

WHAT'S YOUR
HEALTH
WORTH?



FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY 2015

2015 IFIC Foundation Food and Health Survey Media Kit

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What is the Food and Health Survey?

The 2015 Food & Health Survey: Consumer Attitudes toward Food Safety, Nutrition & Health, marks the 10th anniversary of an important ongoing investigation into the opinions and behaviors of American consumers. The survey, commissioned by the International Food Information Council Foundation, delves deeply into issues of health and diet, dietary ingredients, consumer purchasing decisions, sustainability, and food safety. For ten years, the survey has uncovered important consumer insights and trends. The 2015 survey continues that tradition, with a special focus on understanding the extent to which Americans value and prioritize their own health.

The 2015 Food & Health Survey was conducted by Greenwald & Associates of Washington, D.C. The survey was conducted online from March 13 to March 26, 2015. It includes 1,007 Americans ages 18-80, and is weighted to represent the demographics of the United States. **To learn more about the survey, visit www.foodinsight.org/2015-FHS.**

[Click here to view the full report.](#)

[Click here to view the press release.](#)

What is the International Food Information Council Foundation?

The International Food Information Council Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, non-partisan educational foundation based in Washington, D.C. Our mission is to effectively communicate science-based information about health, nutrition and food safety for the public good. We were formed in 1991 as the public education arm of the International Food Information Council (IFIC). We originally were named the Food Education Foundation and later renamed the International Food Information Council Foundation. We envision a global environment where credible science drives food policy and consumer choice, and we exist to help facilitate that environment.

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New Survey: Americans Not Nearly As Fit As We Think We Are

*10th Food and Health Survey Reveals Gap Between Self-Perception and Reality,
Economic Divide on Organic and Processed Foods,
Where Health and Food Rank Among Priorities Like Time and Money*

(Washington, D.C., May 12, 2015)—With the theme “What’s Your Health Worth?”, the International Food Information Council (IFIC) Foundation’s 10th anniversary Food and Health Survey is offering a wealth of new insights into Americans’ health and nutrition, including perceptions of their own health, an economic divide on food-purchasing decisions, where health and nutrition rank among competing priorities, and ongoing confusion over dietary and health-related choices.

“For 10 years, the IFIC Foundation’s Food and Health Survey has provided some of the most wide-ranging and compelling insights and trends about Americans’ attitudes and behaviors around food, health, and nutrition,” said Marianne Smith Edge, MS, RD, LD, FADA, IFIC Foundation’s senior vice president of nutrition and food safety.

“This year’s theme, ‘What’s Your Health Worth?’, delves into the trade-offs Americans make regarding health and nutrition on an everyday basis.”

Self-Perception vs. Reality

According to the survey, 57% of Americans rate their own health as very good or excellent, yet 55% of that group is either overweight or obese.

“What I fear is that we’ve reset the bar, in that some people actually don’t know what feeling good is like, but they think they feel pretty good,” said Dr. Jim Hill, executive director of the Anschutz Health and Wellness Center at the University of Colorado. “So we’ve almost lowered the bar in defining what good health is.”

The vast majority of consumers (84%) say they are either trying to maintain or lose weight.

Consumers also report efforts to choose more healthful options in their lives, with 82% trying to eat more fruits and vegetables; 76% cutting calories by drinking water, or low- and no-calorie beverages; 70% eating more foods with whole grains; 69% cutting back on foods that are higher in added sugars; and 68% consuming smaller portions.

When asked to rate the most effective weight management strategies, changing the types of foods they eat topped the list at 51%, followed by making sure they get enough physical activity, at 50%.

Economic Divide

Higher-income consumers are more likely to buy foods based on their production or source (locally sourced, no added hormones or steroids, organic) and more likely to report avoiding many specific food components and ingredients.

Half of Americans (51%) acknowledge that foods would cost more if processed foods were hypothetically removed from the food supply, with 45% also saying food would become less convenient. While 43% say the impact of removing processed foods would be improved health or nutrition, higher-income consumers were more likely to answer that way.

Lower-income Americans are most concerned about cost impacts if processed foods were removed from the food supply, and they also are most likely than other groups to buy groceries if given an additional \$100 a month.

“Findings show that a minority consisting of higher-income Americans, and those in better health, seem willing to pay more for organic and locally sourced foods that claim environmental, safety, and health benefits, despite lack of evidence that these benefits truly deliver,” said Smith Edge.

“The potential impact on lower-income Americans is to create doubt about the healthfulness of conventionally or typically available food, adding additional stress and guilt to buying foods that can provide nutritious benefits for everyone.”

Competing Priorities

While 37% of Americans cite lack of willpower as the biggest barrier to losing or maintaining their weight, 31% cite lack of time.

If people suddenly were given an extra four hours a week, exercise is the top activity (36%) Americans say they would spend it on, followed by time with friends and family (31%), relaxing or sleeping (29%), doing household chores or tasks (20%), reading (20%), or practicing a hobby (20%).

If Americans had an additional \$100 per month, three out of five (61%) would save, invest or pay off debts, with all other financial priorities trailing behind: household expenses or home repairs (28%), travel (23%), shopping for anything other than groceries (17%), entertainment (13%), and groceries (13%).

When asked how much time they spend preparing dinner on a given day, 19% reported less than 15 minutes, with 52% spending between 15 and 44 minutes, and 29% spending 45 minutes or more.

Four out of 10 (40%) say they spend more time tracking the healthfulness of their diet than they do following their favorite sport or sports team (31%), yet there is a significant gender divide: Men chose sports over their diet 46% to 27%, while women chose their diet over sports 51% to 17%.

When asked whether they would rather lose \$1,000 than gain 20 pounds, 56% would rather lose the money, the same number as last year. However, there is also a gender gap, with 50% of men and 61% of women choosing to lose the money over gaining the weight.

Taste (83%), price (68%), and healthfulness (60%) continue to be the top drivers of food-purchasing decisions, as has been the case every year over the survey’s 10-year history.

Confusion

Perhaps more than ever in the survey’s history, consumer confusion is emerging as a key concern. More than three-quarters (78%) say they would rather hear information about what to eat versus what *not* to eat. That’s the same result as in 2014, but the number who “strongly agreed” with that statement rose 7 percentage points, from 26% to 33%.

More than a third (36%) say that “chemicals” in food are their top food safety concern, followed by 34% who were concerned about foodborne illness from bacteria, despite the fact that the latter has a more serious and substantiated health impact, pointing to a need to better communicate risks.

While 60% of Americans have confidence in the safety of the U.S. food supply, that number has fallen from 70% in 2013, a symptom of the heightened level of “noise” in news coverage and online commentary about food.

“Despite what we see that people want to be told what to do, we continuously tell them what not to do, and I think they’re very, very confused,” said Dr. Hill.

Other Findings

- Information consumers look at on a product’s label before they buy it includes expiration date (51%), the Nutrition Facts Panel (49%), ingredients (40%), serving sizes and amount per container (36%), calories and other nutrition information (29%), and brand name (27%). Only one in nine consumers (11%) look for no information whatsoever on a food product’s label.
- 86% said they would be able to find the information if they wanted to know something about an ingredient in their food.
- Topping the list of what consumers are trying to get a certain amount or as much as possible of: whole grains (56%), fiber (55%), protein (54%), and calcium (43%).
- Topping the list of what consumers are trying to limit or avoid entirely: sugars in general (55%), added sugars (54%), sodium/salt (53%), trans fats (49%), high fructose corn syrup (48%), saturated fats (47%), and calories (47%).
- Americans have widely divergent definitions of what a “sustainable diet” means, with 39% saying it represents a balanced, nutritious meal; 25% saying foods that are affordable and readily available; and 23% citing foods that have a smaller impact on the environment.
- 66% agree that “the overall healthfulness of the food or beverage is more important to me than the use of food biotechnology,” defined as “the use of science and technologies such as genetic engineering to enhance certain attributes of foods.” 49% agree that biotechnology is a tool that can help ensure we have enough food to feed a growing population, while only 17% disagree.
- One’s personal healthcare professional is the most-trusted source of information about types of food (70%) and about food safety (65%). A friend or family member ranks second for types of food (34%) and third for food safety (29%). U.S. government agencies rank second for food safety (42%) and third for types of food (26%).

For more information on the 2015 Food and Health Survey, visit www.foodinsight.org/2015-FHS.

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The International Food Information Council Foundation is dedicated to the mission of effectively communicating science-based information on health, food safety and nutrition for the public good. The IFIC Foundation is supported primarily by the broad-based food, beverage and agricultural industries. Visit <http://www.foodinsight.org>.

WHAT'S YOUR **HEALTH** WORTH?



INTERNATIONAL
FOOD INFORMATION
COUNCIL FOUNDATION

FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY 2015

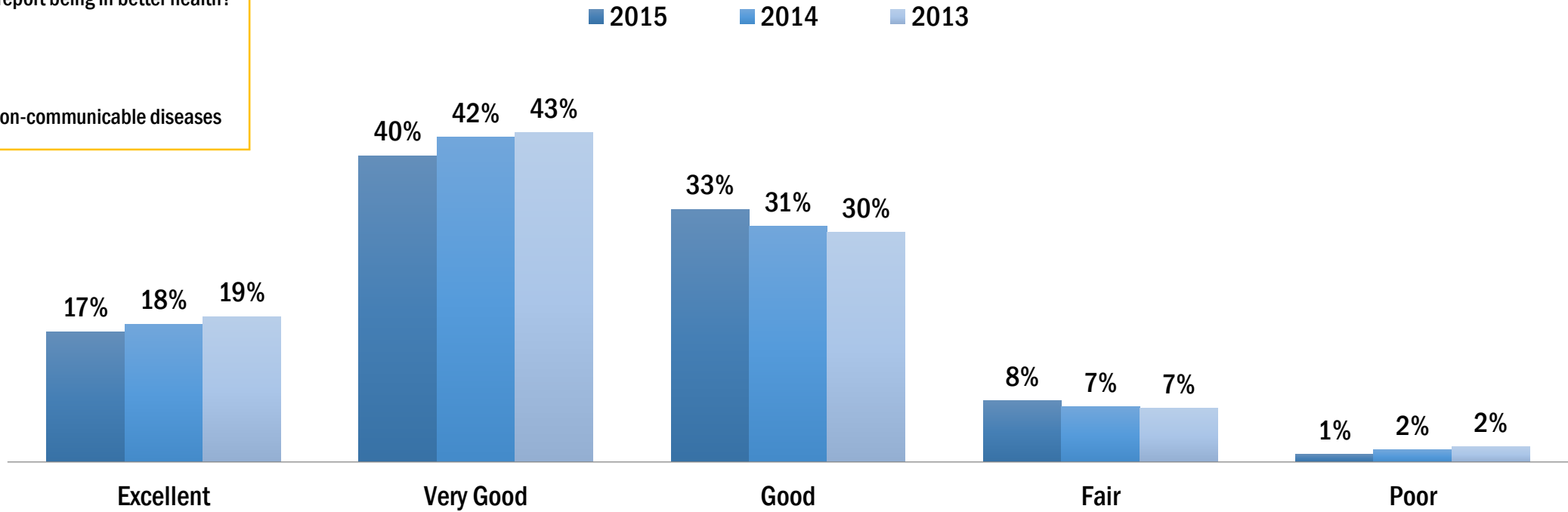
Consistent with previous years, more than half of Americans rate their own health as excellent or very good.

