



**SPOTLIGHT
SURVEY**

Special Report: Americans' Awareness & Response To Cyclospora In Lettuce

August 2026



METHODOLOGY



The International Food Information Council (IFIC) commissioned an online survey among U.S. consumers to measure awareness and response to the recent cyclospora outbreak in lettuce. One thousand eight adults ages 18 years and older completed the online survey from August 12 to August 17, 2026, and were weighted to ensure proportional results.

The Bayesian confidence level for the survey sample (n=1008) is 3.5, which is roughly equivalent to a margin of error of ± 3.1 at the 95% confidence level. Callouts of statistically significant results are included where appropriate on slides displaying results. Something is statistically significant if the result cannot be attributed to random chance. Statistical significance in this report is only compared within each demographic group (e.g. age, race, gender, etc.).

Totals of survey results presented in this report may not add up or equal 100% due to rounding.

SUGGESTED CITATION:

International Food Information Council (IFIC). IFIC Special Report: Americans' Awareness & Response To Cyclospora In Lettuce. August 2026.

KEY FINDINGS

Nearly nine in ten Americans say they have heard about the recent cyclospora outbreak in lettuce.

The lettuce-related cyclospora outbreak in summer of 2026 has reached a broad national audience. Nearly nine in ten Americans (86%) say they have heard about it, and attention extends well beyond simple awareness. Two-thirds (65%) report following the coverage at least somewhat closely, including 35% who have been paying very close attention. Those actively following the story outnumbered Americans who are aware but have paid little attention by roughly three to one (65% vs. 21%). Just 9% had not heard about the outbreak, while 5% were unsure.

Taken together, these findings indicate that the outbreak gained widespread visibility and captured meaningful attention among the majority of Americans.

Three in ten Americans who had heard about the cyclospora outbreak in lettuce say they have stopped eating all lettuce in the past month.

Among Americans who have heard about the lettuce-related cyclospora outbreak, discussing it with others in person was the most-commonly reported action during the previous month (38%). Nearly one-third (32%) searched for information about the outbreak.

Changes in eating behavior are also common: 30% say they have stopped eating all lettuce, 29% have stopped eating iceberg lettuce, and 22% say they have stopped eating produce or reduced their produce intake.

Conversation occurred much more often offline than online, with in-person discussion more than three times as common as posting or commenting about the outbreak online (38% vs. 12%).

Less than one in ten (6%) reported that they do not ever eat or purchase lettuce.

KEY FINDINGS

More than three in four lettuce eaters would feel comfortable eating it if it were grown locally.

Among Americans who eat or purchase lettuce, 76% would feel comfortable eating lettuce if it were locally grown, including **34% who would feel very comfortable and 42% somewhat comfortable**. Similar shares would feel comfortable if the FDA confirms that all affected lettuce has been removed from the market (72%) or if the lettuce is grown in the U.S. (71%). Nearly seven in ten would be comfortable if it were washed thoroughly (68%) or if the CDC announced that the outbreak was over (67%).

Comfort with eating lettuce is lower when based on social and marketplace cues. About six in ten would feel comfortable if friends or family were eating lettuce (62%), if it were available at their regular grocery store (59%), or if it were served at a trusted restaurant (59%).

Overall, these results suggest that geographic origin and/or official government confirmation may engender greater comfort eating lettuce during the cyclospora outbreak of summer 2026 than cues from friends and family or familiar and trusted points of sale.

More than three in ten lettuce eaters would feel very comfortable eating it were locally grown or thoroughly washed, or if the FDA confirmed all affected lettuce had been removed from the market.

Among Americans who eat or purchase lettuce, the conditions would make them feel **very comfortable** eating lettuce level are geographic origin, safe food-handling precautions, and official public health confirmation.

Thirty-four percent would feel very comfortable eating locally grown lettuce, while 32% would feel very comfortable if it were washed thoroughly and 31% if the FDA confirmed that all affected lettuce had been removed from the market. Slightly smaller shares would feel very comfortable if the lettuce were grown in the U.S. or if the CDC announced that the outbreak was over (28% each).

