, from 73% in 2024 to 70% in 2025 and 61% in 2026.

Frequency Of Snacking



61% ⬇
Snack at least once a day
70% in 2025 ⬇
73% in 2024

- At least once a day
- Three or more times a day
- Two times a day
- Once a day

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2019-2026] In a typical week, how often do you snack or eat something in addition to your main meals? (n=3005)
Note: Only 2022-2026 results are shown. 2019-2021 IFIC Food & Health Surveys did not include options for multiple snack occasions per day.
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. the previous year.

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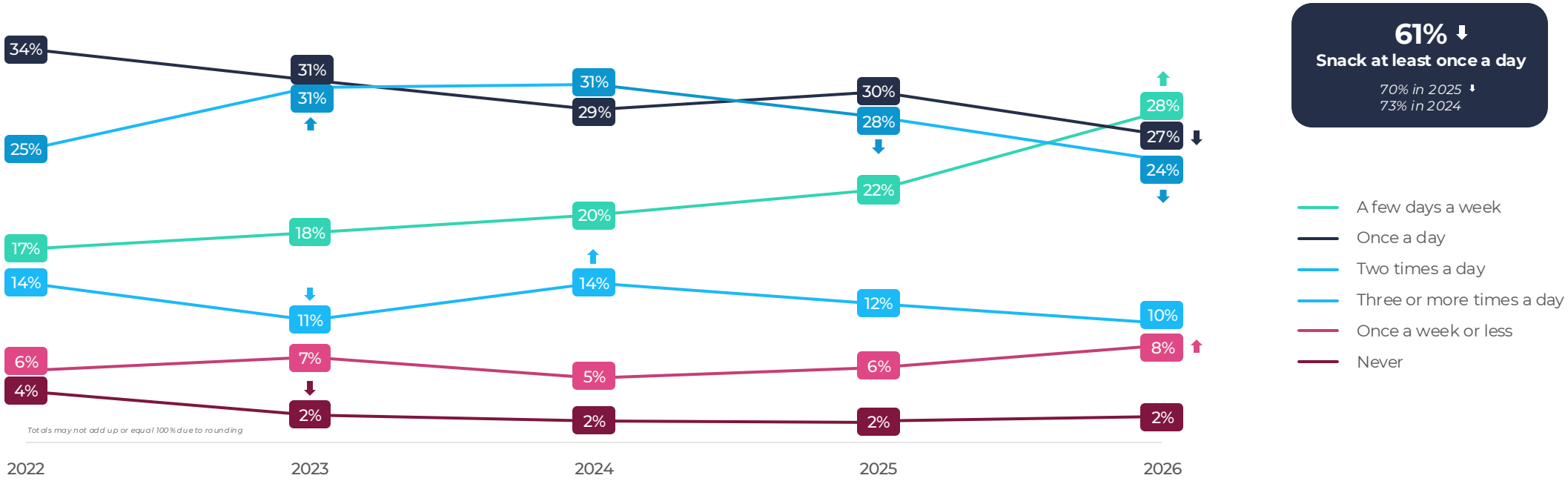
Six in ten Americans snack at least once a day.

Daily snacking has declined for two consecutive years, from 73% in 2024 to 70% in 2025 and 61% in 2026. Compared with 2025, more Americans now snack a few days a week (28% vs. 22%) or once a week or less (8% vs. 6%).

Frequency Of Snacking



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2019-2026] In a typical week, how often do you snack or eat something in addition to your main meals? (n=3005)
Note: Only 2022-2026 results are shown. 2019-2021 IFIC Food & Health Surveys did not include options for multiple snack occasions per day.
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. the previous year.

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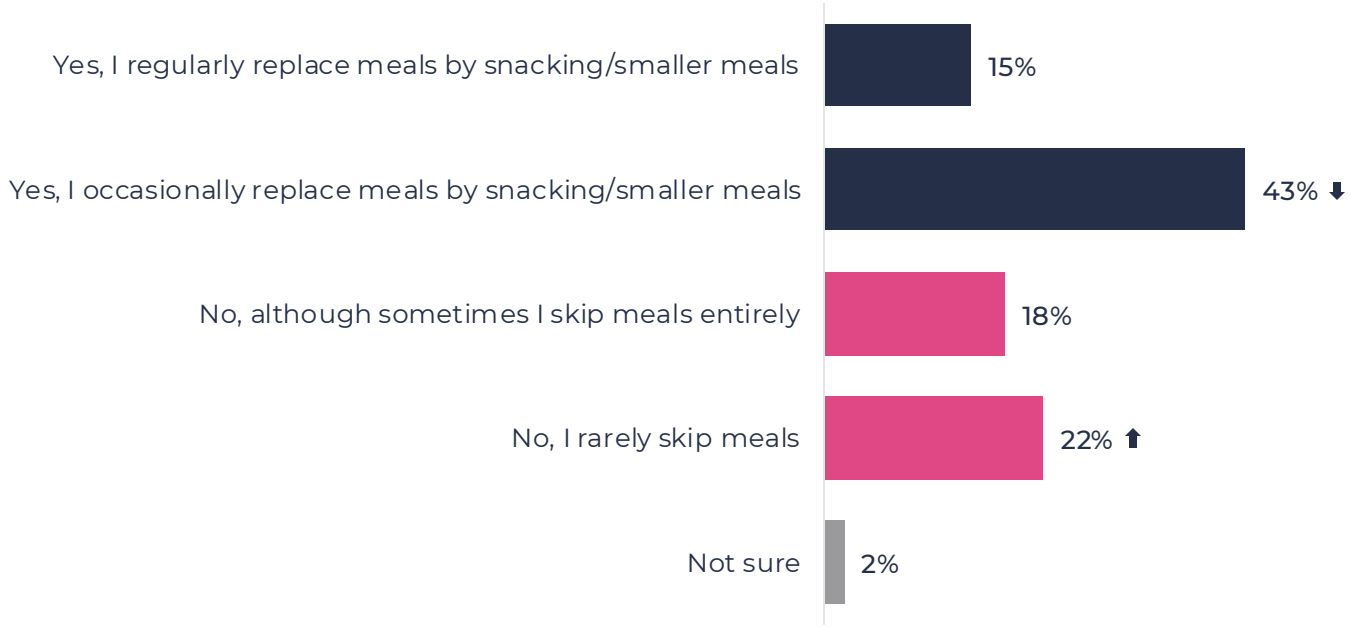
Nearly six in ten Americans replace traditional meals with snacks or smaller meals at least occasionally, down from 2025.

After rising from 38% in 2020 to 56% in 2024 and 62% in 2025, the share who replace meals with snacks or smaller meals fell to 58% in 2026. Another 18% say they do not replace meals but sometimes skip meals entirely, continuing a decline from 2024.

Replace Traditional Meals By Snacking/Eating Smaller Meals



58% ⬇
Replace traditional meals by snacking or eating smaller meals
62% in 2025 ⬆
56% in 2024 ⬆
38% in 2020

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2020/2024-2026] *Do you ever replace traditional meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner) by snacking or eating smaller meals instead? (n=3005)*
Note: Arrows in the callout box indicate statistical significance vs. the previous measurement.
Note: Arrows in the chart indicate statistical significance vs. 2025.

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NUTRIENTS

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

2026

Americans continue to be keen on protein in 2026.

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

70% **are trying to consume protein**

70% in 2025 (n=3000)
71% in 2024 (n=3000)
67% in 2023 (n=1022)
59% in 2022 (n=1005)
62% in 2021 (n=1014)

2. For the fifth straight year, "good source of protein" is among the top three criteria that Americans use to define a healthy food. In 2026, it only trails "fresh" for the most cited criteria.

33% **use "good source of protein" to define a healthy food**

38% in 2025 (n=3000)
37% in 2024 (n=3000)
37% in 2023 (n=1022)
29% in 2022 (n=1005)

For the fourth straight year "high protein" is the most common diet that Americans say they followed in the past year, increasing in each survey since its introduction in 2018.

27% **have followed a "high protein" diet in the past year**

23% in 2025 (n=3000)
20% in 2024 (n=3000)
18% in 2023 (n=1022)*
4% in 2018 (n=1009)*

Source: International Food Information Council (IFIC). 2026 IFIC Food & Health Survey.

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

*__[TREND 2018-2026]__ Have you followed any specific eating pattern or diet at any time in the past year? (Select all that apply.) (n=3000) *High protein diet was not assessed from 2019-2022.*
__[TREND 2022-2026]__ Which of the following best define a healthy food to you? Please select up to 5 choices. (n=3000)
__[TREND 2019-2026]__ Do you generally try to consume or avoid the following? (n=3000) Protein added in 2021.

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“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.

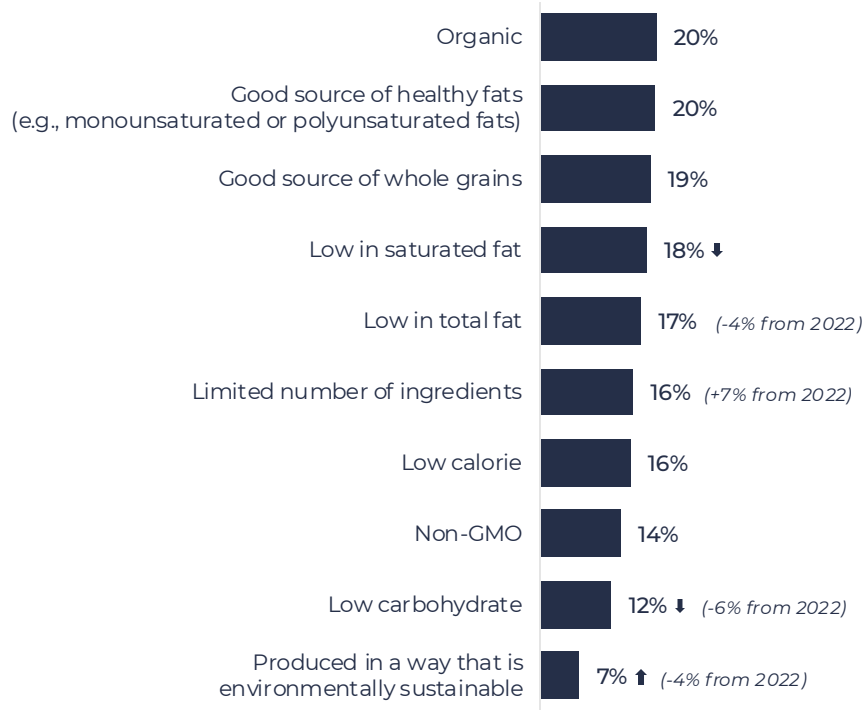
Compared with 2025, more Americans use “Natural,” “Fresh,” and/or “Produced in a way that is environmentally sustainable” to define a healthy food. Fewer use “Good source of protein,” “Low in sugar,” “Low sodium,” “Low carbohydrate,” and/or “Low in saturated fat.” Ingredient- and processing-related considerations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

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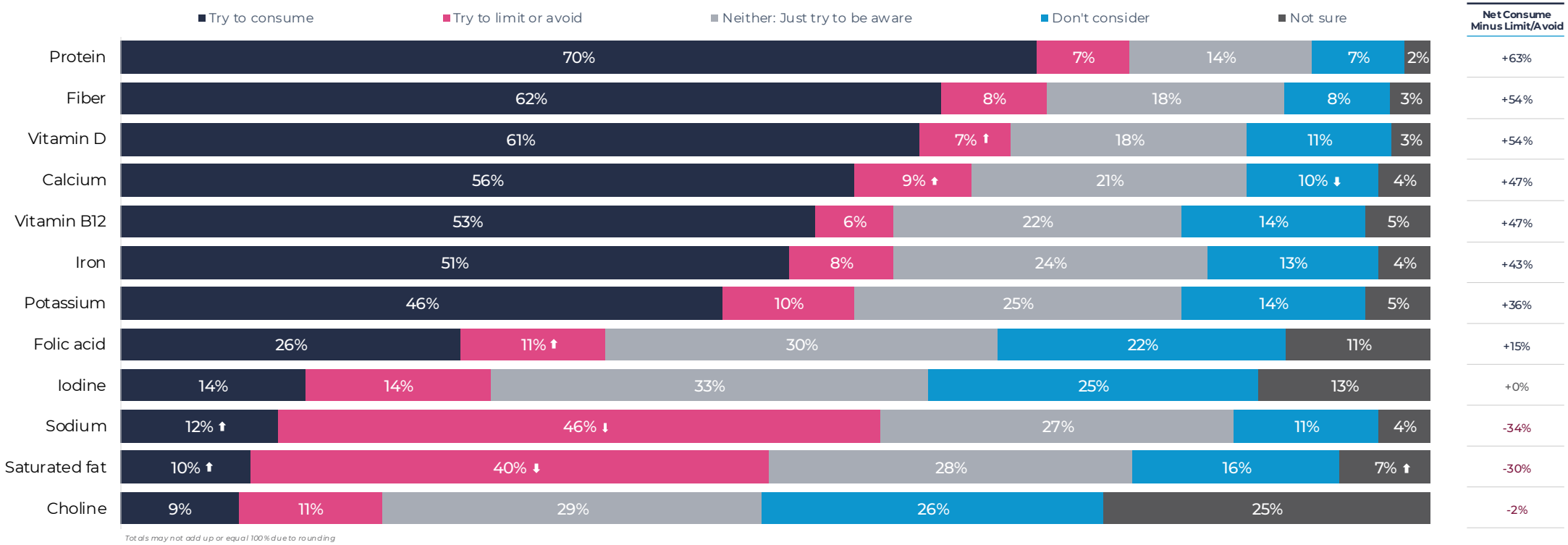
Protein leads nutrients Americans try to consume for a sixth straight year, while sodium leads those they limit or avoid for an eighth.