57%

ARE IN EXCELLENT/VERY GOOD HEALTH

- Who is more likely to report being in better health?
- College grads
 - Women
 - Higher income
 - Lower BMI , no non-communicable diseases

How would you describe your own health in general?

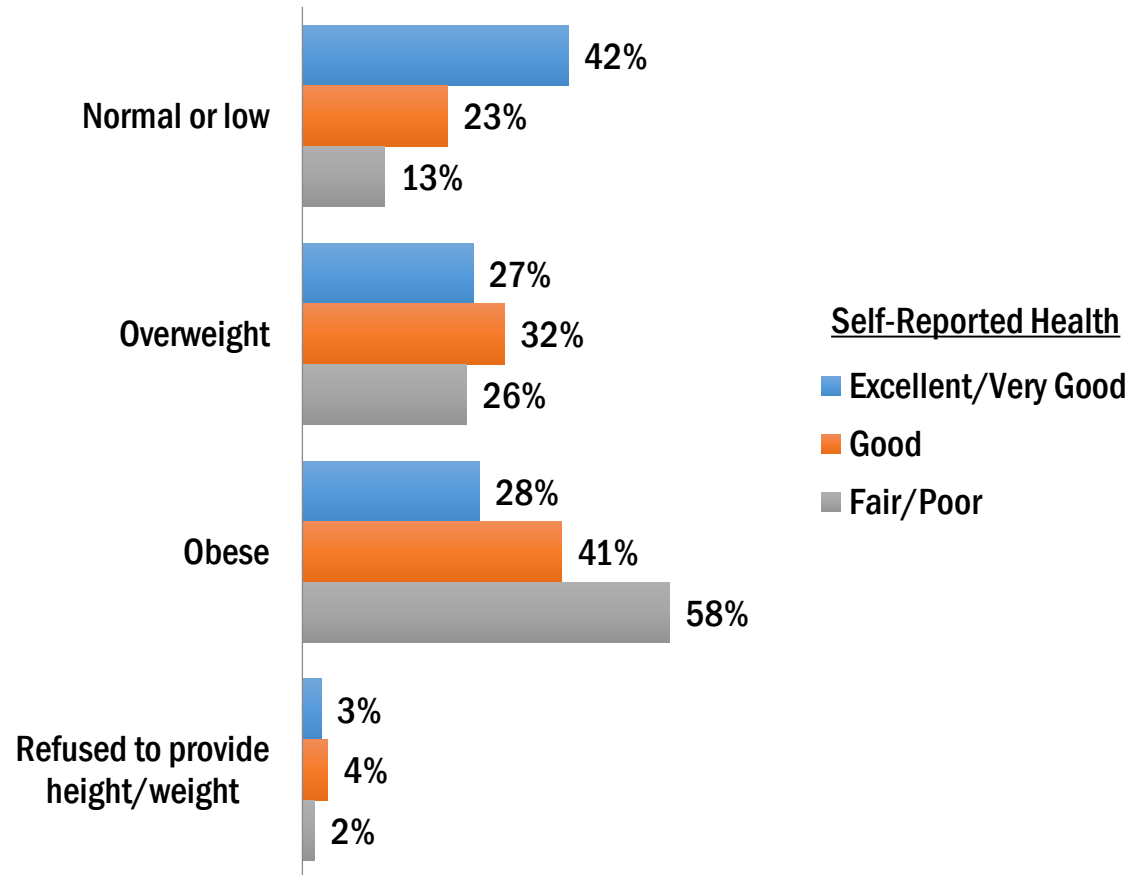


2015 n=1,007; 2014 n=1,005; 2013 n=1,006

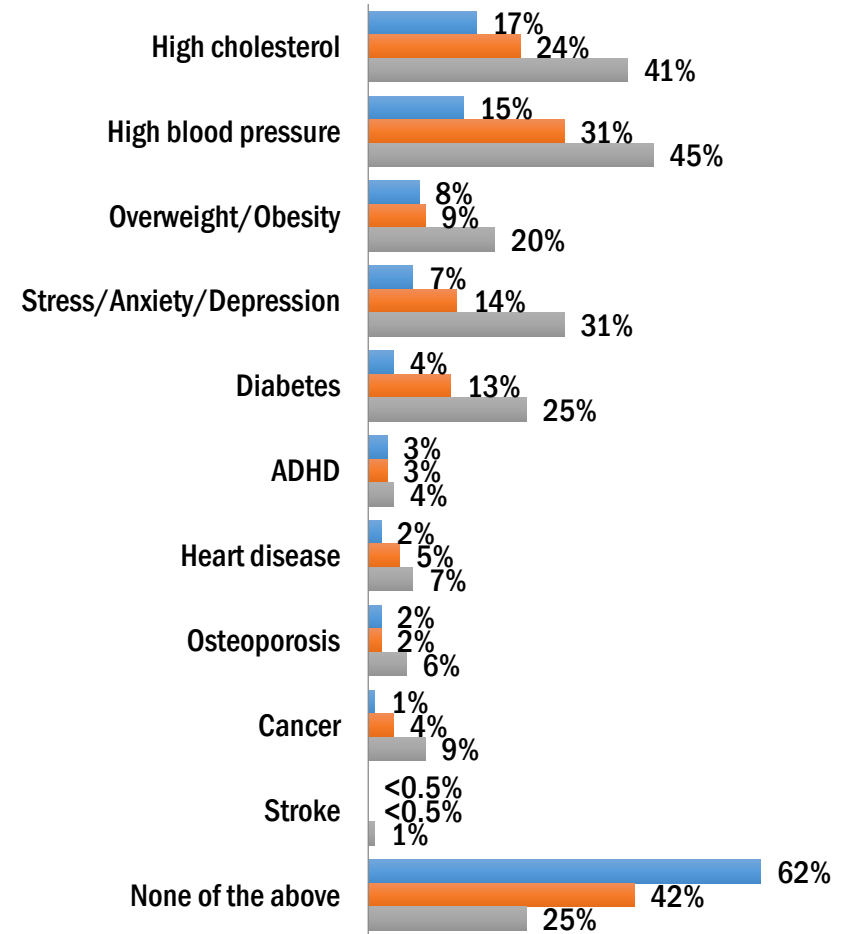


Half of Americans who see themselves as in excellent or very good health are overweight or obese.

BMI Score

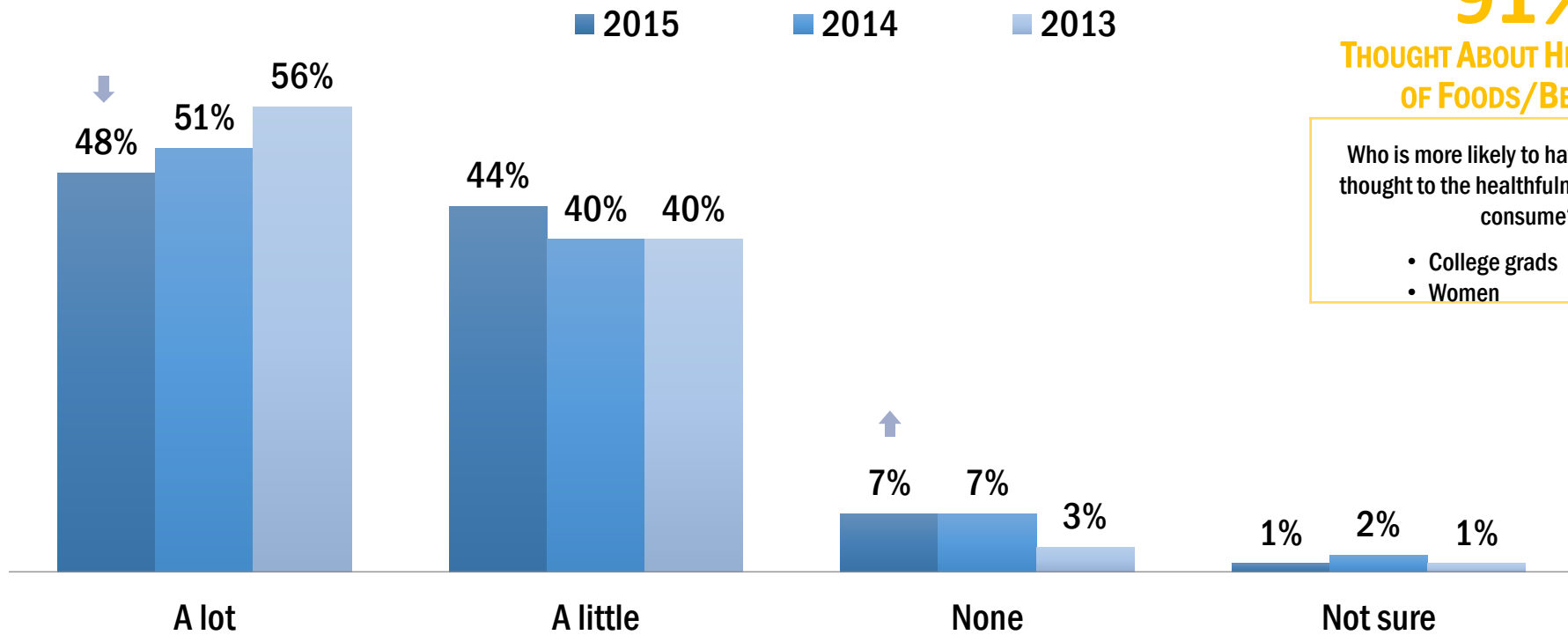


Currently Being Treated For...



In 2015, almost half of all Americans have given a lot of thought to the healthfulness of foods and beverages they consume.

Over the past year, how much thought have you given to the healthfulness of the foods and beverages you consume?