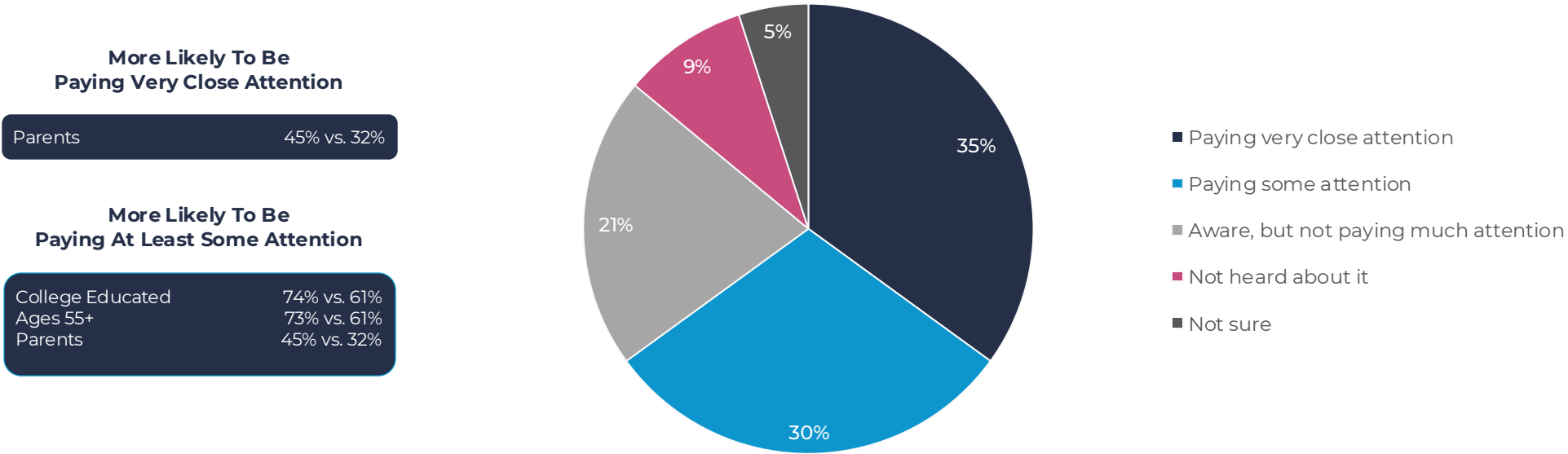
Social and marketplace cues were less likely to make them feel very comfortable eating lettuce. Twenty-three percent would feel very comfortable if friends or family were eating lettuce, and 21% would feel the same if it were available at their regular grocery store or served at a trusted restaurant.

Overall, these results suggest that specific product attributes and official government actions appear more strongly associated with feeling very comfortable than the behavior of others in their social circles or availability at familiar points of sale.

Nearly nine in ten Americans say they have heard about the recent cyclospora outbreak in lettuce.

While 86% say they have heard about the cyclospora outbreak in lettuce, two-thirds (65%) report paying very close (35%) or some (30%) attention. Another 21% are aware but have not paid much attention, and 9% have not heard about it.