Protein has the strongest net tilt toward consumption (+63 points), while sodium (−34) and saturated fat (−30) tilt most toward limiting or avoidance. Compared with 2025, more Americans try to consume sodium (12% vs. 9%) and saturated fat (10% vs. 7%), while fewer try to limit or avoid them (46% vs. 52% and 40% vs. 45%, respectively).

Nutrients Americans Are Trying To Consume & Limit/Avoid



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

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2019-2026] *Do you generally try to consume or avoid the following? (n=3005)*
Note: These twelve nutrients have been measured since 2023, as the DGA 2020–2025 identifies them as nutrients of public health concern for under- or overconsumption.
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. 2025.

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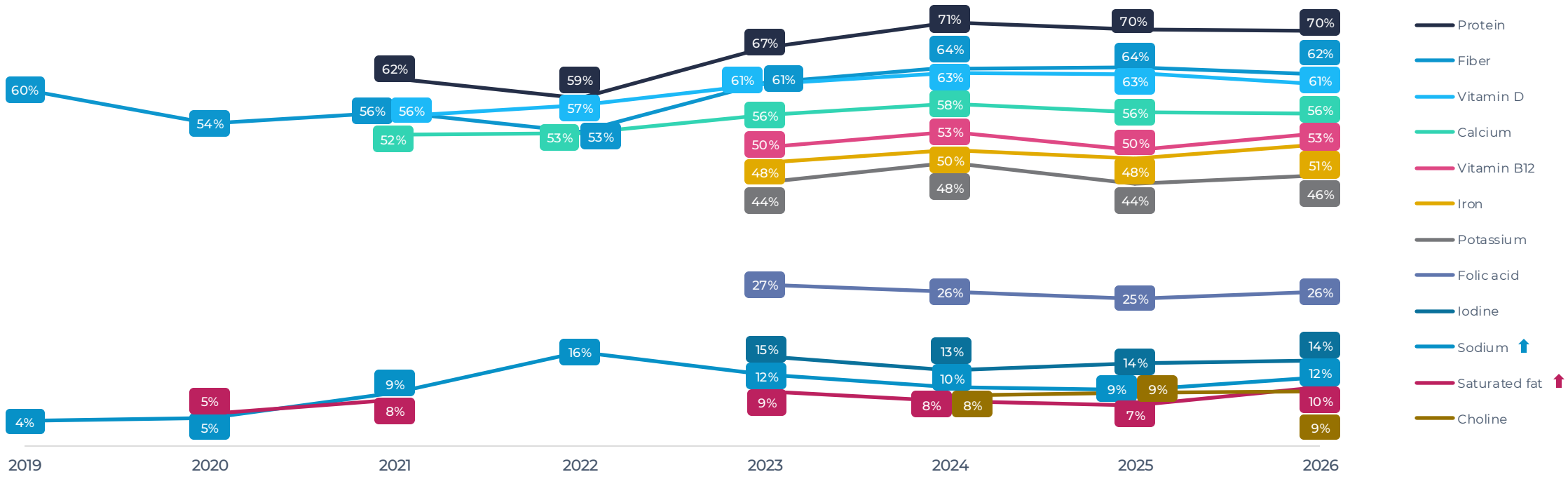
Nutrients Americans Are Trying To Consume



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2019-2026] Do you generally try to consume or avoid the following? (n=3005)
Note: These twelve nutrients have been measured since 2023, as the DGA 2020–2025 identifies them as nutrients of public health concern for under- or overconsumption.
Note: Not all nutrients were measured in every year shown.
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. 2025.

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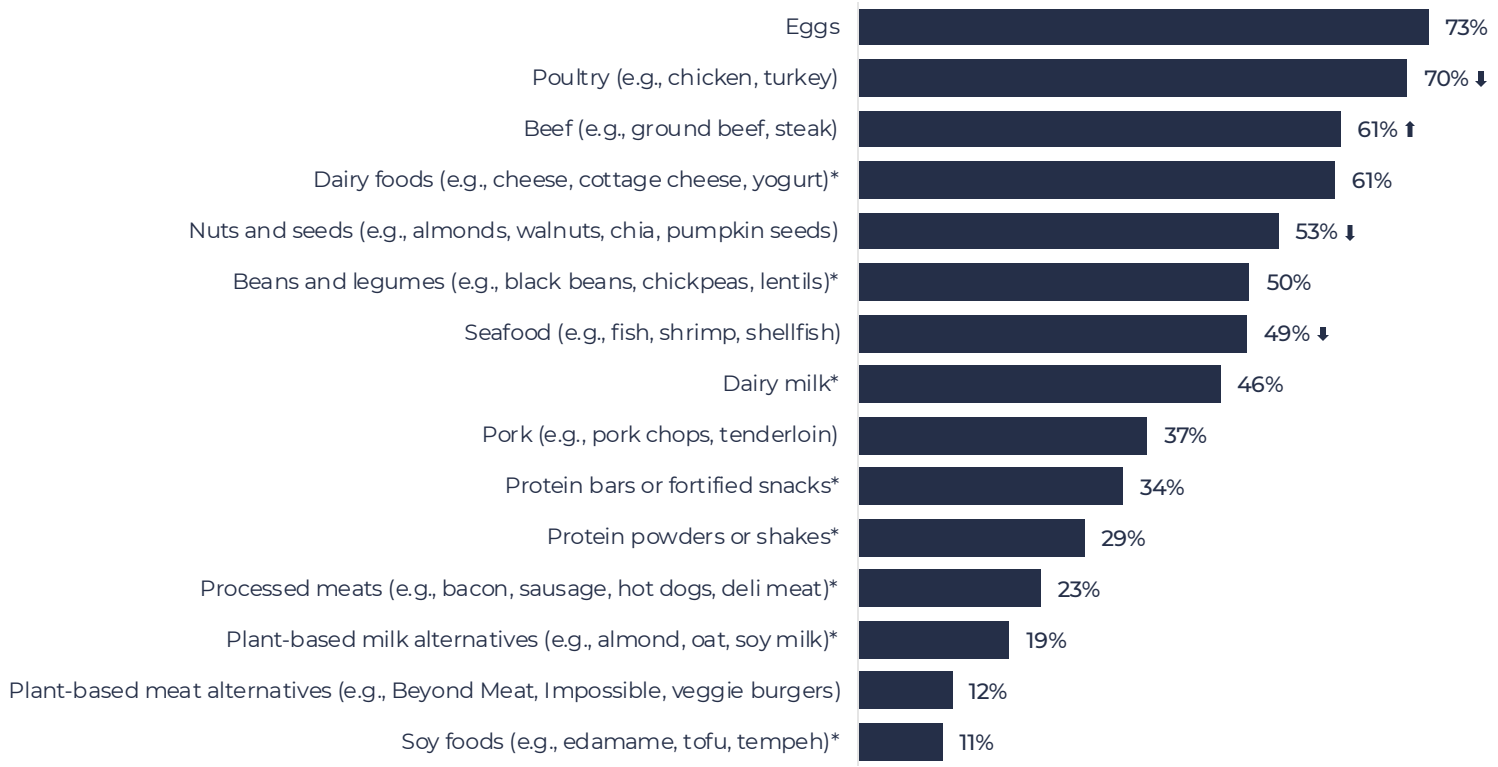
Among Americans trying to consume protein, eggs and poultry are the top sources they actively include in their diets.

Beef and dairy foods follow at 61% each, with beans and legumes close behind (60%). Compared with 2016, fewer include seafood (49% vs. 66%), nuts and seeds (53% vs. 68%), or poultry (70% vs. 76%), while more include beef (61% vs. 53%).

Protein Sources Actively Include In Their Diet

Among Americans trying to consume protein



Change in Protein Source Priority: 2016 vs. 2026

Percent actively trying to include in their diet

Protein Source	2016	2026	Change
Seafood	66%	49%	**-17%**
Nuts & Seeds	68%	53%	**-15%**
Poultry	76%	70%	**-6%**
Pork	40%	37%	-4%
Eggs	70%	73%	+3%
PBMA	14%	19%	+5%
Beef	53%	61%	**+8%**

Only protein sources included in both 2016 and 2026 are shown.

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2016/2025] *Which of the following protein sources are you actively trying to include in your diet? Select all that apply. (n=2126; FILTER: Trying to consume protein)*
Note: Arrows and bolded percentage changes indicate statistical significance vs. 2016.
Note: "Other" (<0.5%) and "None of these" (2%) are not shown.
**New/Edited item 2026*

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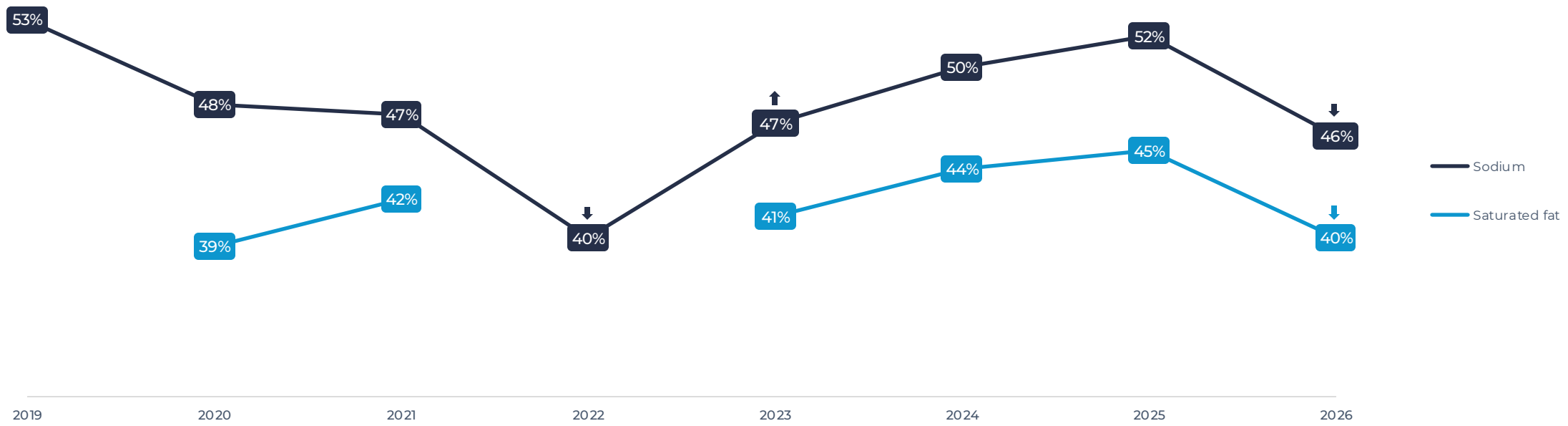
Sodium remains the nutrient Americans most often limit or avoid for an eighth straight year, despite a decline from 2025.

In 2026, 46% report limiting or avoiding sodium, down significantly from 52% in 2025, while saturated fat fell significantly from 45% to 40%. Since 2019, sodium has consistently ranked first despite year-to-year fluctuations, while saturated fat has remained near four in ten since 2020.

Nutrients Americans Are Trying To Limit Or Avoid



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2019-2026] *Do you generally try to consume or avoid the following? (n=3005)*
Note: Sodium and saturated fat have been measured consistently since 2023, as the DGA 2020–2025 identifies both as nutrients of concern for overconsumption.
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. the previous year.
Note: Saturated fat was not measured in 2022.

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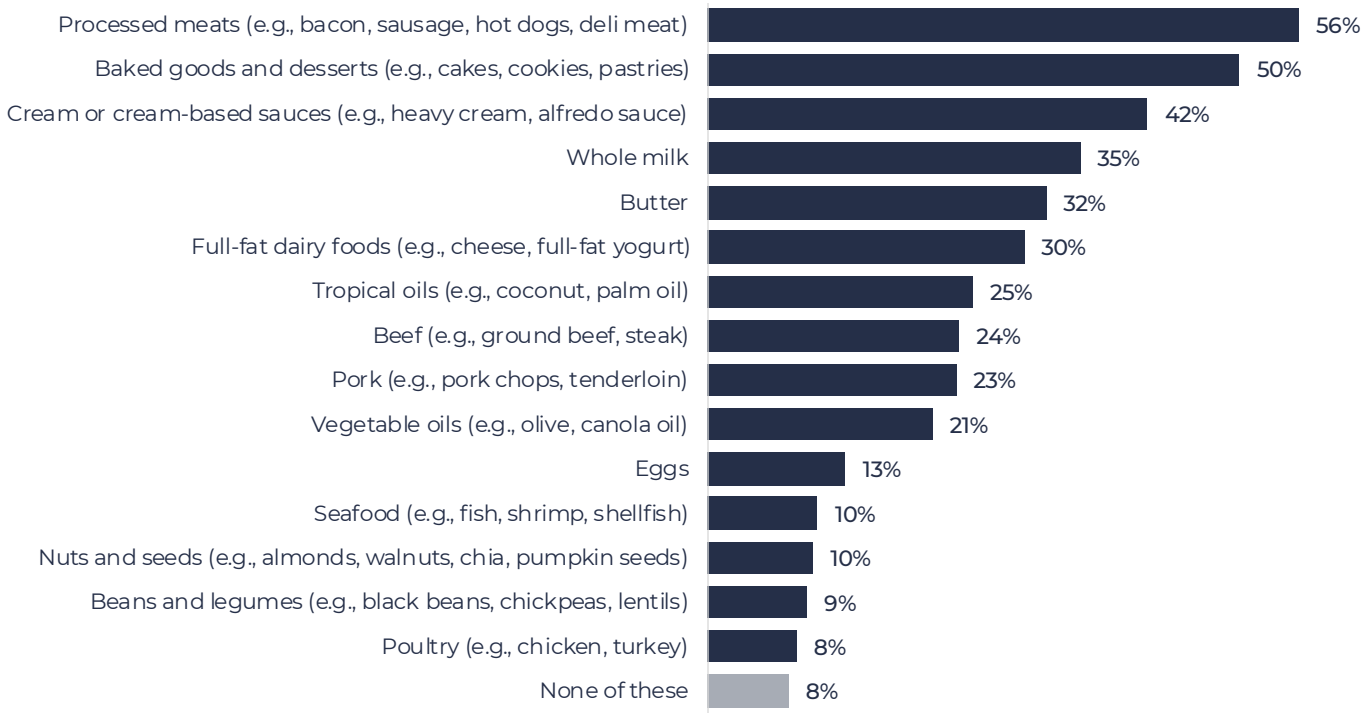
Among Americans limiting or avoiding saturated fat, processed meats and baked goods and desserts are most often restricted.