91%
THOUGHT ABOUT HEALTHFULNESS OF FOODS/BEVERAGES

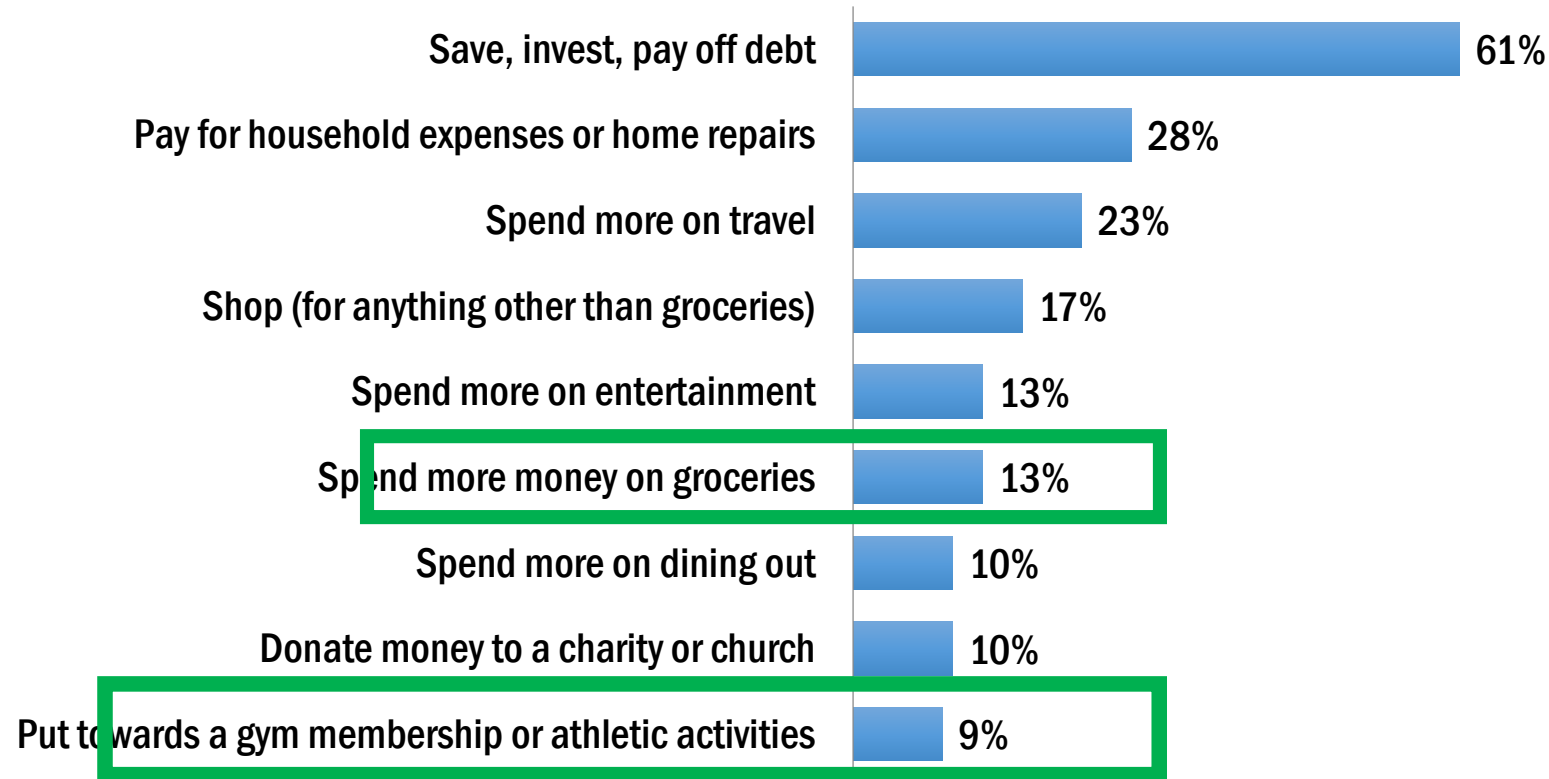
Who is more likely to have given *a lot* of thought to the healthfulness of what they consume?

- College grads
- Women

2015 n=1,007; 2014 n=1,005; 2013 n=1,006
Arrows indicate significant (.95 level) differences vs. prior year(s); color of arrow indicates comparison year.

If given an extra \$100 every month, six in ten Americans would save it, invest it, or pay off debt. No more than 13% would apply the extra money to any of the food or health options.

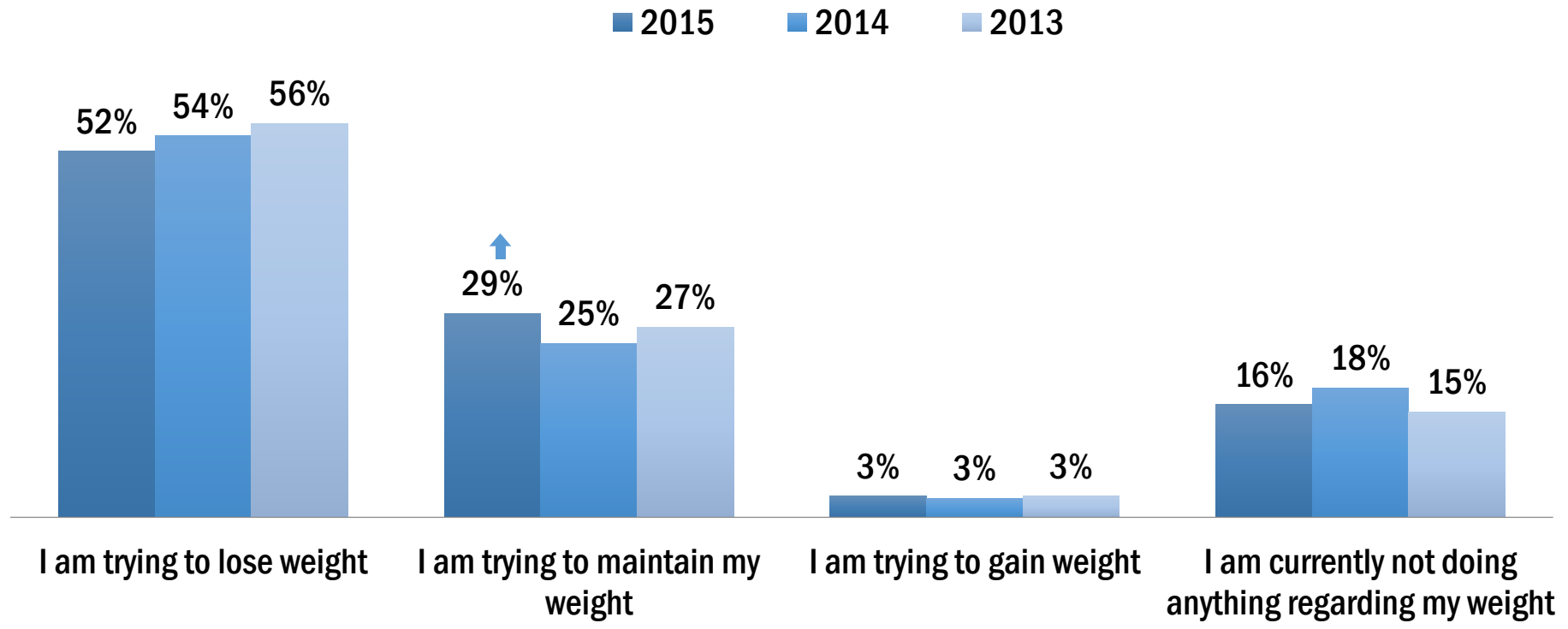
If you had an extra \$100 to spend every month, what would you likely do with that money? (Please select up to 3 options.)



2015 n=1,007

Four out of five Americans are trying to lose weight or maintain their current weight.

Which of the following best describes what you are currently doing regarding your weight?

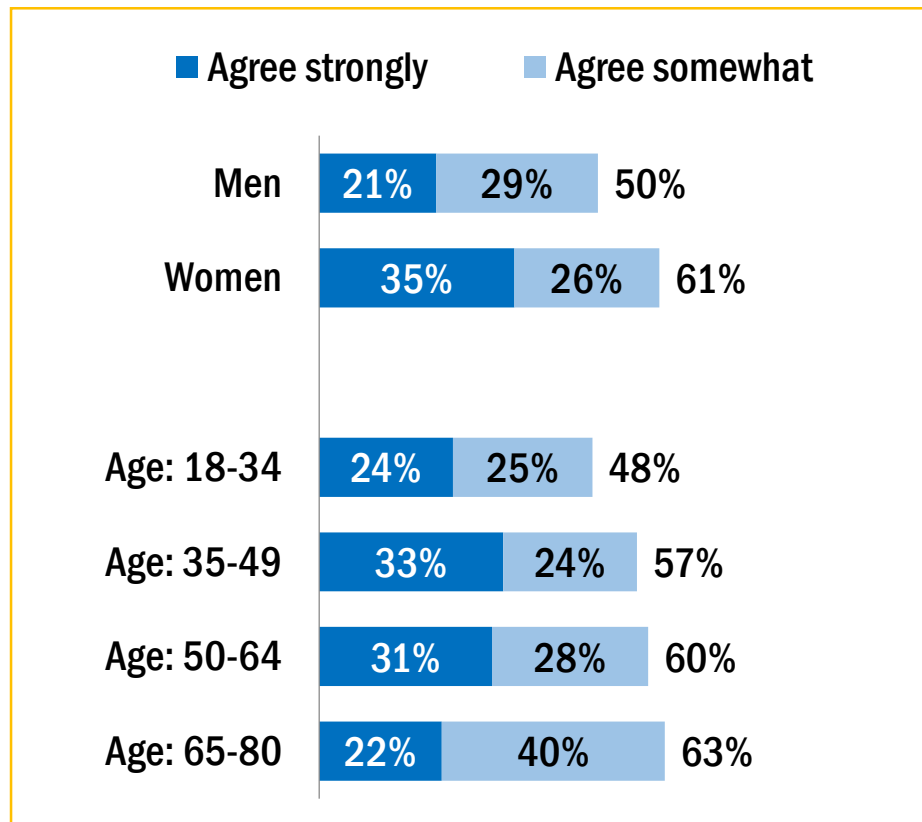
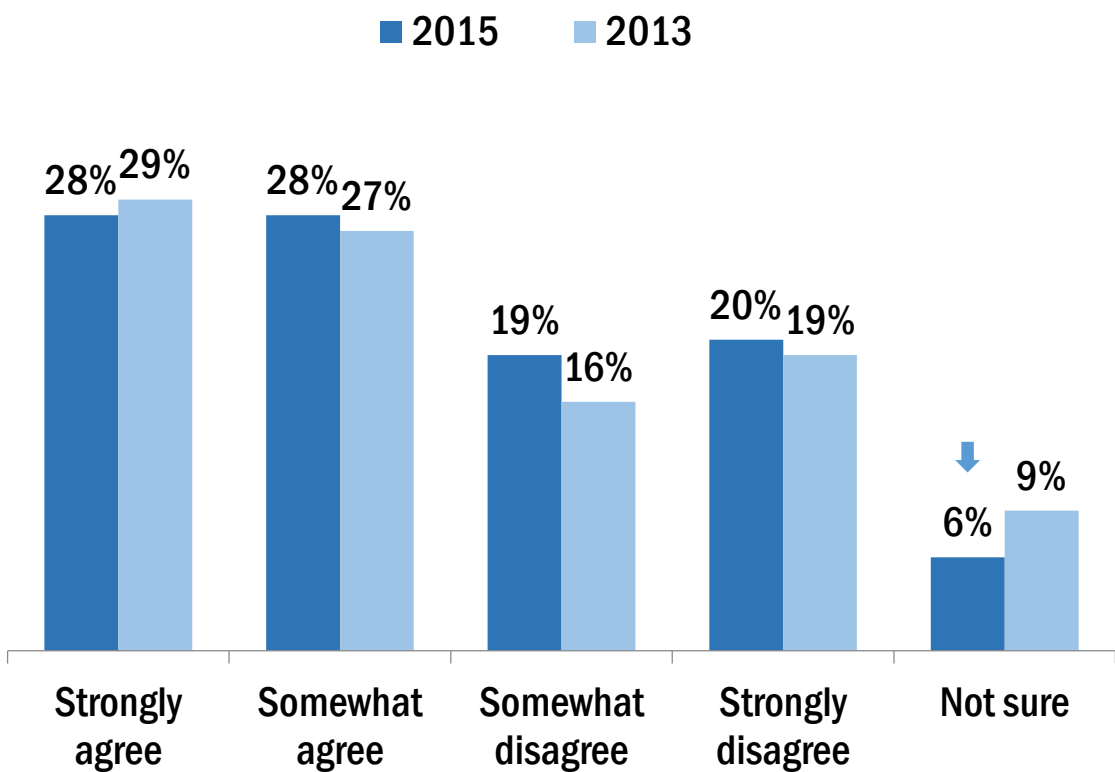


2015 n=1,007; 2014 n=1,005; 2013 n=1,006
Arrows indicate significant (.95 level) differences vs. prior year(s); color of arrow indicates comparison year.