Attention Paid To The Cyclospora Outbreak In Lettuce



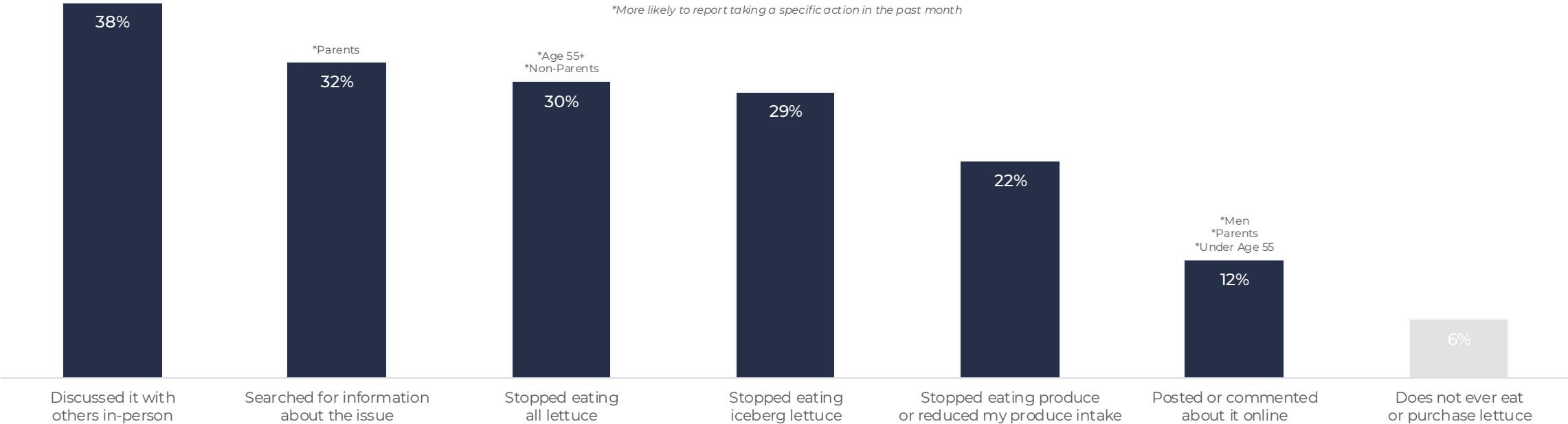
Three in ten Americans who had heard about the cyclospora outbreak say they have stopped eating all lettuce in the past month.

In addition to those who say they have stopped eating all lettuce (30%) in the past month, 22% say they have stopped eating produce or reduced their produce intake. Discussing the cyclospora outbreak in-person (38%) was more common than searching for information (32%) or posting or commenting about it online (12%).

Actions Related To The Cyclospora Outbreak In Lettuce

Among those who had heard about cyclospora in lettuce

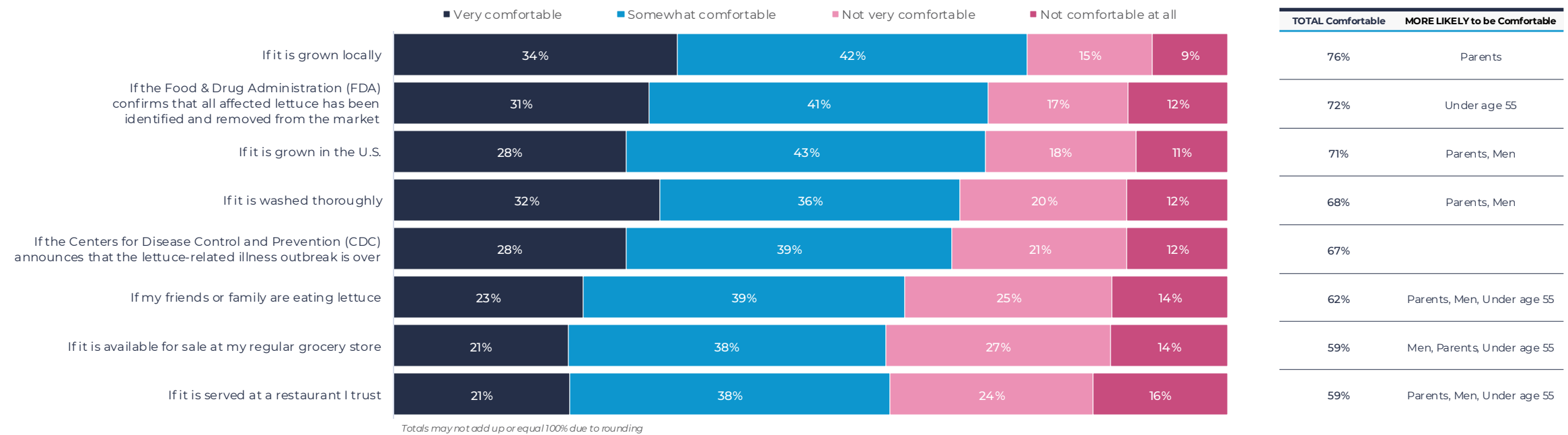
**More likely to report taking a specific action in the past month*