More than four in ten also limit or avoid cream or cream-based sauces (42%), while about one-third target whole milk (35%), butter (32%), or full-fat dairy foods (30%).

Foods Limited Or Avoided To Reduce Saturated Fat Intake

Among Americans trying to limit or avoid saturated fat



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2024/2026] *Which of the following foods, if any, do you attempt to limit or avoid to reduce your saturated fat intake? Select all that apply.*
(n=1234; FILTER: Trying to limit/avoid saturated fat)
Note: In 2024, respondents ranked their top three choices. The 2026 question used a different methodology; results are not directly comparable.
Note: "Other" (<0.5%) is not shown.

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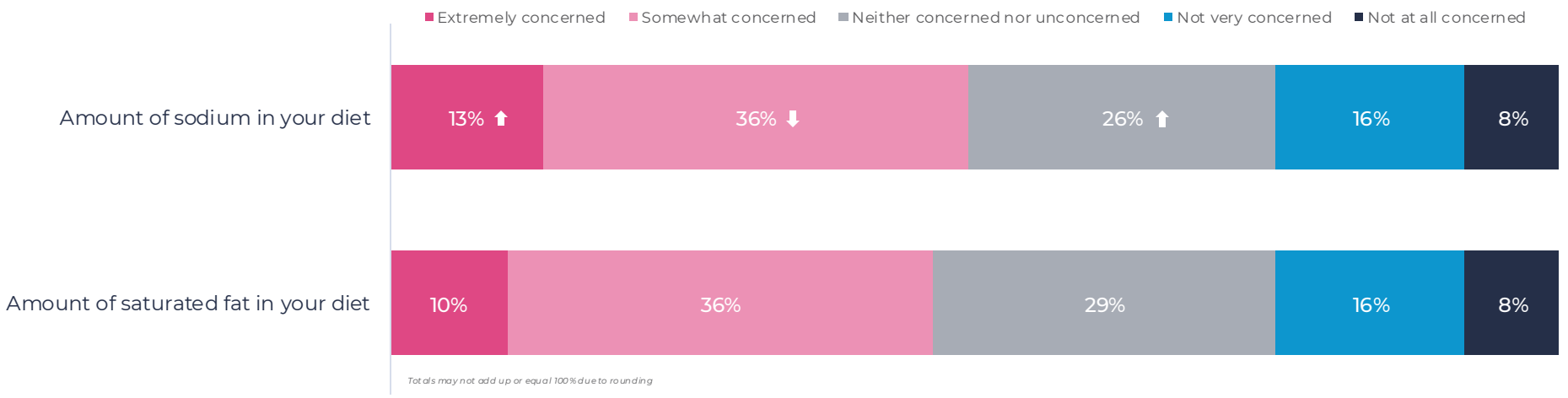
About half of Americans are concerned about the amount of sodium or saturated fat in their diet.

In 2026, 49% are extremely (13%) or somewhat (36%) concerned about their sodium intake, while 47% are extremely (10%) or somewhat (36%) concerned about saturated fat. Overall sodium concern remains similar to 2025 (52%) and 2011 (53%), despite shifts in the intensity of concern.

Concern With The Amount Of Sodium & Saturated Fat In Their Diet



49%
Are concerned with their sodium intake

52% in 2025
53% in 2011

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2011/2025-2026] *How concerned are you, if at all, with the amount of sodium in your diet? (n=3005)*
[2026] *How concerned are you, if at all, with the amount of saturated fat in your diet? (n=3005)*
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. 2025.

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PURCHASE BEHAVIORS & FOOD AFFORDABILITY

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

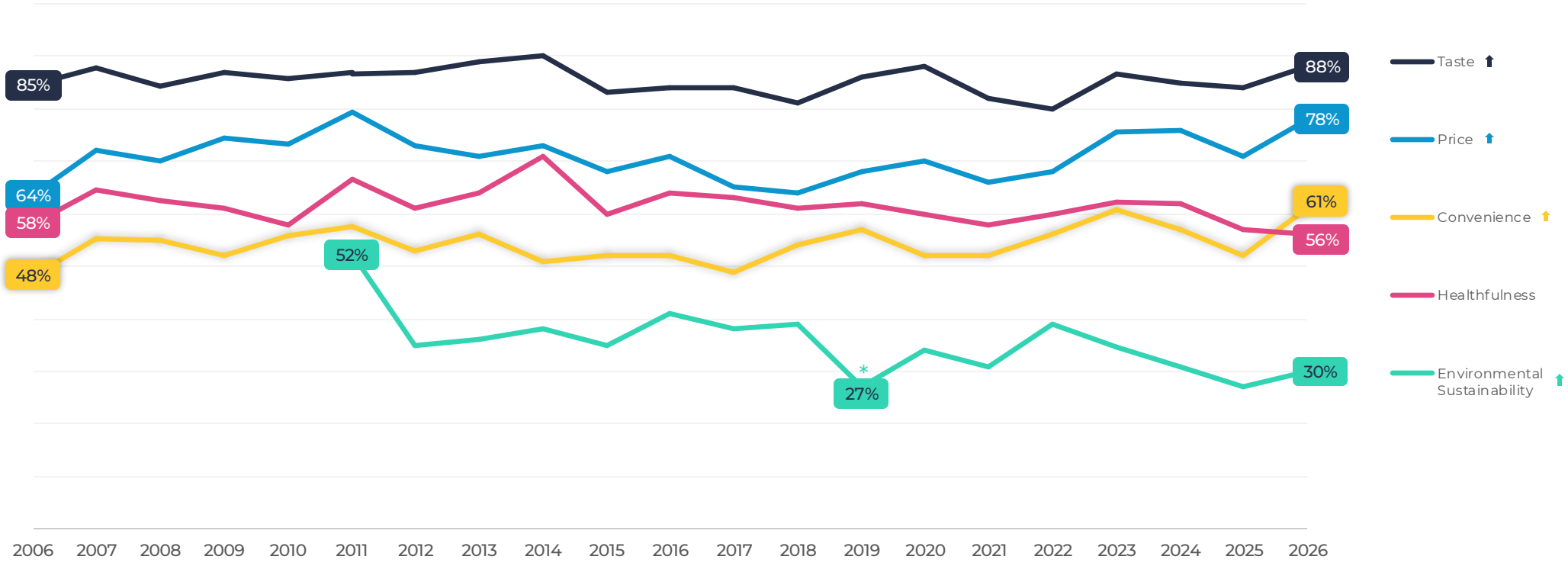
2026

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"*

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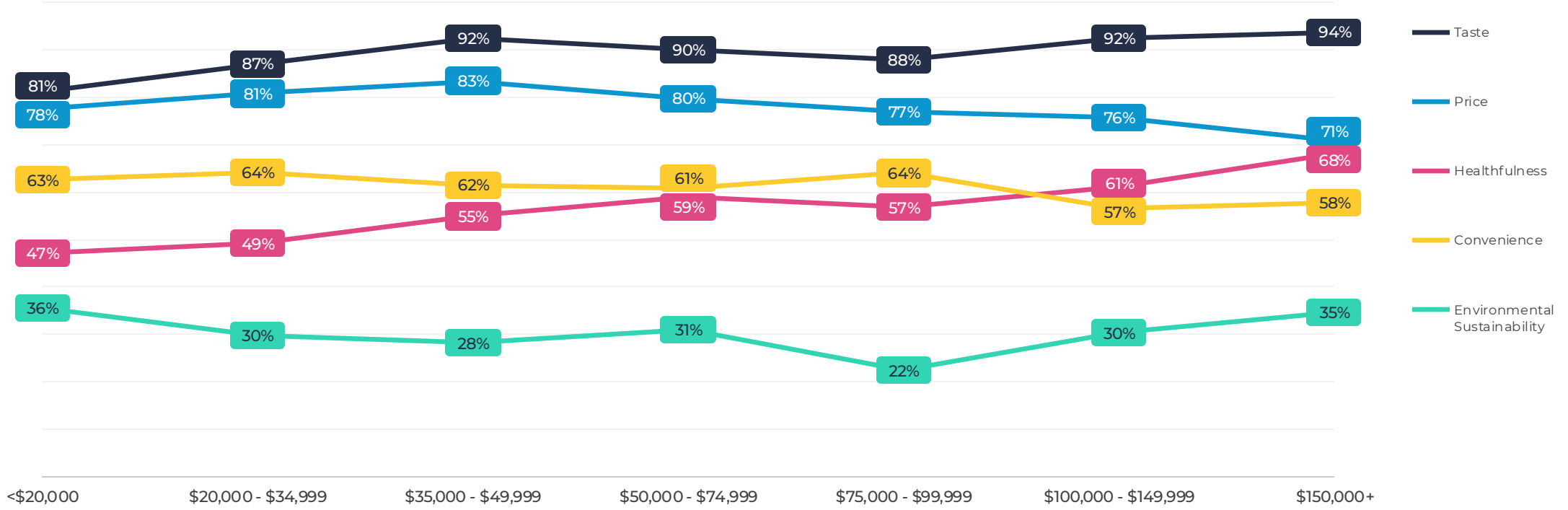
Higher-income Americans place greater emphasis on taste and healthfulness and less on price and convenience.

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.

Food & Beverage Purchase Drivers By Annual Household Income

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"

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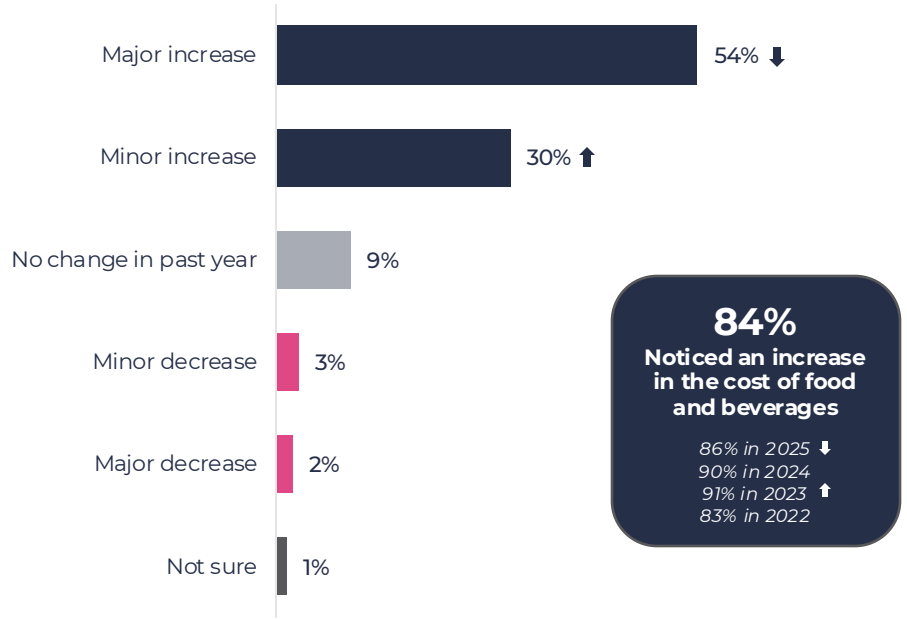
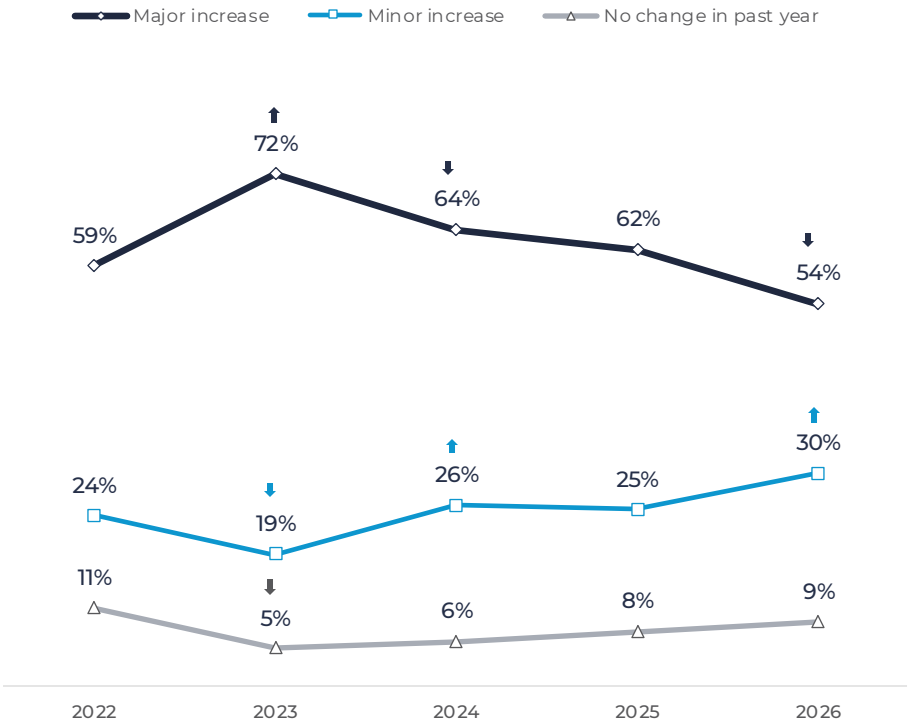
More than half of Americans have noticed a major increase in the cost of food and beverages in the last year.