When given a choice between losing money or gaining weight, women would rather lose the money. Men are evenly split on the tradeoff.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

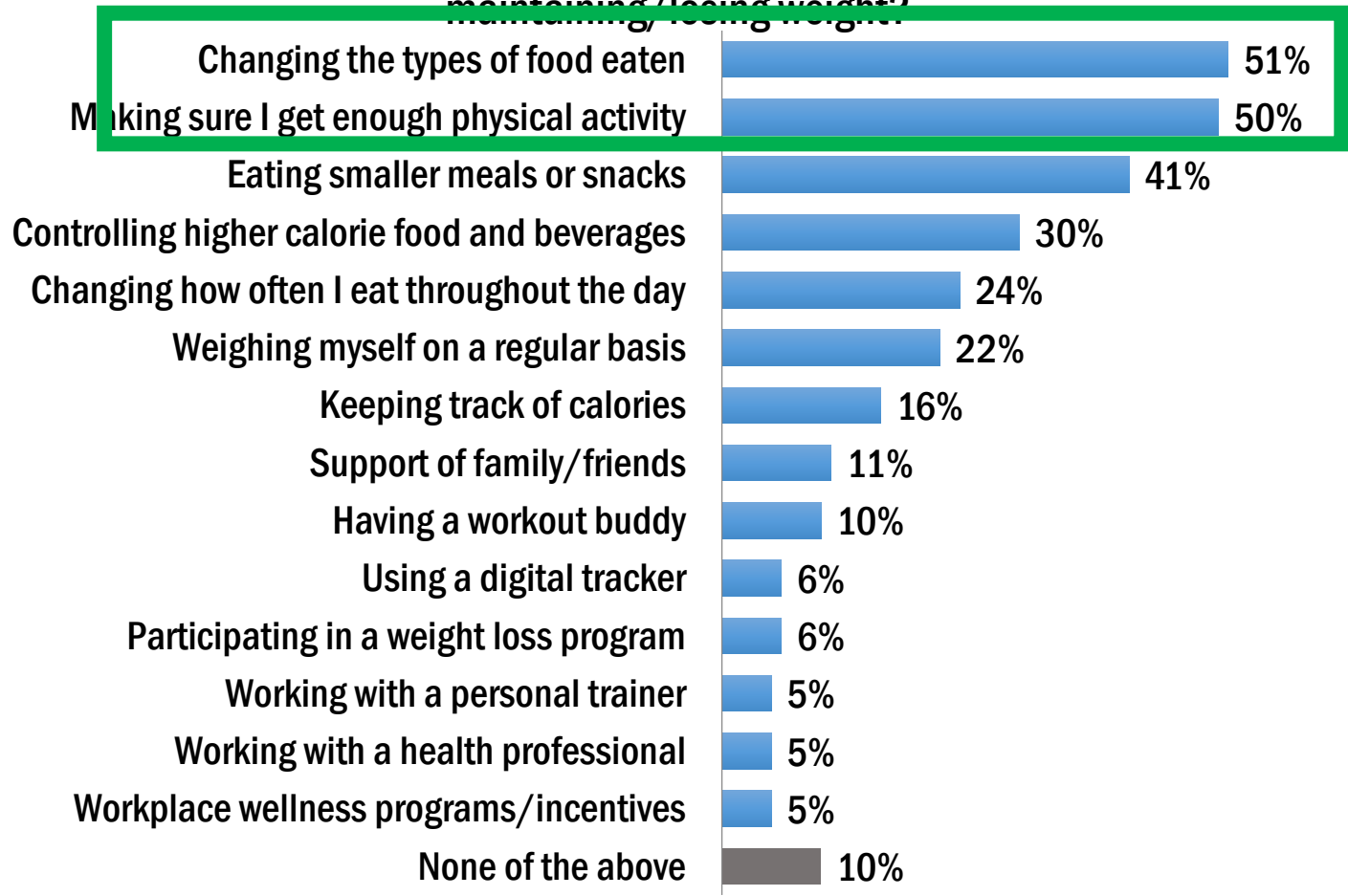
“I would rather lose \$1,000 than gain 20 pounds.”



2015 n=1,007; 2013 n=1,006

Americans see changing the types of food eaten and making sure to get enough physical activity as the most effective weight management strategies.

Which of the following would contribute/has contributed the most to your success in maintaining/losing weight?

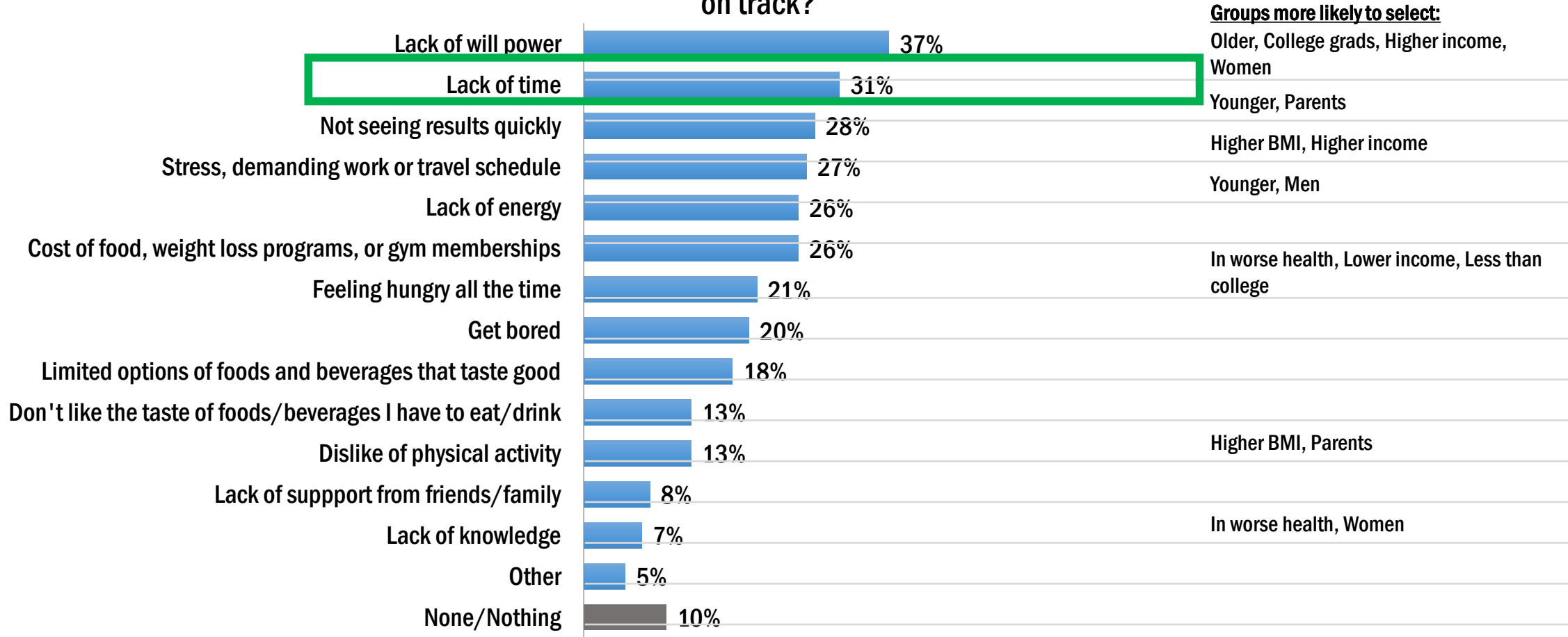


2015 n=1,007



Americans see lack of will power and lack of time as the biggest barriers to losing/maintain their weight.

In an effort to lose/maintain weight, which of the following prevents you from staying on track?

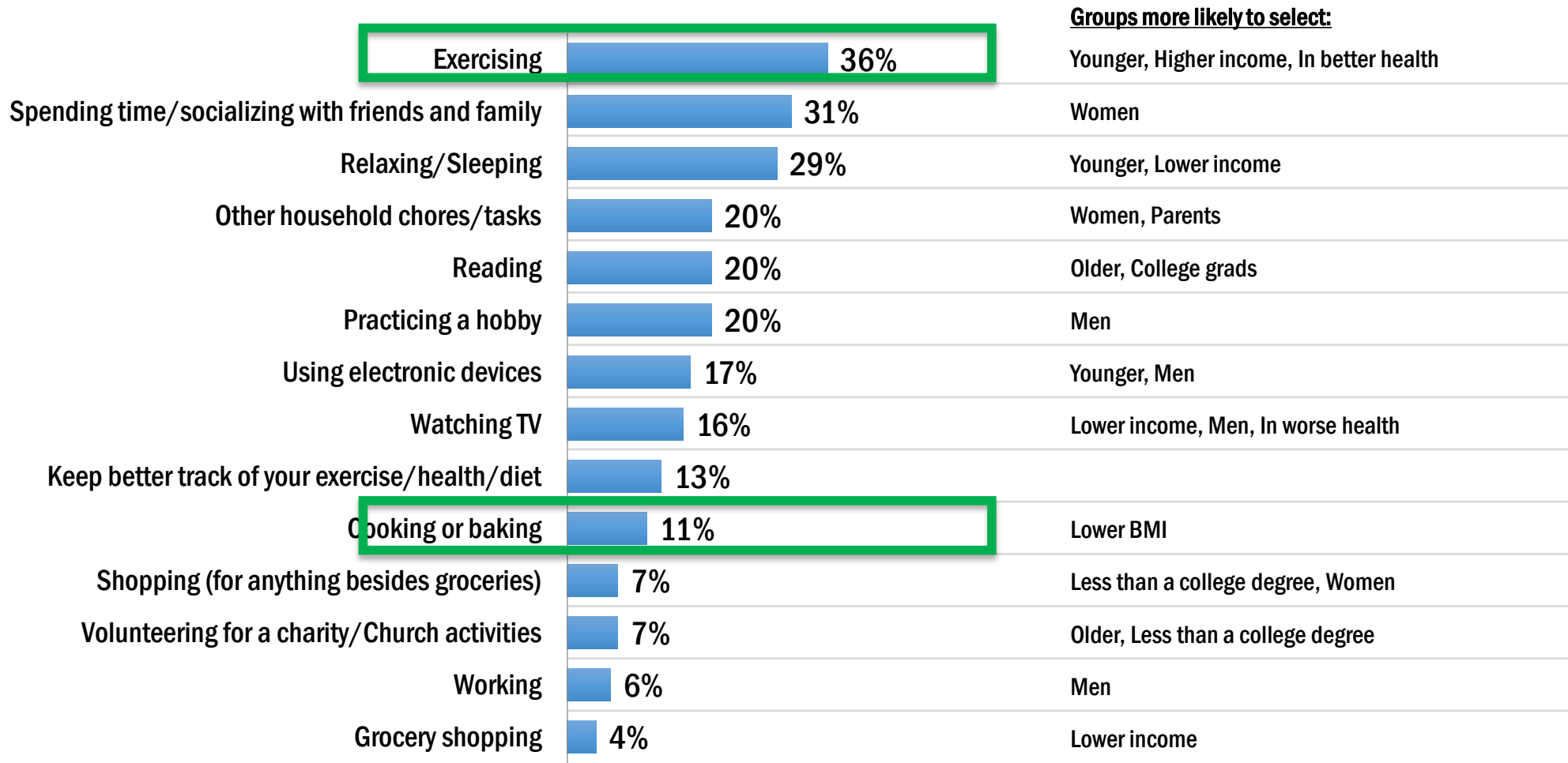


2015 if trying to lose or maintain weight (Split Sample B) n=411



If Americans had an extra 4 hours every week, most say they would exercise or spend time with friends and family. Only about one in ten would spend any of the time cooking or tracking their activity/diet.