More than three in four lettuce eaters would feel comfortable eating it if it were grown locally.

Overall, 76% would feel comfortable eating locally grown lettuce, including 34% who would feel very comfortable and 42% somewhat comfortable. Similar shares would feel comfortable if the FDA confirms all affected lettuce has been removed from the market (72%) or if the lettuce is grown in the U.S. (71%). Fewer would feel comfortable if it were available at their regular grocery store or served at a trusted restaurant (59% each).

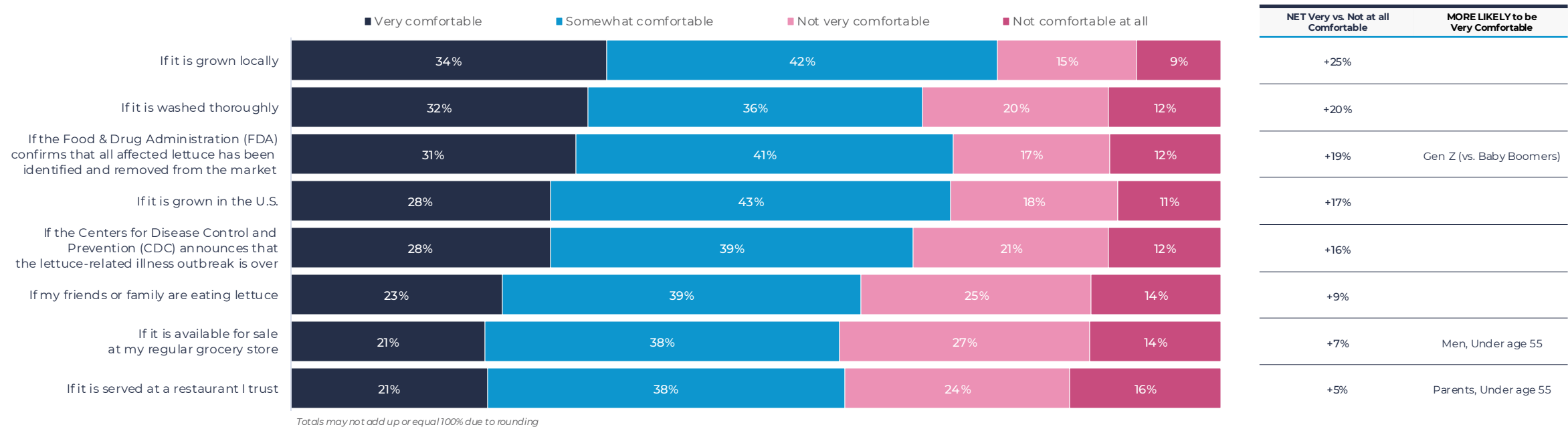
Comfort Level With Eating Lettuce



More than three in ten lettuce eaters would feel very comfortable eating it were locally grown or thoroughly washed, or if the FDA confirmed all affected lettuce had been removed from the market.

Thirty-four percent would feel very comfortable eating lettuce if it were locally grown, with similar shares saying the same if it were washed thoroughly (32%) or if the FDA confirmed all affected lettuce had been removed from the market (31%). Fewer than one in four would feel very comfortable if friends or family were eating lettuce (23%), if it were available at their regular grocery store (21%), or if it were served at a trusted restaurant (21%).

Comfort Level With Eating Lettuce





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