While steady since last year, fewer Americans reported noticing higher food and beverage costs in 2025 (86%) and 2026 (84%) than in the previous two years (91% in 2023 and 90% in 2024).

Perceived Change In The Cost Of Food & Beverages



Five-Year Trend In Perceived Cost Change



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2022-2026] In the past year, have you noticed a change in the overall cost of food and beverages? (n=3005)
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. the previous year in the callout box and line chart, and vs. 2025 in the bar chart.

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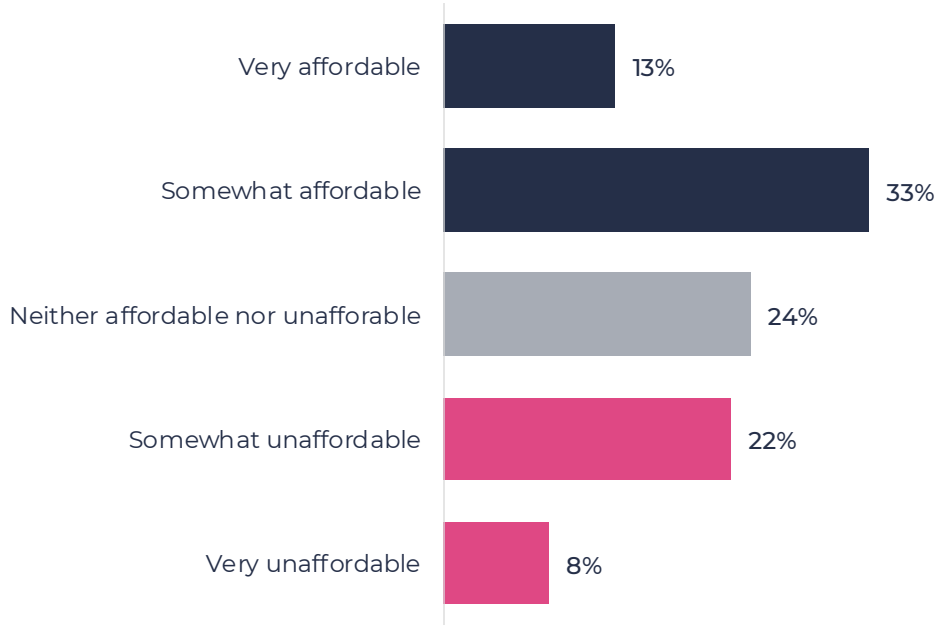
Under half of Americans say food was affordable for their household in the past month, while three in ten say it was unaffordable.

In the past month, 46% say food was very (13%) or somewhat (33%) affordable for their household, while 30% say it was somewhat (22%) or very (8%) unaffordable. One in four (24%) say it was neither affordable nor unaffordable.

Food Affordability in Past Month



46%
Say food has been affordable for their household in the past month

30%
Say food has been unaffordable for their household in the past month

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[2026] *In the past month, how affordable has food been for your household? (n=3005)*

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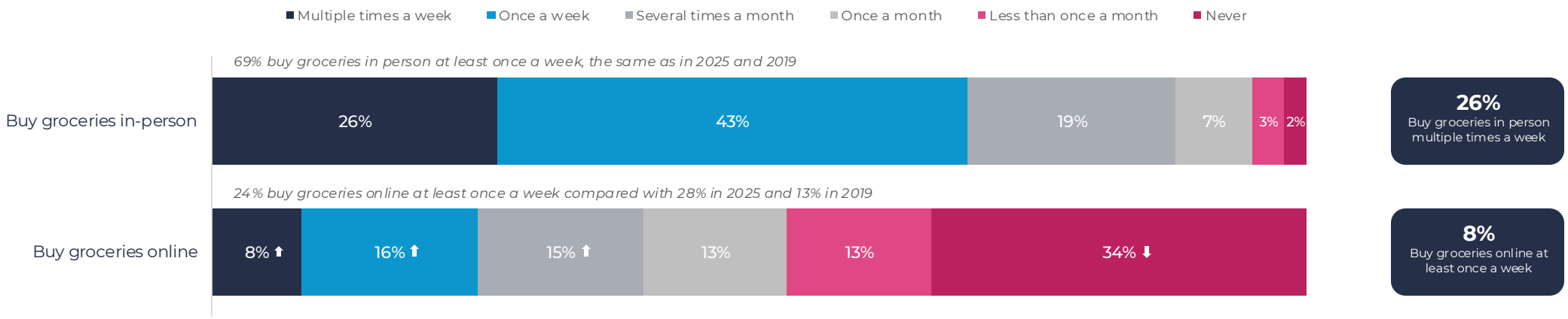
Online grocery shopping increased in 2026, while in-person grocery shopping remains steady.

In 2026, 24% of Americans report buying groceries online at least weekly, up from 18% in 2025, reflecting increases in shopping multiple times a week (8% vs. 5%) and once a week (16% vs. 13%). Buying groceries online several times a month also rose (15% vs. 12%), while never doing so fell from 42% to 34%, well below the 61% reported in 2019 and 52% in 2020. Meanwhile, weekly in-person grocery shopping remains unchanged from 2025 and 2019 (69% each).

Frequency Of Select Food Behaviors



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2019-2023/2025-2026] How often do you ...? (n=3005)
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. 2025.

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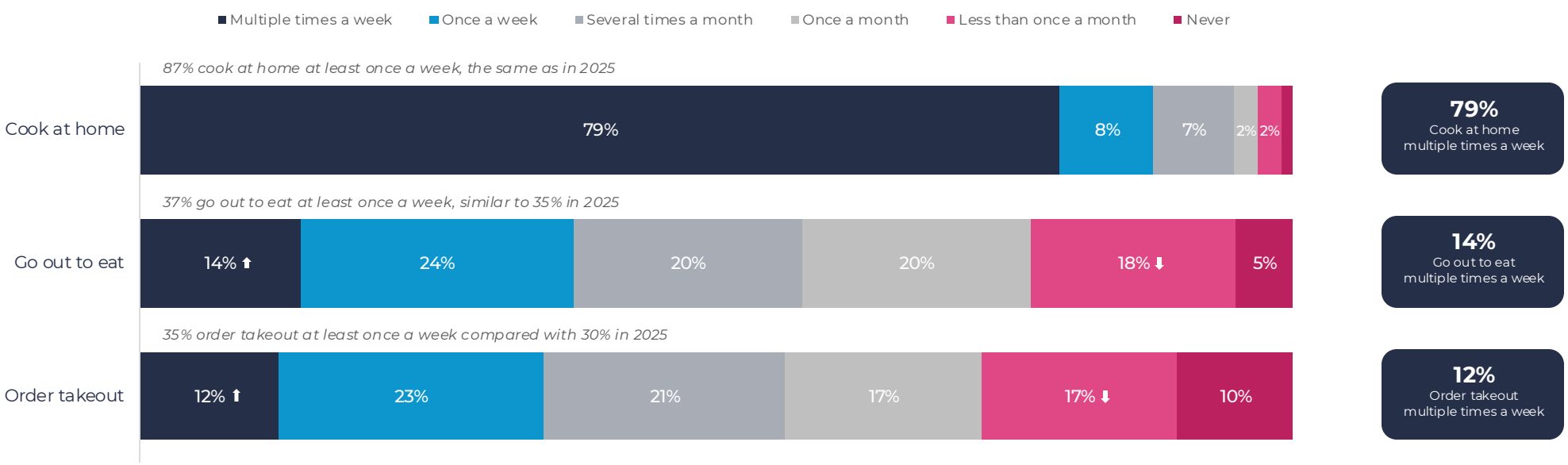
Nearly eight in ten Americans cook at home multiple times a week. Eating out and ordering takeout are less common.

Overall, 87% report cooking at home at least once a week, unchanged from 2025. Going out to eat at least weekly is also similar (37% vs. 35%), though more do so multiple times a week (14% vs. 10%). Ordering takeout at least once a week increased from 30% to 35%, reflecting an increase in those ordering takeout multiple times a week (12% vs. 9%).

Frequency Of Select Food Behaviors



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2025-2026] How often do you ...? (n=3005)
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. 2025.

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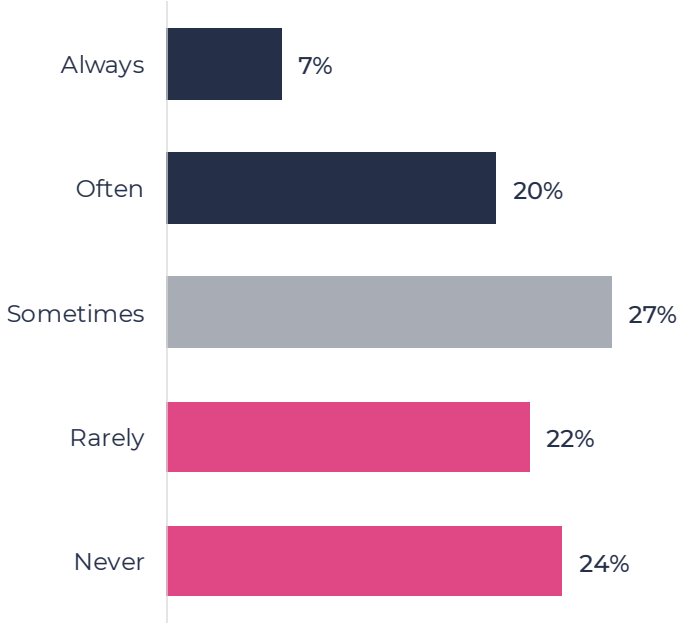
More than half of Americans say they use nutrition information at least sometimes when ordering food away from home.

In the past year, 27% say they always (7%) or often (20%) used nutrition information when ordering food away from home and another 27% used it sometimes. Nearly half rarely (22%) or never (24%) used it to guide their choices.

Frequency Of Using Nutrition Information When Eating Away From Home



27%
Always or Often
use nutrition information
when eating away from home

46%
Rarely or Never
use nutrition information
when eating away from home

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[2026] In the past 12 months, when ordering or purchasing food away from home (including restaurants, fast-food outlets, cafeterias, or delivery apps), how often have you used nutrition information (such as calories) to help decide what to order? (n=3005)

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FOOD & HEALTH INFORMATION SOURCES

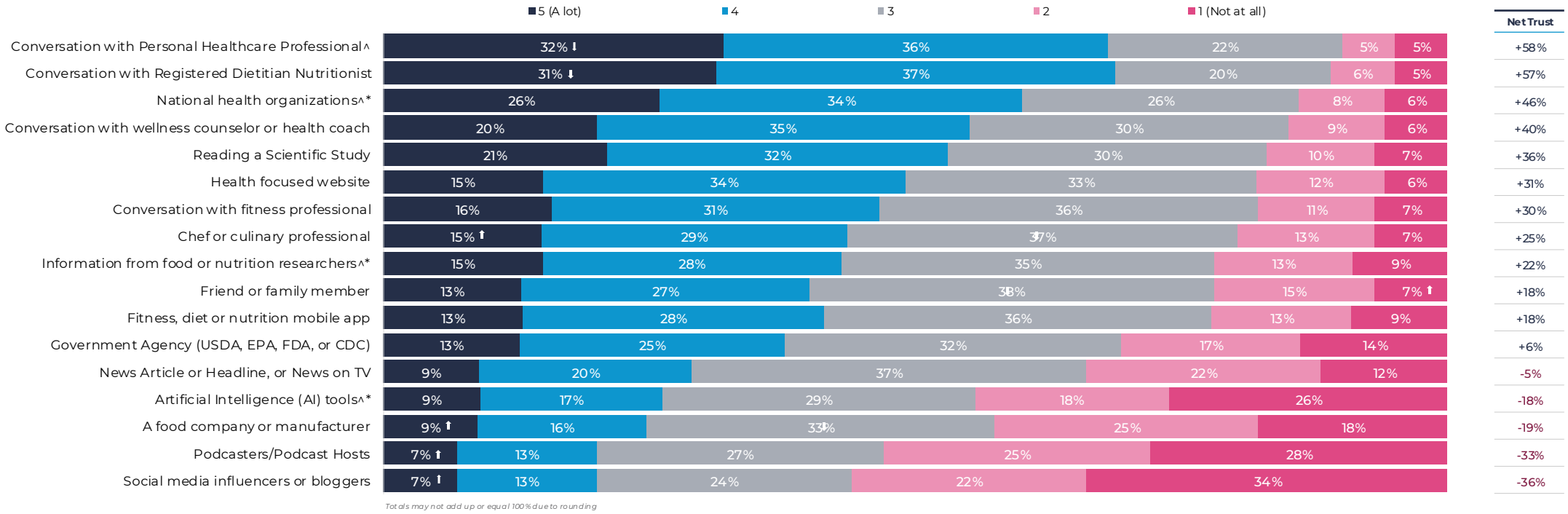
IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

2026

Although trust in registered dietitians and healthcare professionals is down this year, they continue to be the most trusted sources for information about which foods to eat and avoid.