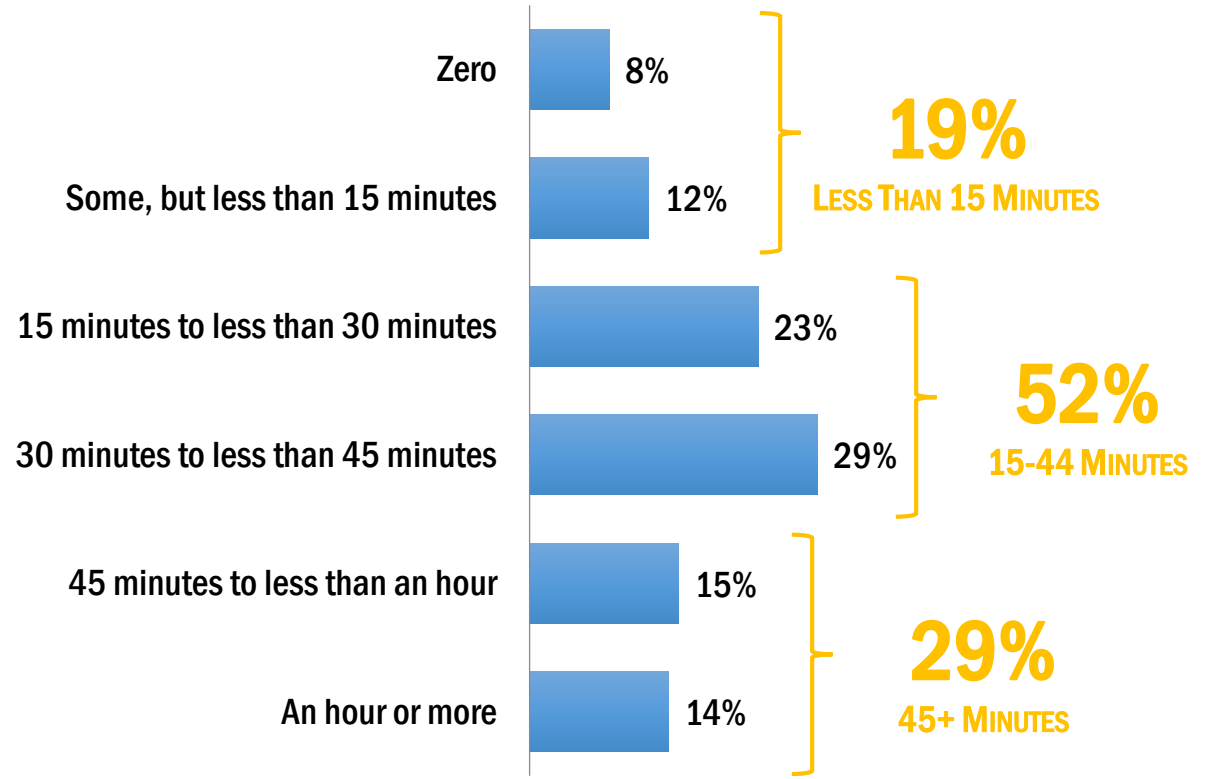
If you suddenly had an extra 4 hours every week, how would you likely spend that time? *(Please select up to 3 options.)*



2015 n=1,007

One in five Americans spends less than 15 minutes cooking or preparing dinner on the average weekday.

How much time do you personally spend cooking or preparing dinner on the average weekday?



PERCENT SPENDING AN HOUR OR MORE

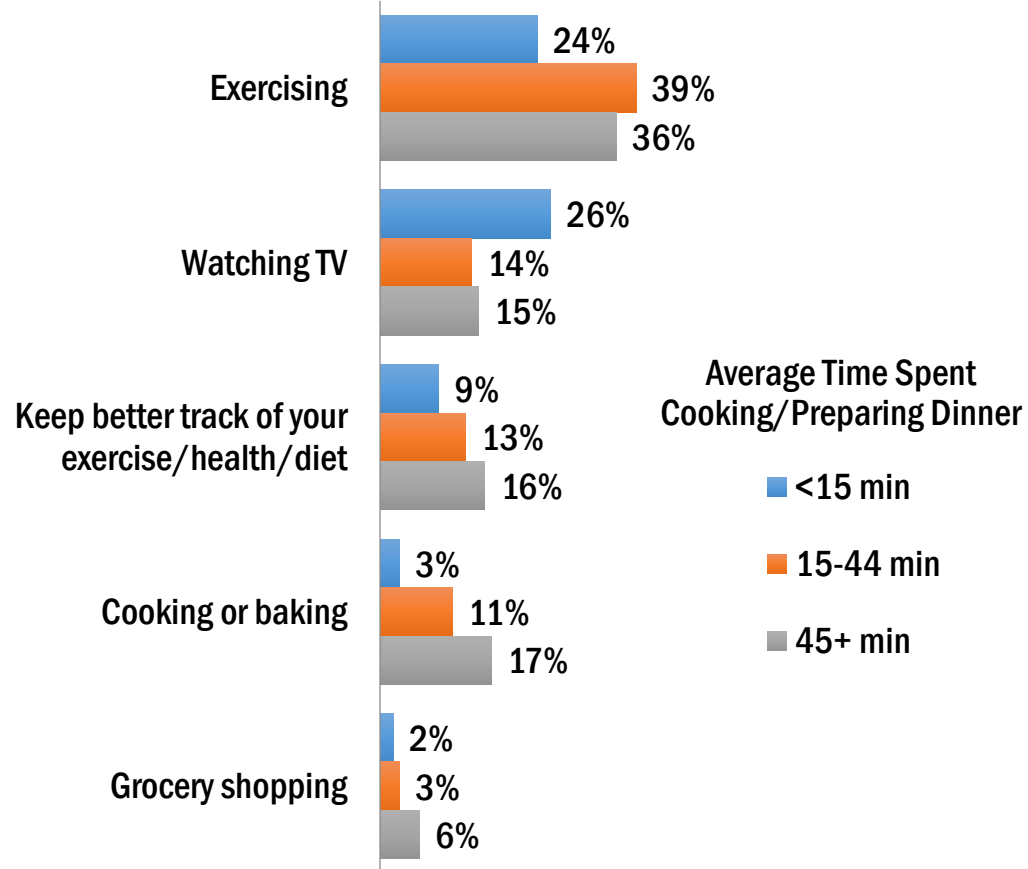
Race/Ethnicity	
White, non-Hispanic	10%
Hispanic	25%
African American	18%

2015 n=1,007

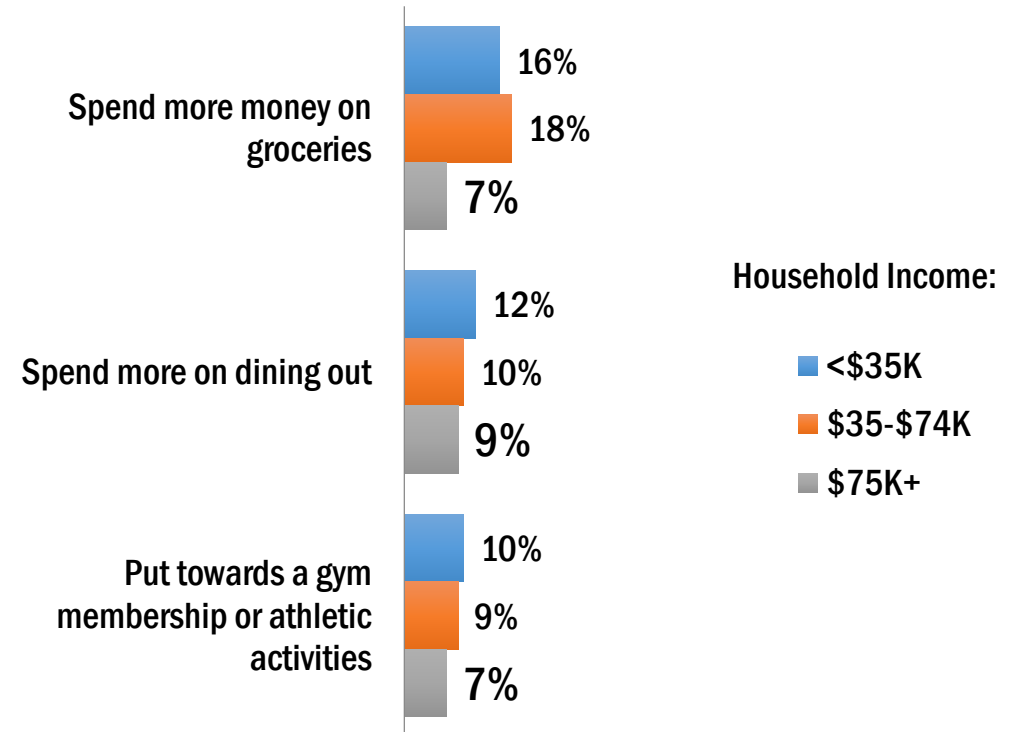


Those who already spend more time cooking/preparing dinner are the ones who are more likely to use their *extra time* on food/diet related activities. Lower income consumers are more likely to spend extra money on groceries.