Compared to 2025, trust in social media influencers (+4%), food companies (+4%), friends or family (+3%), and podcasters (+3%) has increased the most, while trust in government agencies (-4%), wellness counselors/health coaches (-3%), and personal healthcare professionals has decreased the most.

Trust In Food Information Sources



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

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2017-2018/2022/2024-2026] *How much would you trust information from the following on what foods to eat and avoid? (n=3005)*
Note: Net Trust is calculated by subtracting the combined % of responses rated 1 or 2 from the combined % rated 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale.
Note: Totals may not add up or equal 100% due to rounding.
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. 2025.
**New in 2026; ^Abridged text*

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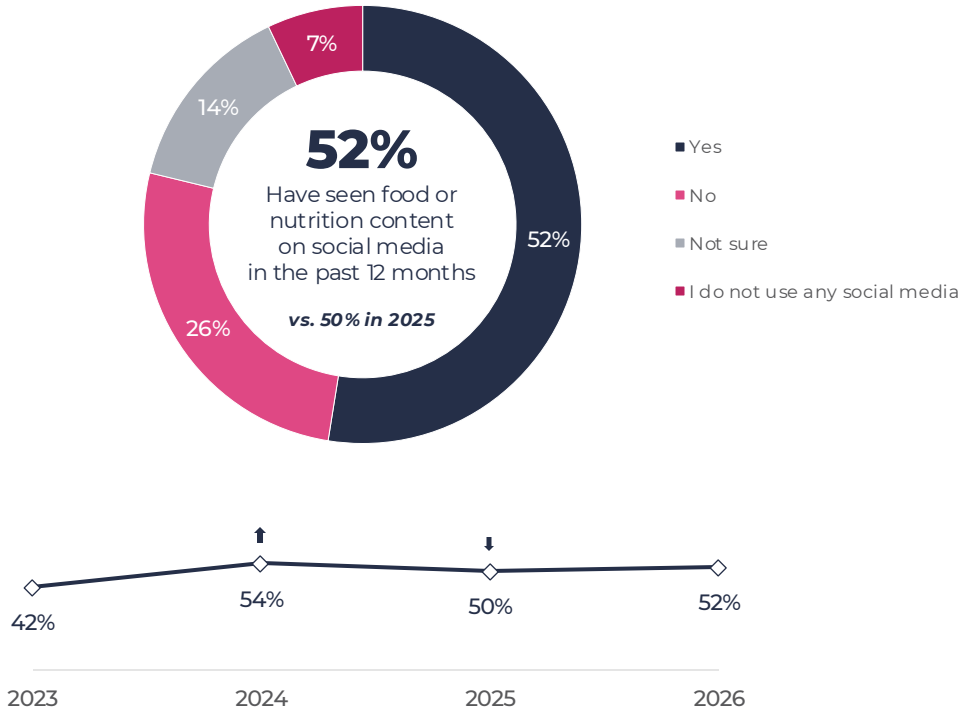
Half of Americans have come across food and nutrition content on social media in the past year, on par with 2025.

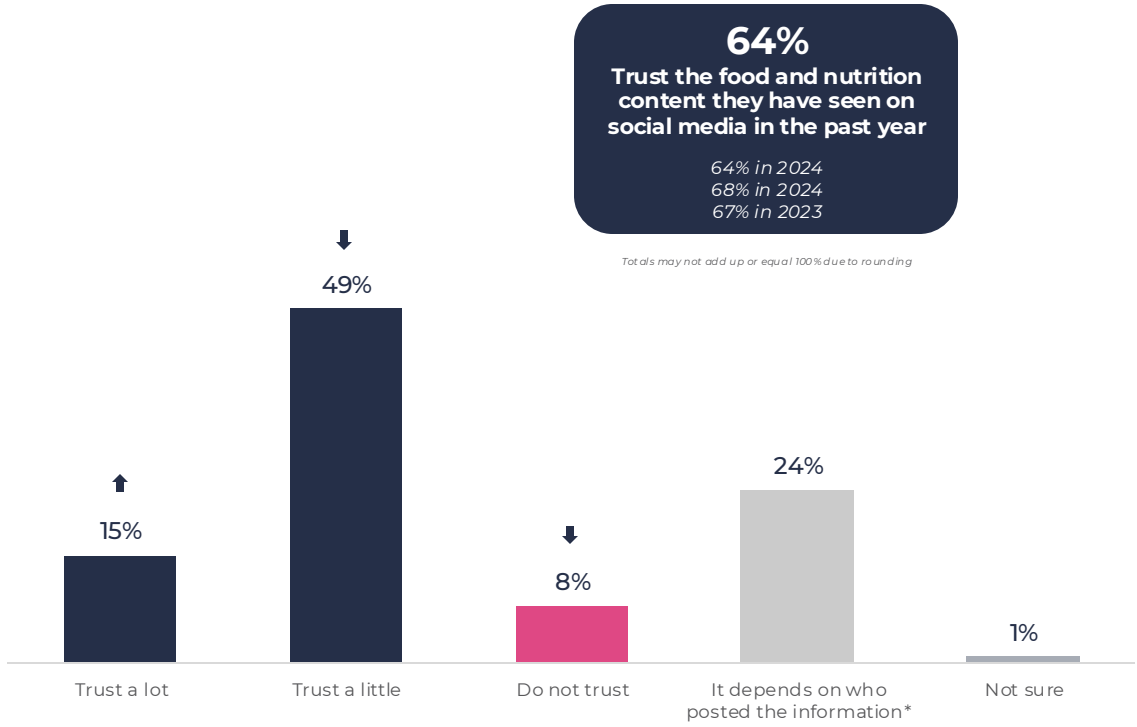
The share who trust the food and nutrition content they have seen on social media in 2026 (64%) is the same as 2025 (64%).

Exposure To Food/Nutrition Content On Social Media



Trust Content About Food/Nutrition On Social Media

If came across food/nutrition content on social media in the past 12 months



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2023-2026] In the past year, have you come across any content about food or nutrition on social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter/X, YouTube, TikTok)? (n=3005)
[TREND 2023-2026] In general, how much do you trust the content you see on social media about food and nutrition? (n=1520; FILTER: Came across food and nutrition content on social media)
**Response option was revised in 2026. 2023-2025 results can not be trended for this response.*
Note: Arrows in the charts indicate statistical significance vs. the previous year.

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Half of Americans who saw food and nutrition content on social media tried a new recipe, while four in ten tried a new type of food.

About three in ten say social media content led them to change how much of certain foods they eat (30%) or reduce or avoid highly processed foods (29%), while 26% reduced or avoided certain ingredients or additives. One in ten (11%) say the content did not lead them to take any action.

Actions Taken From Content On Social Media

If came across food/nutrition content on social media in the past 12 months

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[2026] *In the past 12 months, has food and nutrition content you saw on social media led you to do any of the following? Select all that apply.*
(n=1520; FILTER: Came across food and nutrition content on social media)
Note: "Other" (<0.5%) is not shown

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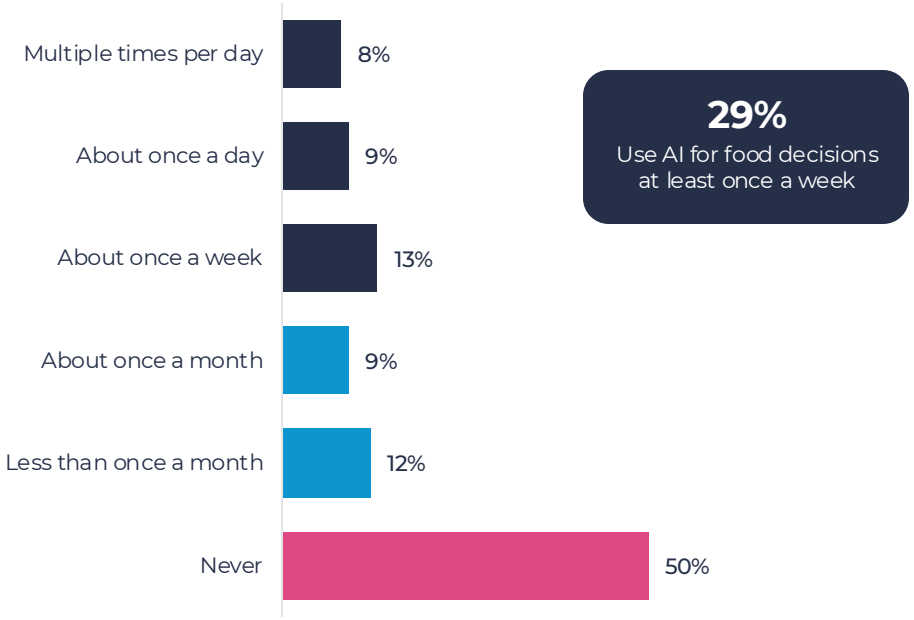
Nearly three in ten Americans use Artificial Intelligence to help make food decisions at least weekly, while half say they never use it.

Millennials (44%) and Gen Z (40%) are more likely than Gen X (27%) and Baby Boomers (11%) to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) for food decisions at least once a week. Conversely, 72% of Baby Boomers say they never use AI for food decisions, compared with 50% of Gen X, 38% of Millennials, and 33% of Gen Z.

Frequency Of Artificial Intelligence Use For Food Decisions



29%
Use AI for food decisions at least once a week

Artificial Intelligence Use For Food Decisions By Generation

Frequency	Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X	Boomer
Multiple times per day	9%	**14%**	7%	2%
About once a day	**13%**	**13%**	8%	3%
About once a week	**18%**	**17%**	12%	7%
At least once a week	**40%**	**44%**	27%	11%
Never	33%	38%	**50%**	**72%**

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[2026] How often, if at all, do you use artificial intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., voice assistants, chatbots, or AI-powered apps) to help you decide what to eat, what groceries to buy, or where to eat? (n=3005)
Note: Statistical differences by generation are indicated by pink vs. non-pink and bolded vs. non-bolded percentages.
Note: Totals may not add up or equal 100% due to rounding.

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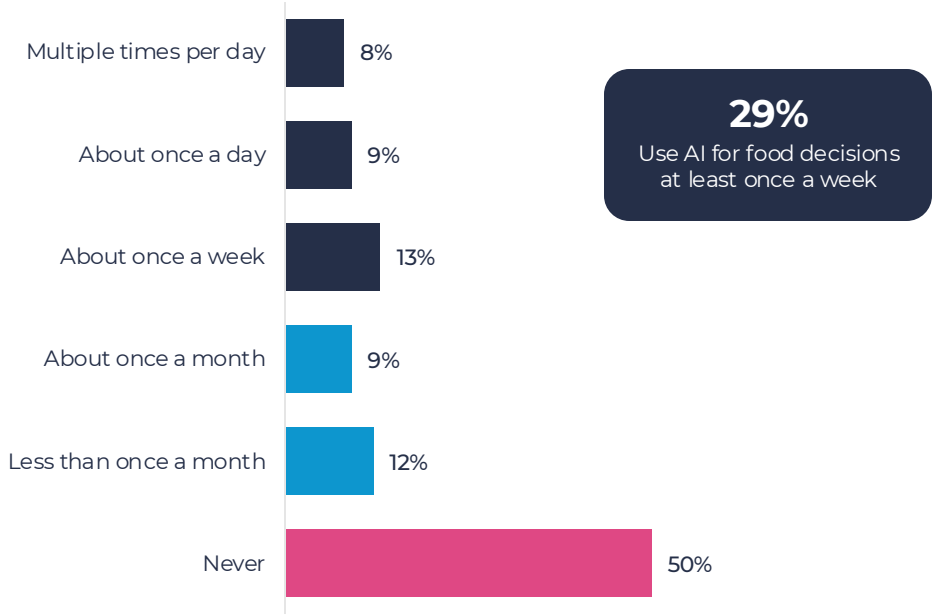
Among Americans who use Artificial Intelligence for food decisions, recipes and cooking tips are the most common use.