If you suddenly had an extra 4 hours every week, how would you likely spend that time? *(Please select up to 3 options.)*



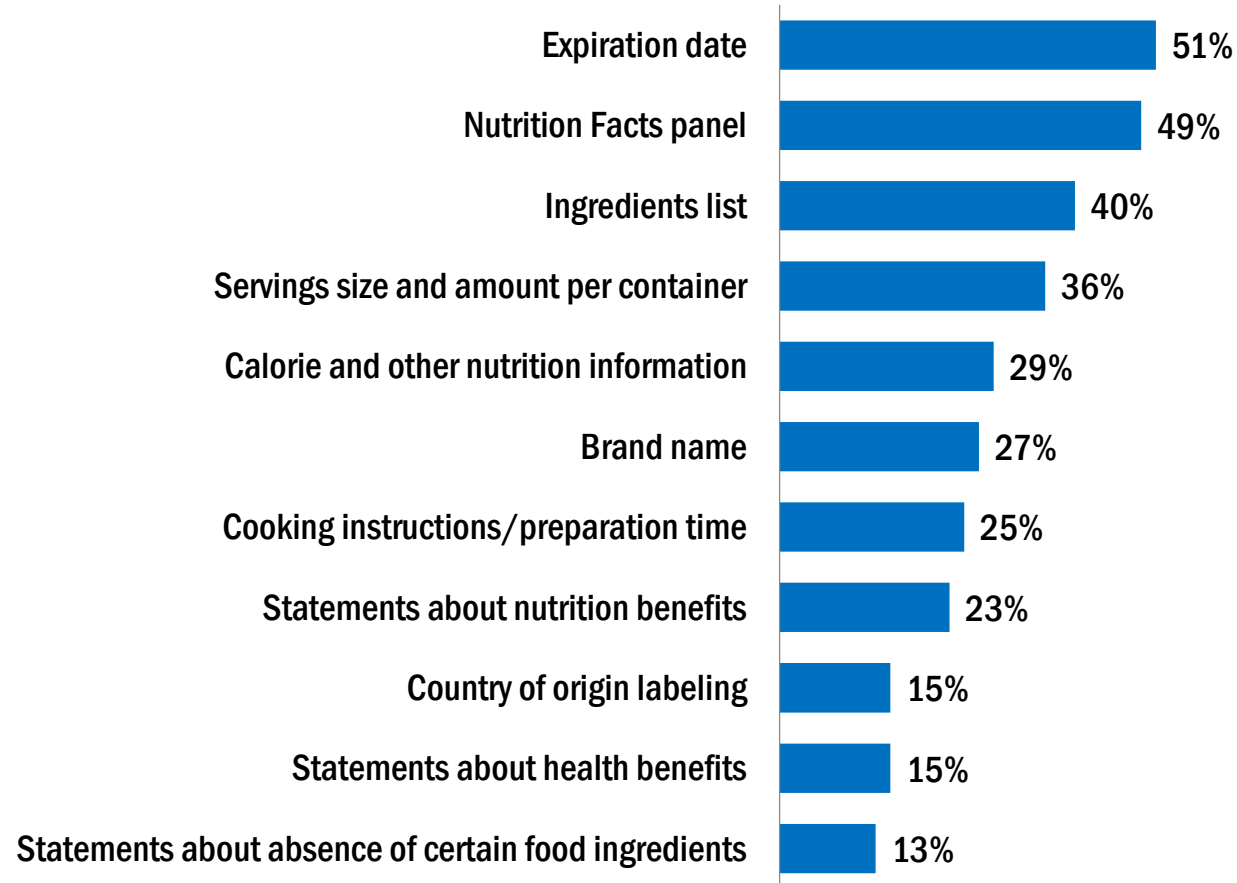
If you had an extra \$100 to spend every month, what would you likely do with that money? *(Please select up to 3 options.)*



2015 n=1,007

Americans have consistent views about which packaging information they are more likely to look at. However, they report looking at fewer pieces of information when making a purchasing decision.

What information do you look at on the food or beverage package when deciding to purchase or eat a food or beverage? *(Select all that apply.)*

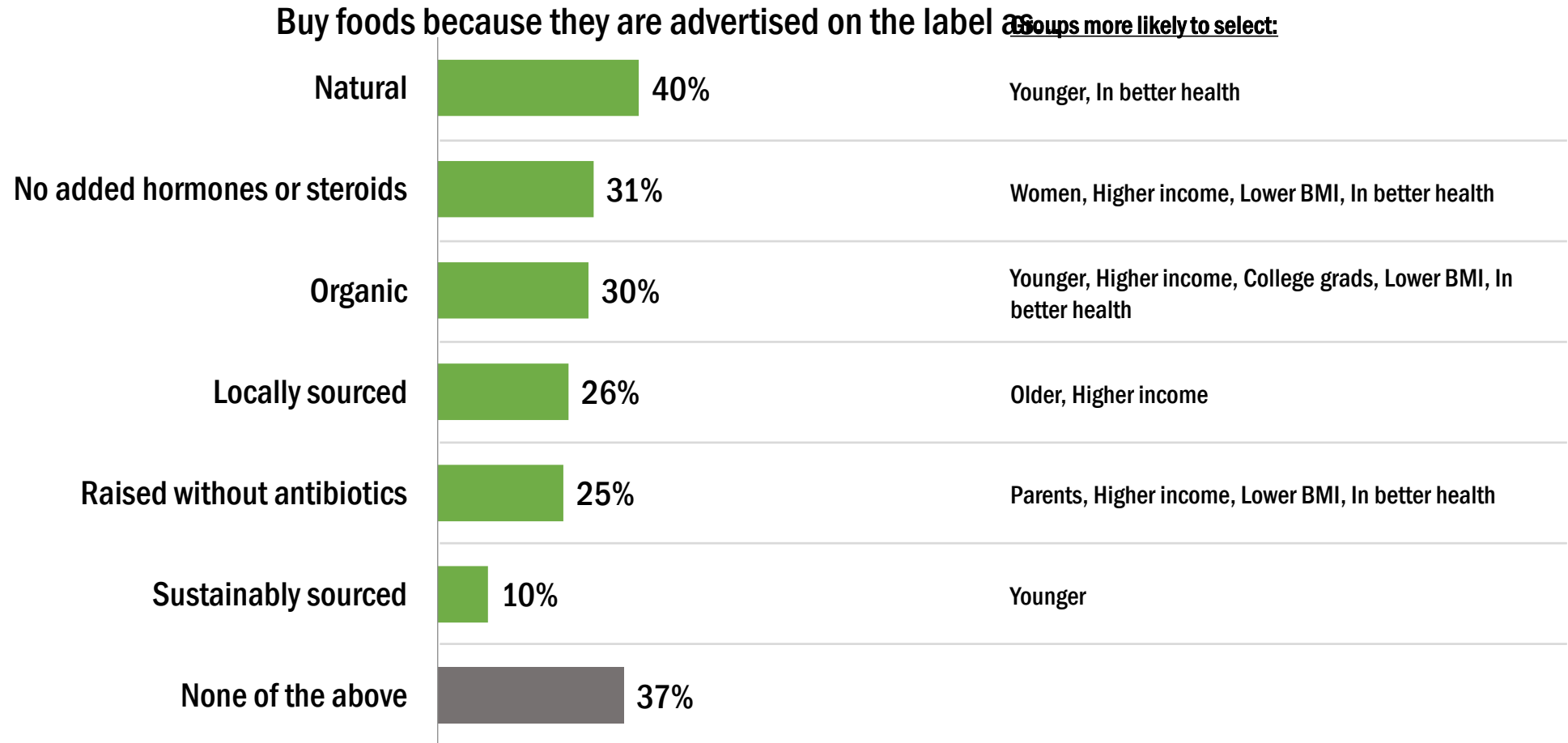


- On average, consumers consider **3** of these pieces of information in purchasing decisions.
- **11%** say they look at none of these things.

2015 n=1,007

Four out of ten consumers regularly buy foods labeled as “Natural,” while only about three in ten purchase foods labeled as “Organic.”

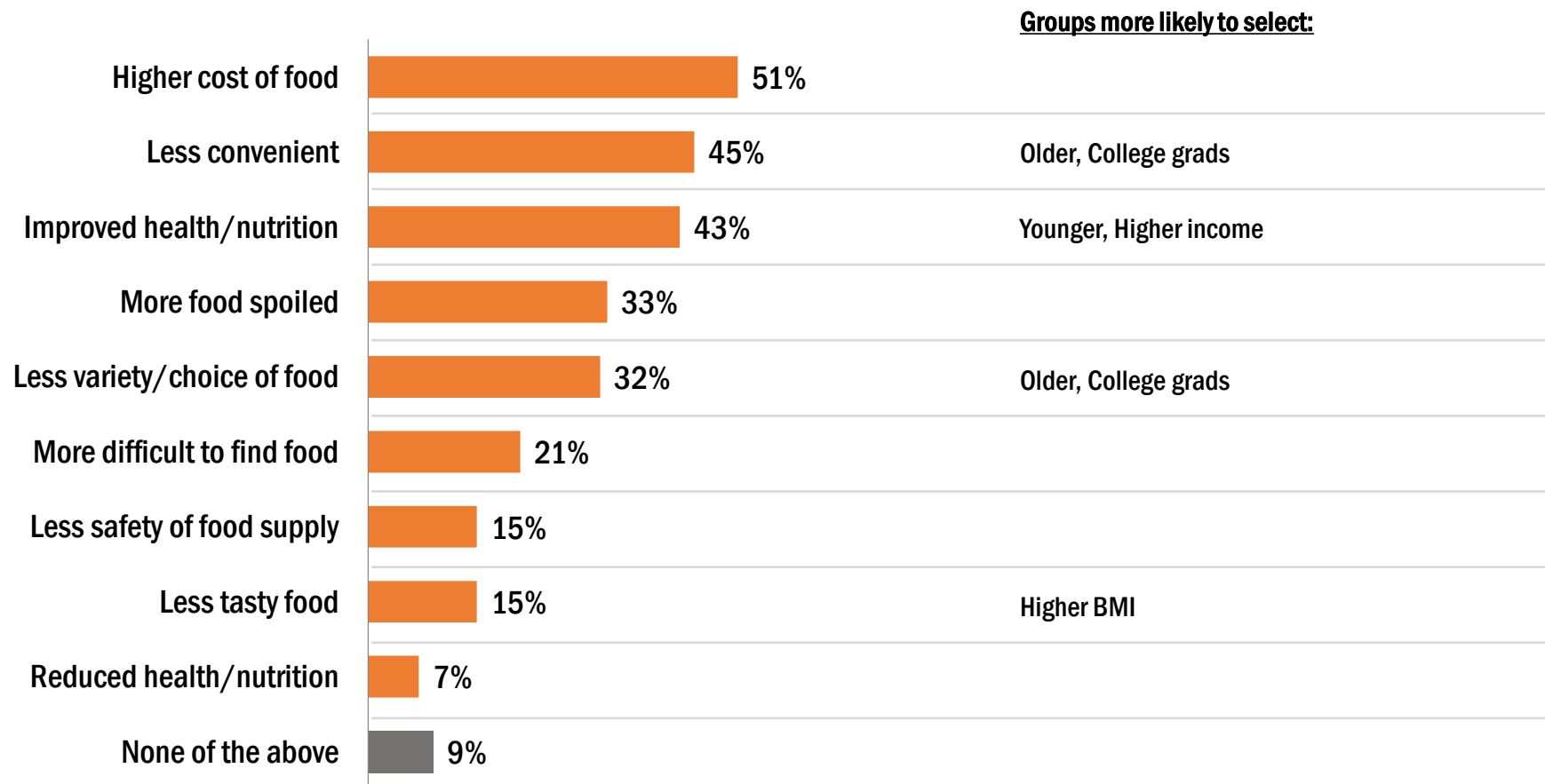
Which of the following, if any, do you do on a regular basis (that is, most times when you shop for food and beverages)?



2015 n=1,007

Half of Americans believe that they would be most impacted by a higher cost of food if processed foods were removed from the food supply.