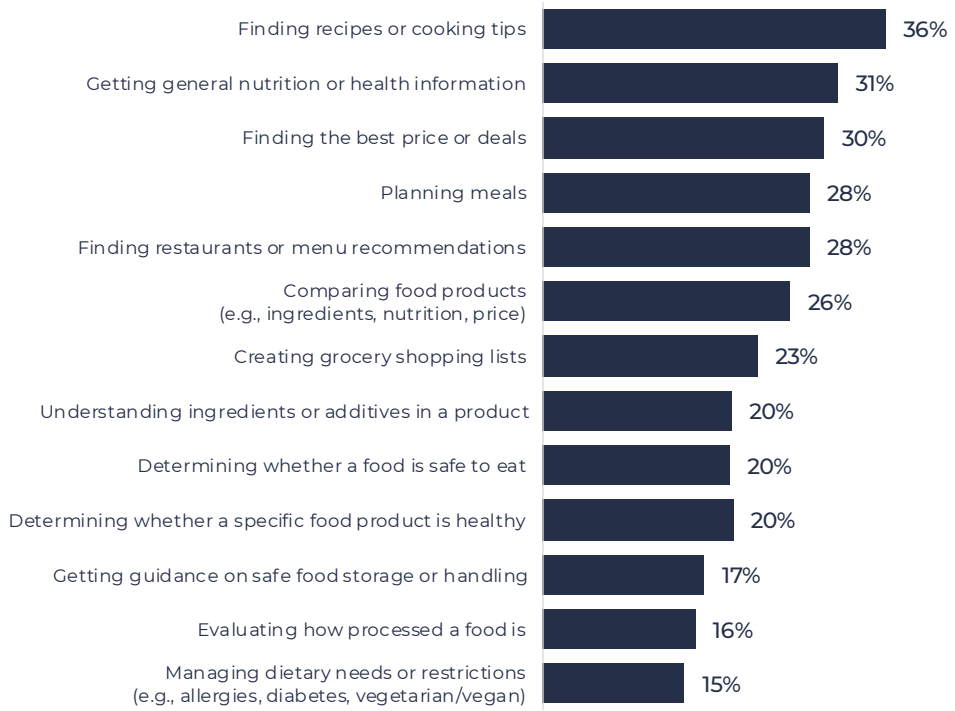
Among those who use Artificial Intelligence (AI) for food decisions, the top reported use is finding recipes or cooking tips (36%), followed by getting nutrition or health information (31%), finding the best prices or deals (30%), and planning meals (28%).

Frequency Of Artificial Intelligence Use For Food Decisions



Artificial Intelligence Use For Food

Among Americans who use AI for food decisions



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[2026] How often, if at all, do you use artificial intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., voice assistants, chatbots, or AI-powered apps) to help you decide what to eat, what groceries to buy, or where to eat? (n=3005)
[2026] For which of the following food-related purposes have you used artificial intelligence (AI)? Select all that apply. (n=1471; FILTER: Used AI tools for food decisions)
Note: Totals may not add up or equal 100% due to rounding.

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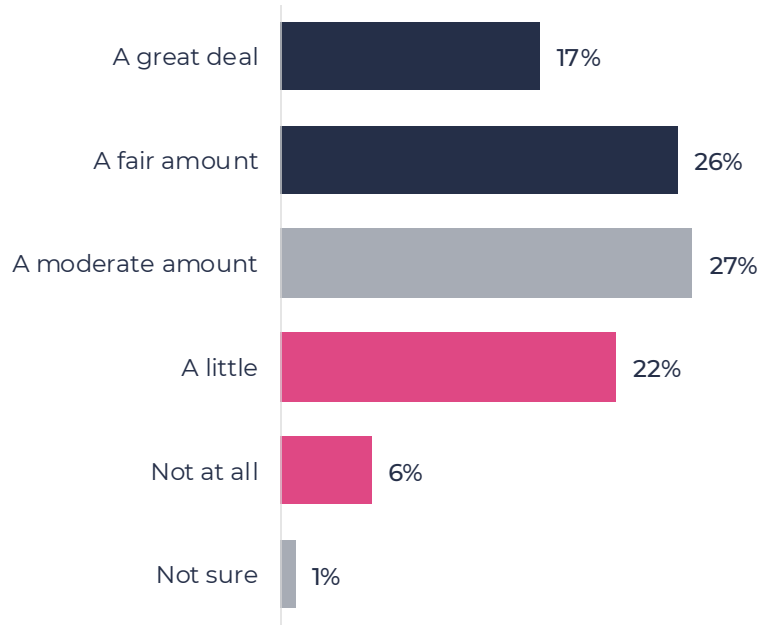
Among Americans who use Artificial Intelligence for food decisions, seven in ten say it is at least moderately influential.

More than four in ten (43%) say Artificial Intelligence (AI) influences their final decisions about food a great deal (17%) or a fair amount (26%), while 27% say a moderate amount. By comparison, 28% say AI has little (22%) or no (6%) influence.

Influence Of Artificial Intelligence On Food Decisions

Among Americans who use AI for food decisions



43%
Say AI use influences their final food decisions a great deal or a fair amount

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

28%
Say AI use influences their final food decisions a little or not at all

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[2026] *When you use artificial intelligence (AI) tools for food-related decisions, how much do they influence your final decision? (n=1471; FILTER: Used AI tools for food decisions)*

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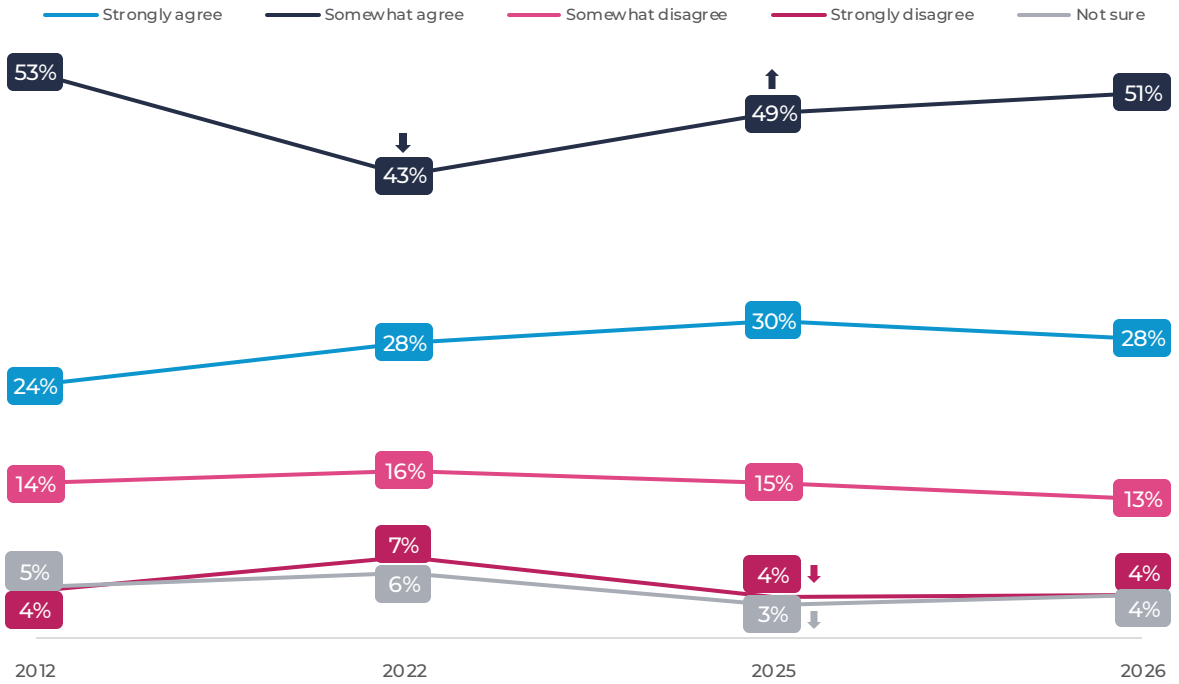
Nearly eight in ten Americans say nutrition information seems to keep changing, making it hard to know what to believe.

In 2026, 79% strongly (28%) or somewhat (51%) agree that nutrition information seems to keep changing, making it hard to know what to believe. Agreement is unchanged from 2025 and higher than in 2022 (71%). Across all four survey years dating back to 2012, at least seven in ten Americans have agreed.

"Because nutrition information seems to keep changing, it's hard to know what to believe"



79%

Agree that because nutrition information seems to keep changing, it's hard to know what to believe

79% in 2025 ⬆
71% in 2022 ⬇
76% in 2012

17%

Disagree that because nutrition information seems to keep changing, it's hard to know what to believe

18% in 2025 ⬇
23% in 2022 ⬆
19% in 2012

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

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[TREND 2012/2022/2025-2026] *To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement regarding food and health information? "Because nutrition information seems to keep changing, it's hard to know what to believe" (n=3005)*
Note: Arrows indicate statistical significance vs. the previous measurement.

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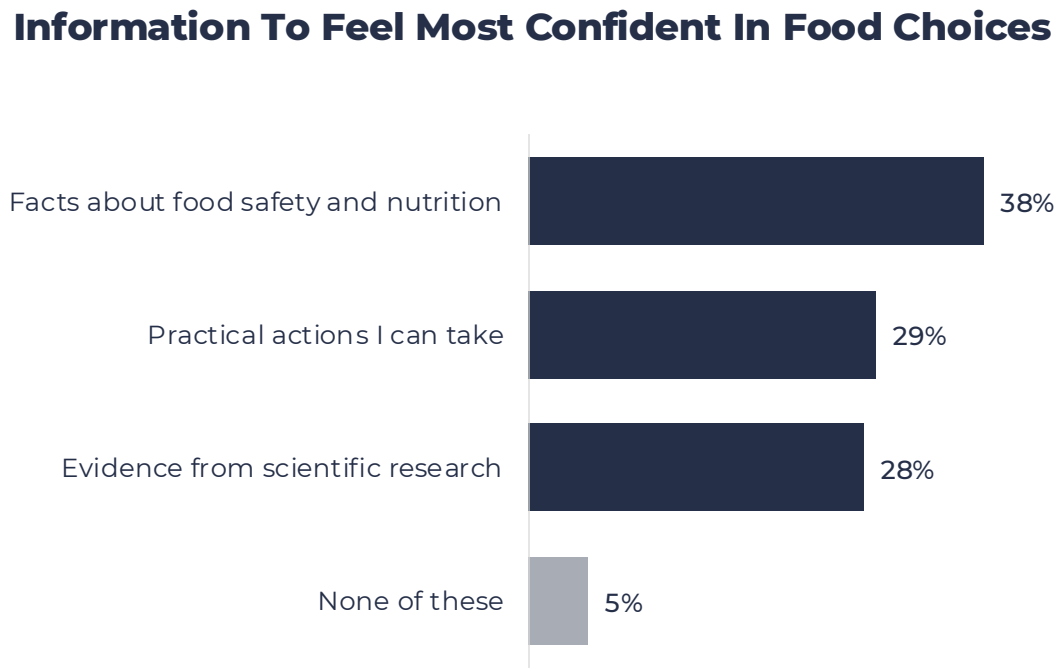
Nearly four in ten Americans say facts about food safety and nutrition would give them the most confidence in their food choices.

Nearly three in ten point to practical actions they can take (29%) or evidence from scientific research (28%), while 5% are not sure.



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

[2026] Which of the following types of information would make you feel most confident in your food choices? Please select one. (n=3005)
Note: "Other" (1%) is not shown

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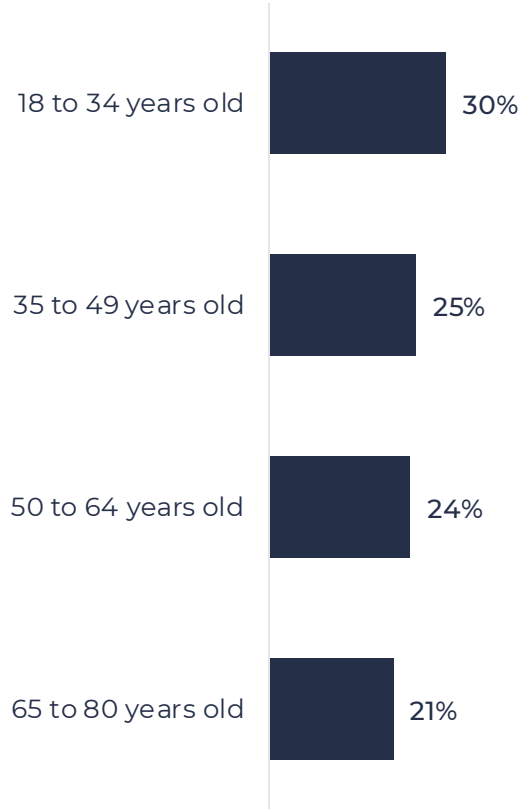
DEMOGRAPHICS

IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

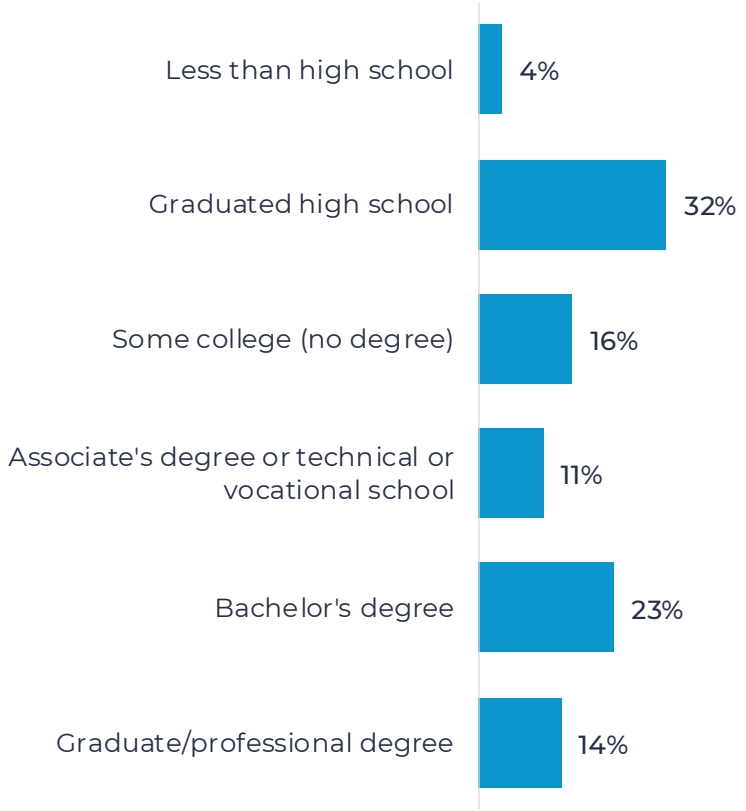
2026

DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE



EDUCATION



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

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

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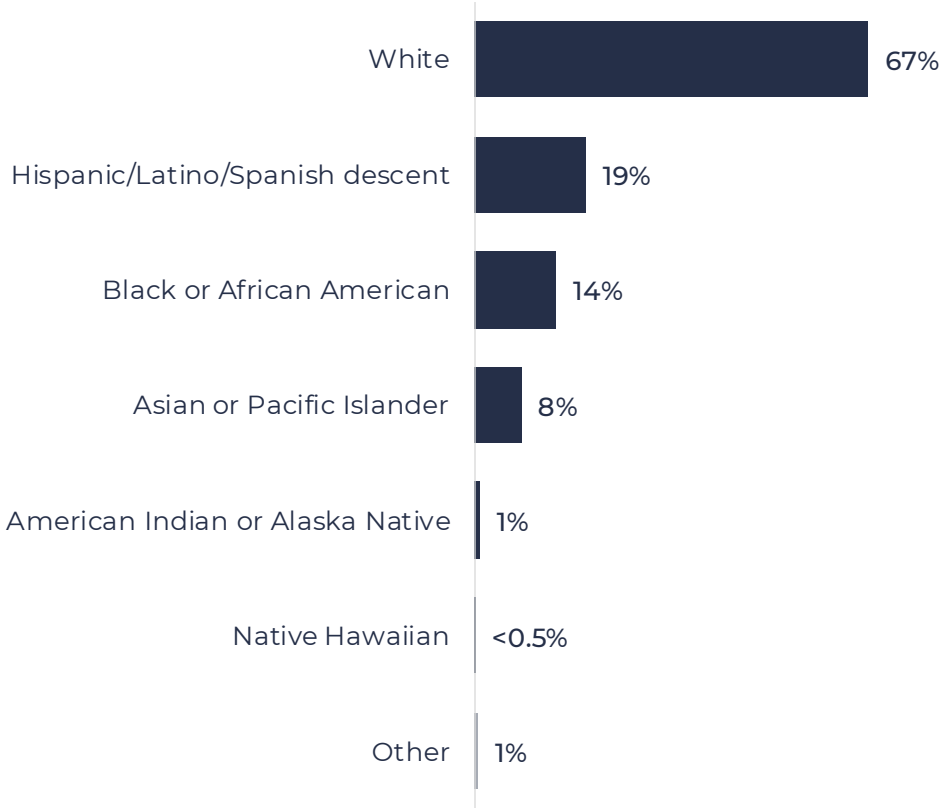
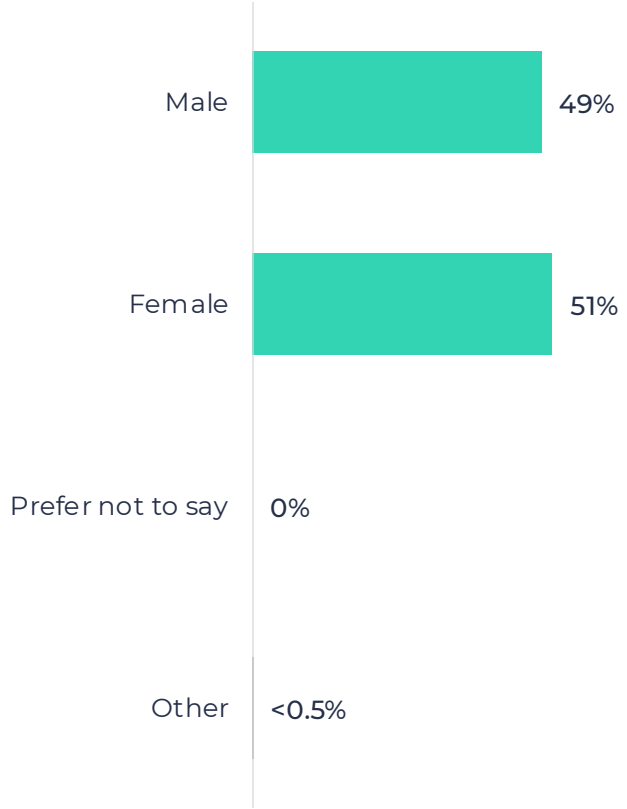
DEMOGRAPHICS

RACE/ETHNICITY



GENDER



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

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

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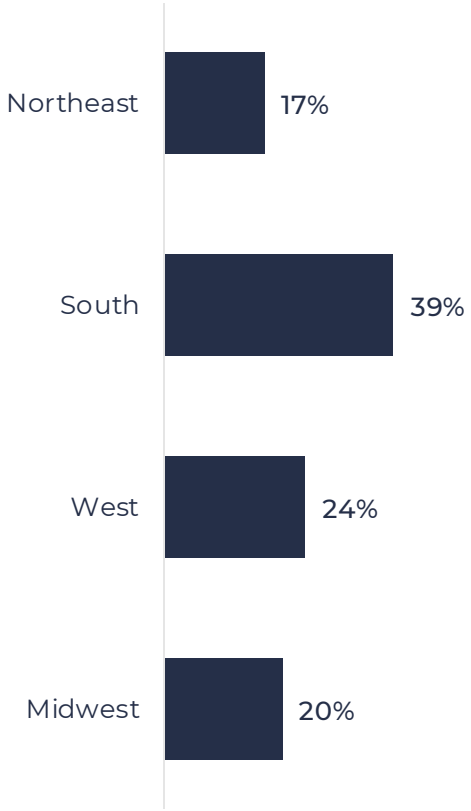
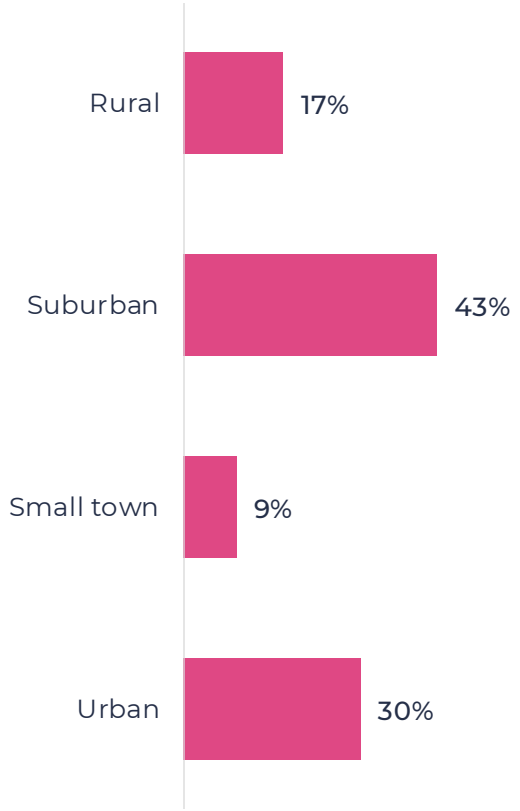
DEMOGRAPHICS

REGION



COMMUNITY



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

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

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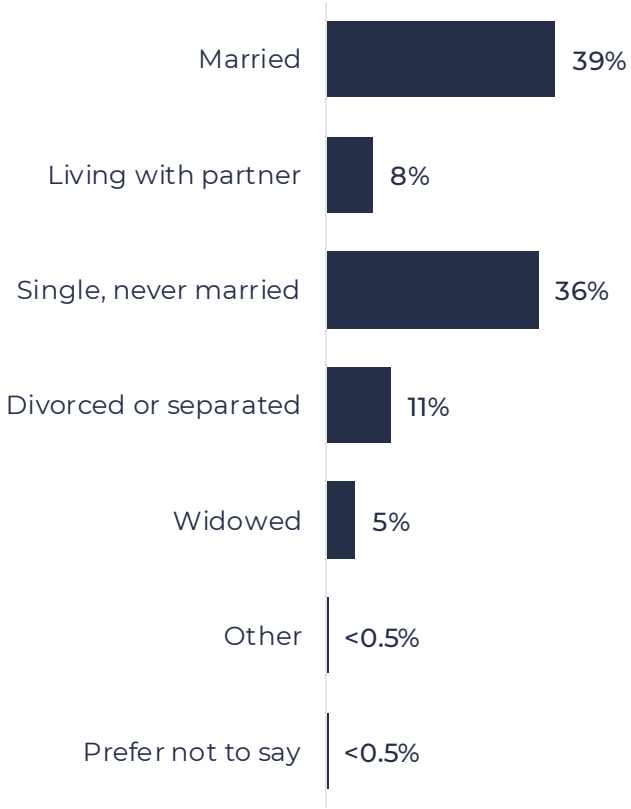
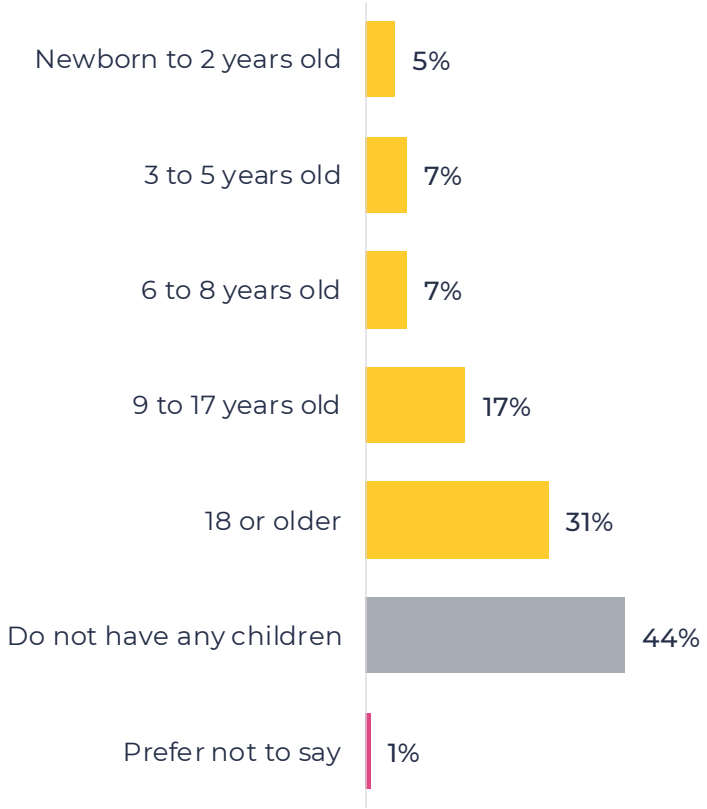
DEMOGRAPHICS

MARITAL STATUS



CHILDREN



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

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

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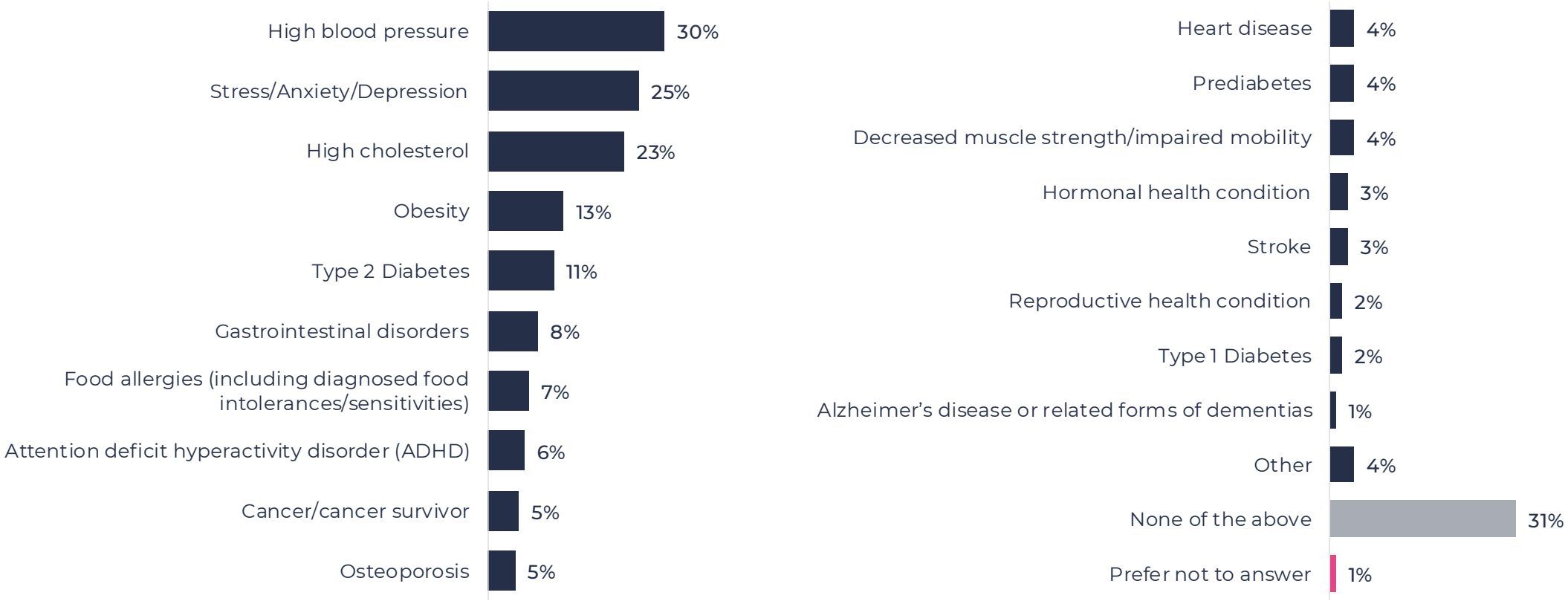
DEMOGRAPHICS