If processed foods were removed from the food supply, how would it impact you?
(Select up to 4 most important ways you would be impacted.)

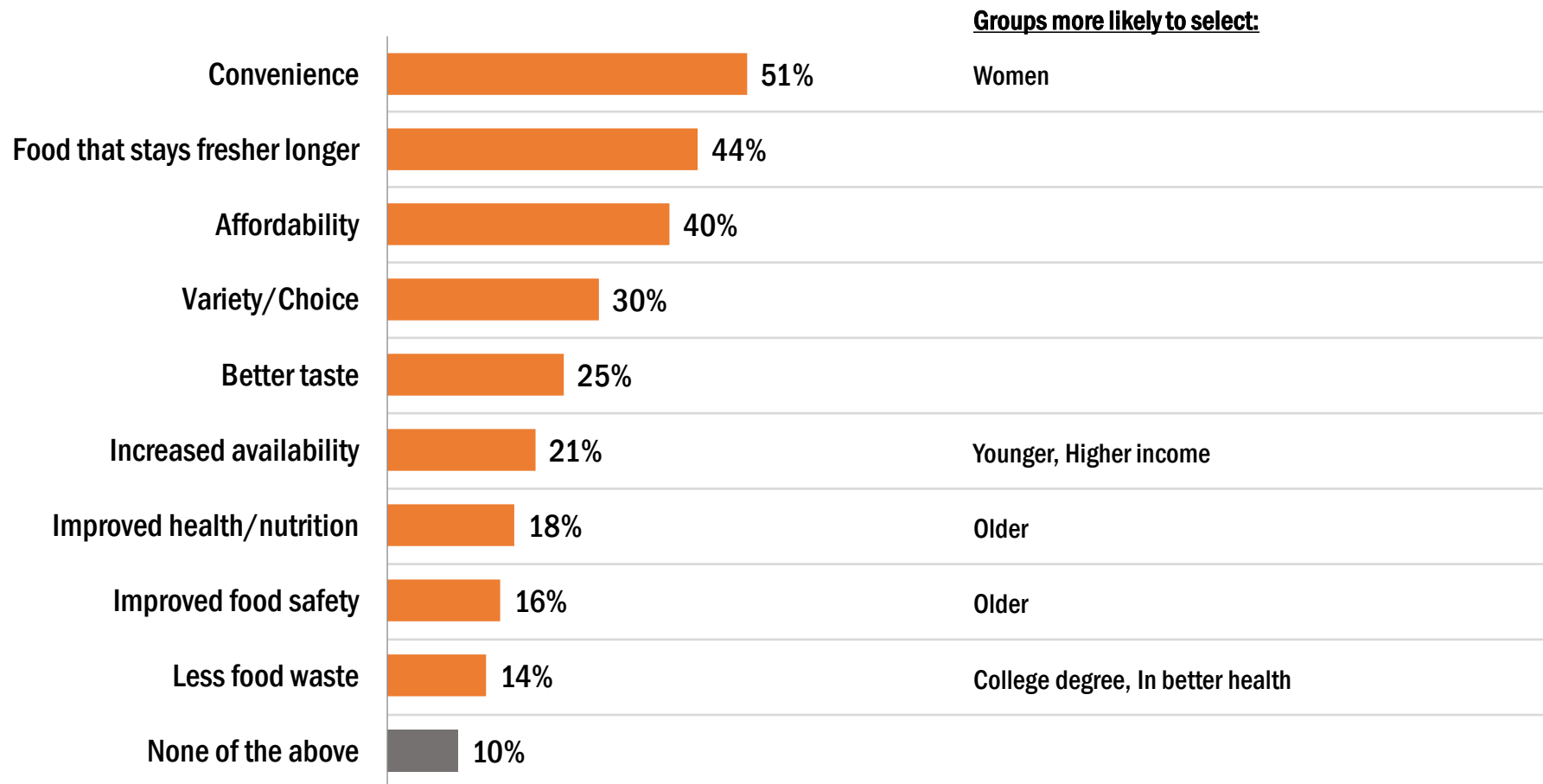


2015 Sample B n=510



Half of Americans value the convenience of processed foods, followed by staying fresh longer and affordability.

Which, if any, of the possible benefits of processed foods do you value most?
(Select up to 4 most important benefits.)

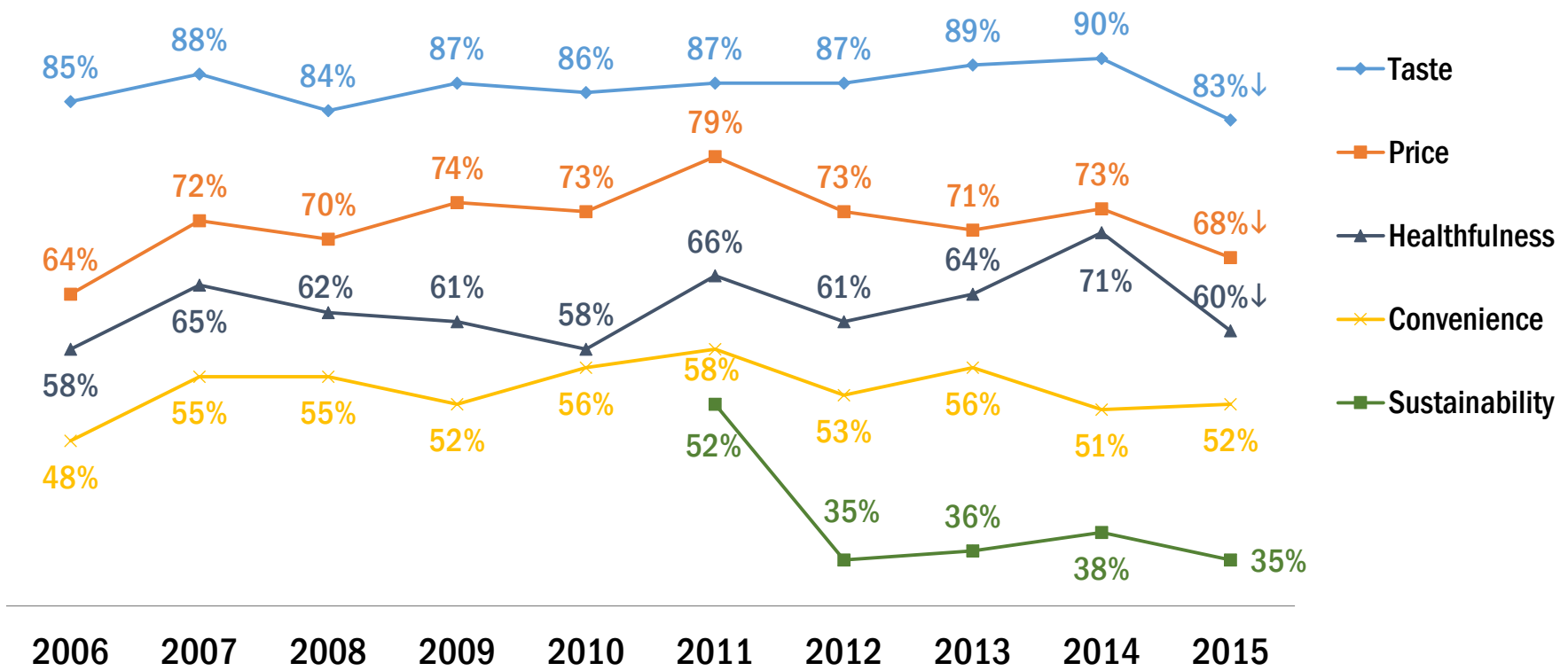


2015 Sample A n=497



Taste, price, and healthfulness continue to drive food selection, but Americans feel less strongly about these three factors than in 2014. Healthfulness in particular is down from its peak position last year.

How much of an impact do the following have on your decision to buy foods and beverages?
 (% Rating 4 to 5 on 5-point scale, from No Impact to A Great Impact)



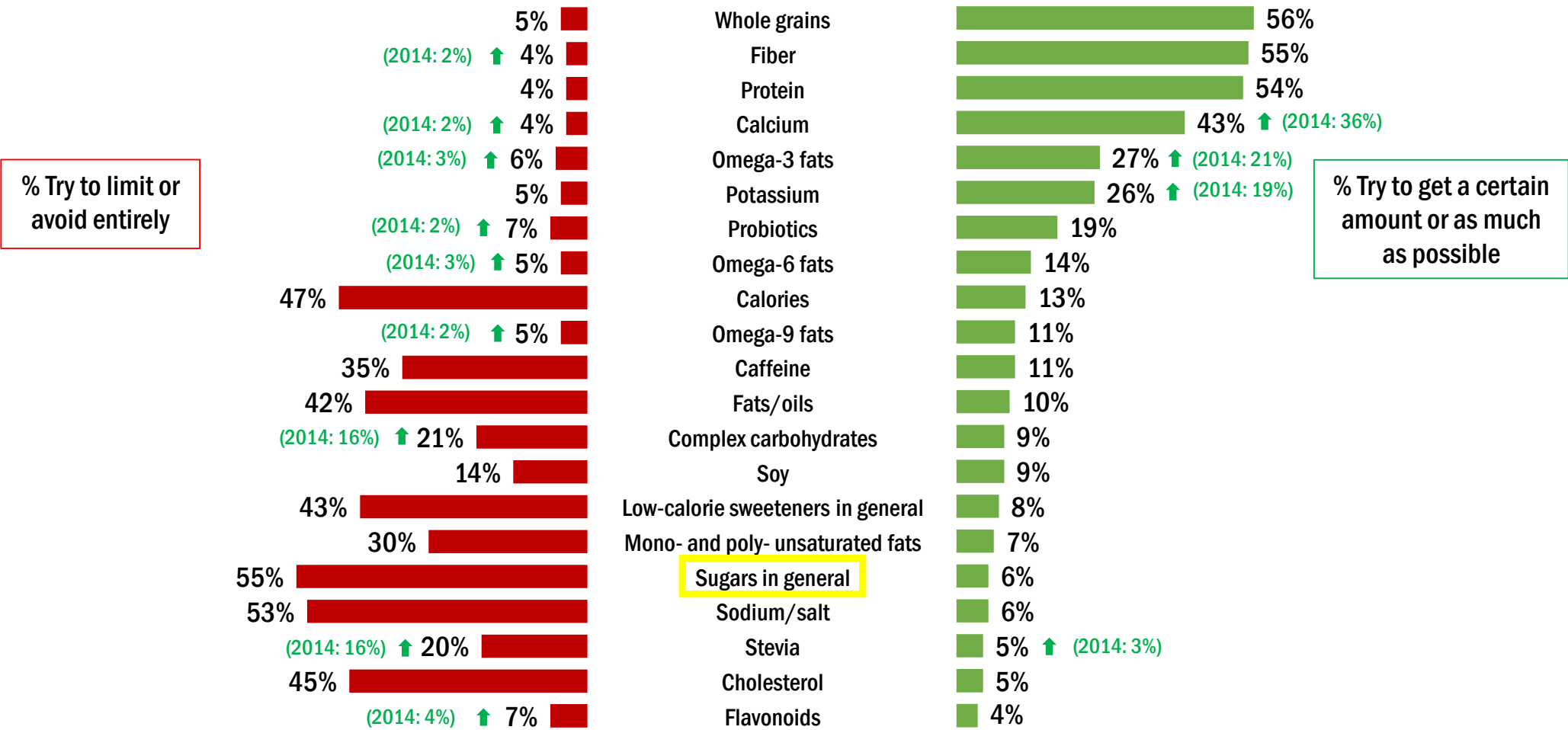
2015 n=1,007

Arrows indicate significant (.95 level) differences vs. 2014.