MEDICAL CONDITIONS



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

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

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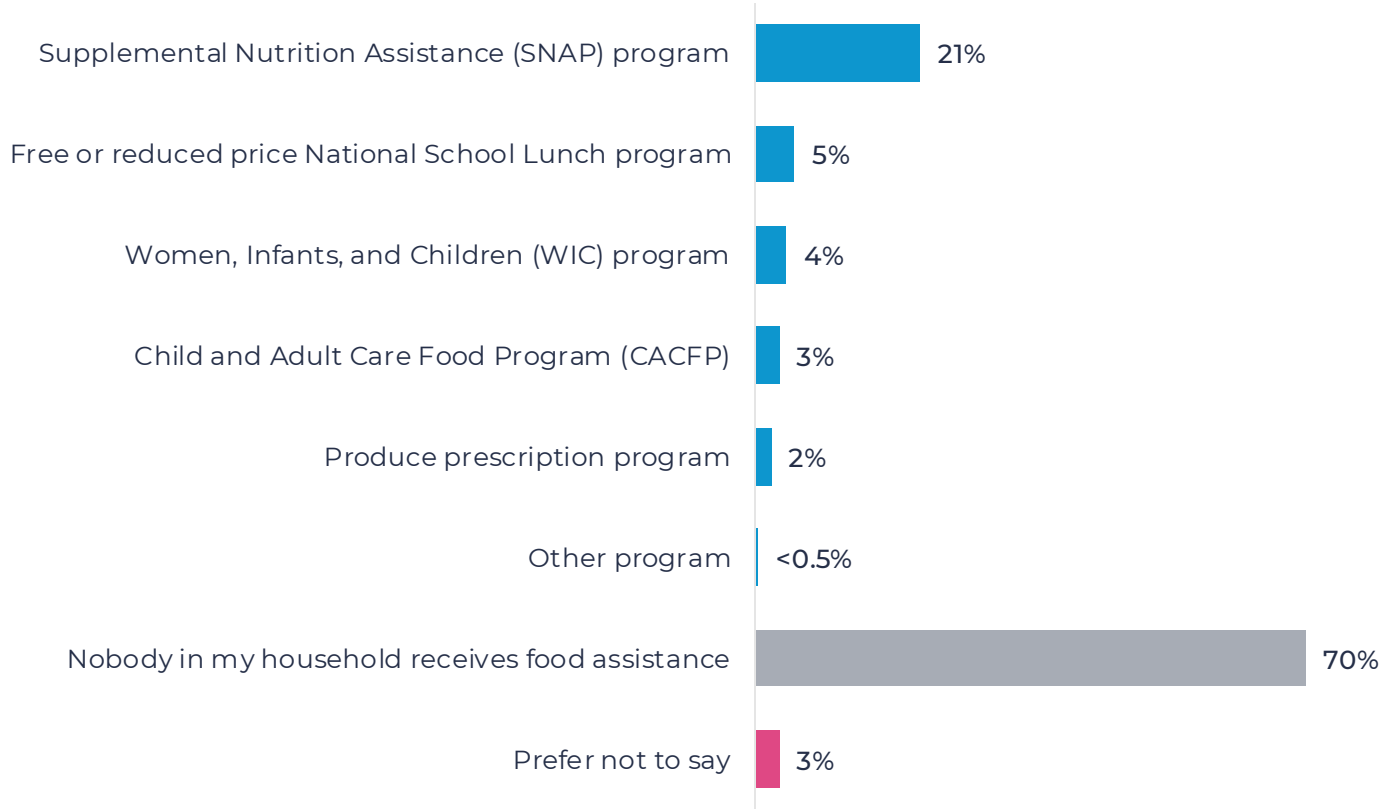
DEMOGRAPHICS

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

GOVERNMENT FOOD ASSISTANCE



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

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

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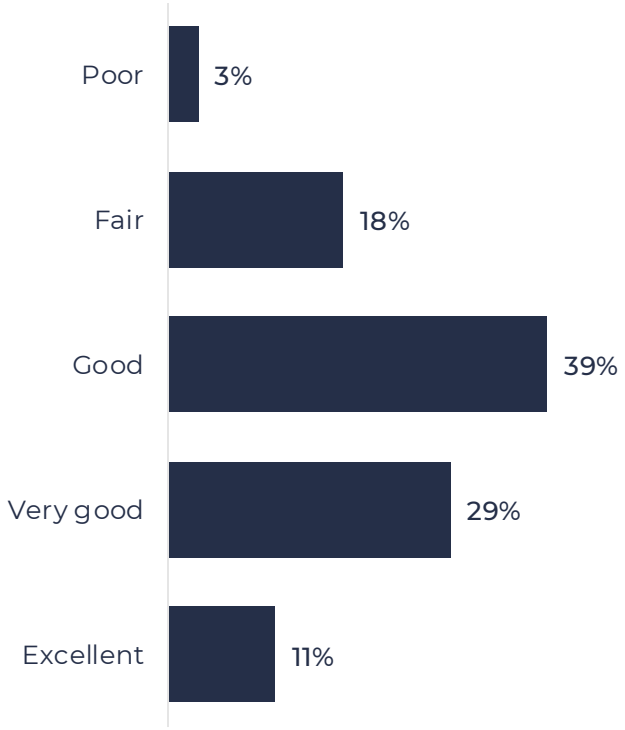
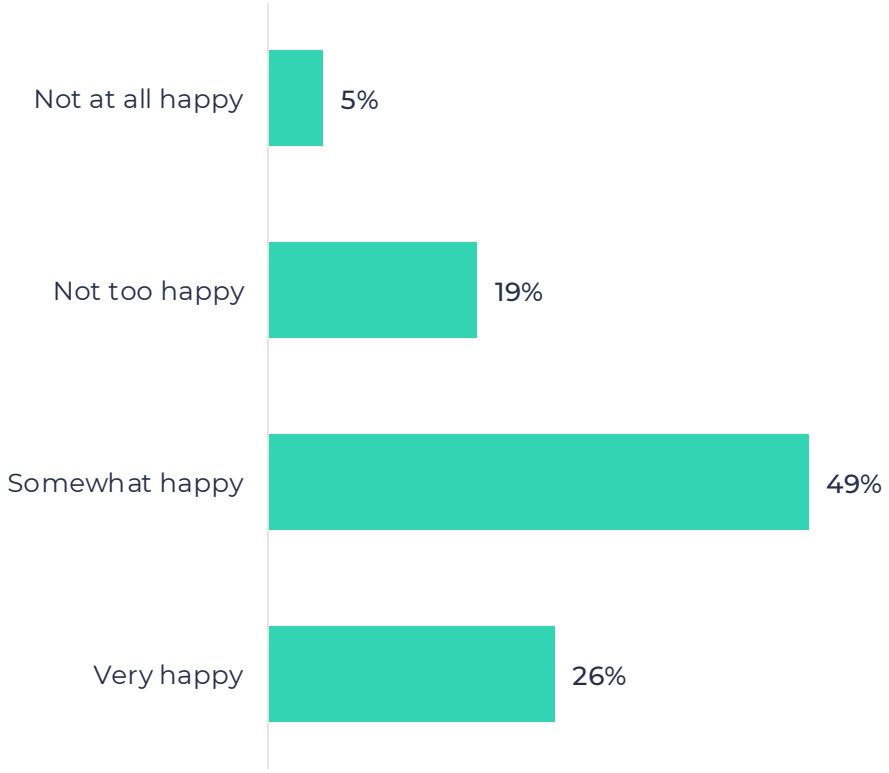
DEMOGRAPHICS

HEALTH STATUS



HAPPINESS



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

How would you describe your own health, in general? (n=3005)
How happy have you been in the past six months? (n=3005)

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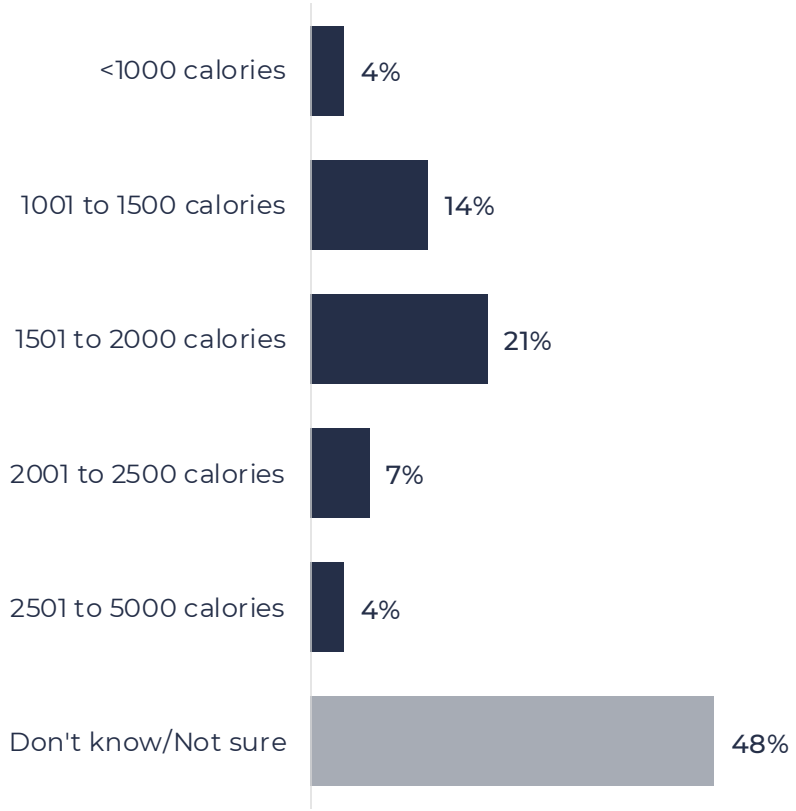
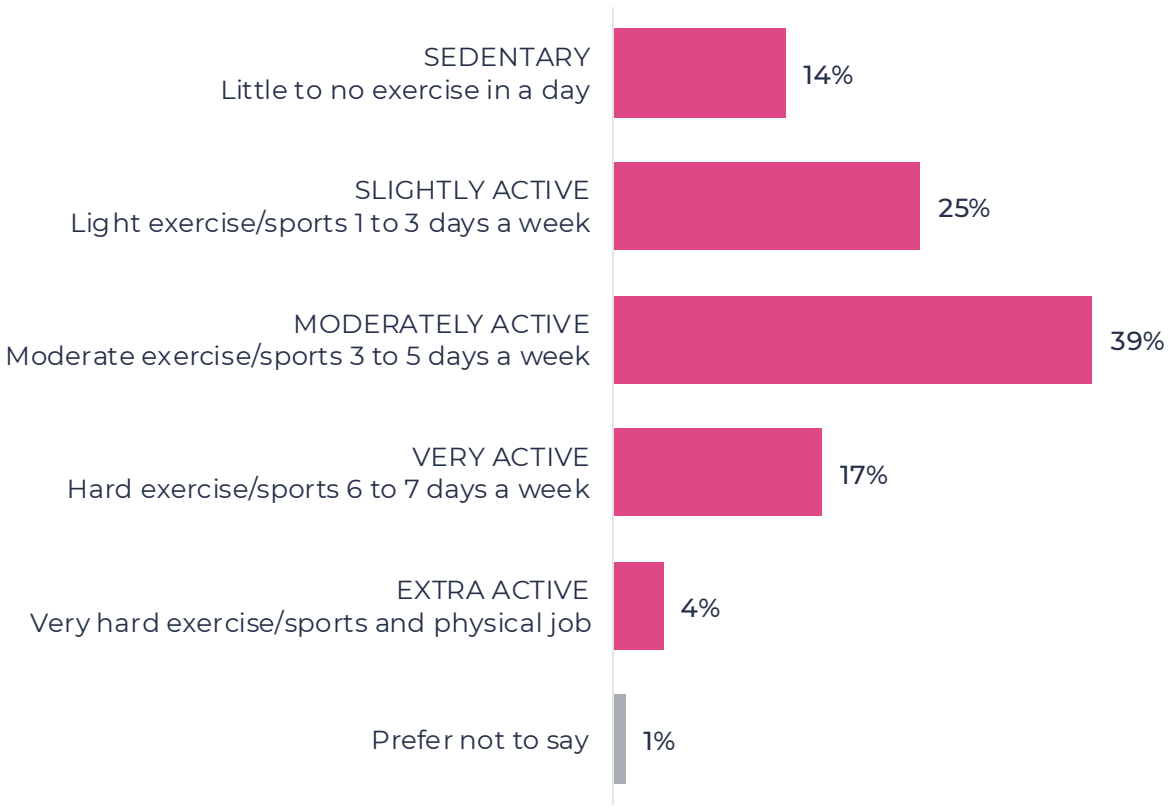
DEMOGRAPHICS

ESTIMATED DAILY CALORIE NEEDS FOR WEIGHT MAINTENANCE



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVEL



IFIC FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

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

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