Whole grains, fiber, and protein top the list of food components that Americans are trying to consume.

To what extent do you try to consume or avoid the following?



% Try to limit or avoid entirely

% Try to get a certain amount or as much as possible

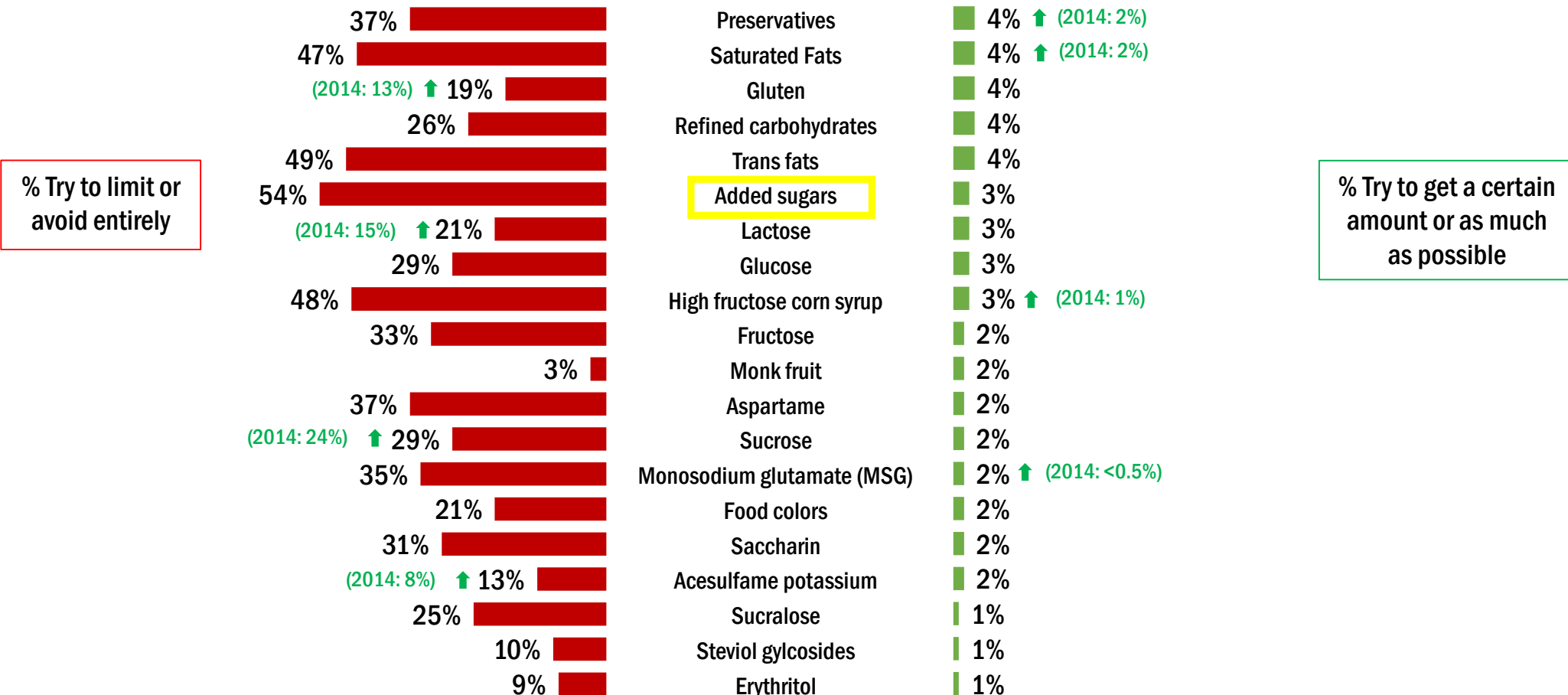
Sugars in general

2015 n=1,007



Sugars, added sugars, and sodium top the list of food components that some Americans are trying to avoid.

To what extent do you try to consume or avoid the following?



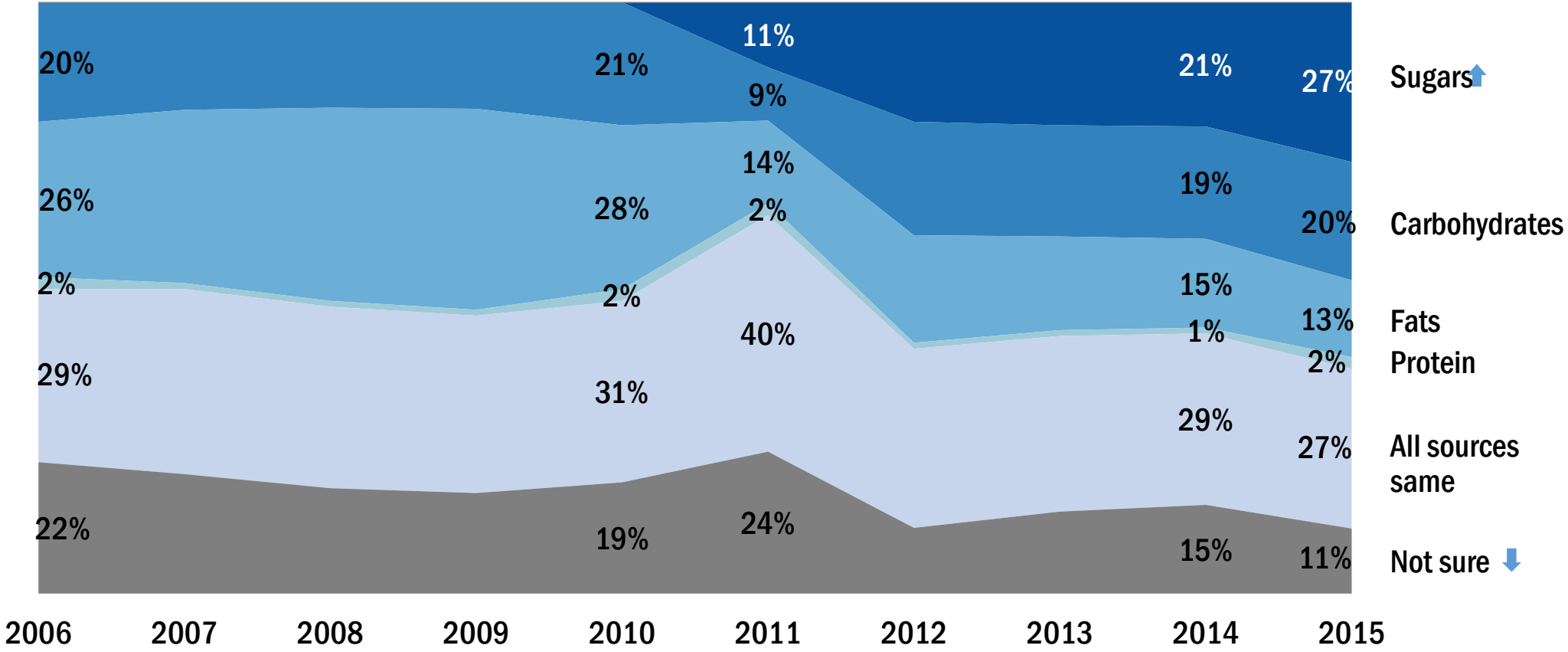
% Try to limit or avoid entirely

% Try to get a certain amount or as much as possible

Added sugars

About a quarter of Americans believe that all sources of calories influence weight gain equally. Since 2011, sugars have risen steadily.

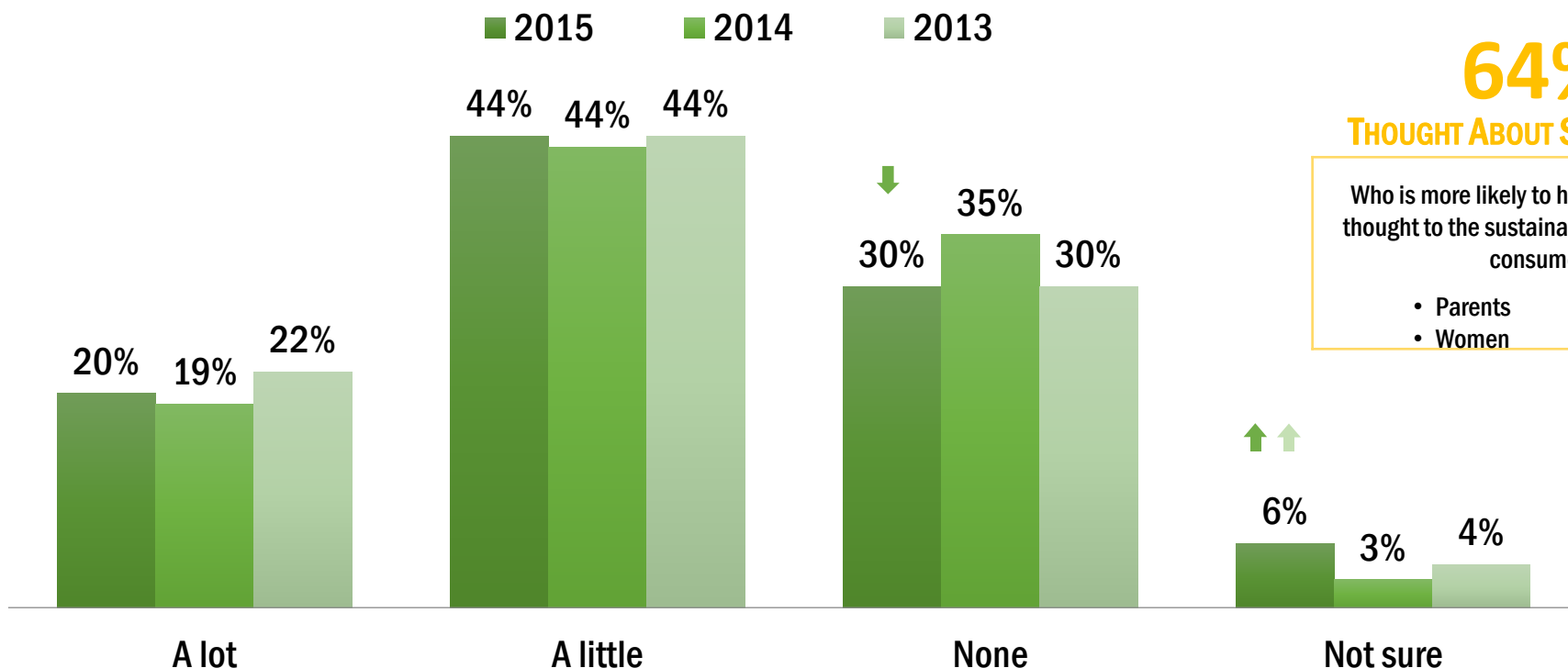
What source of calories are the most likely to cause weight gain?



2015 n=1,007

Nearly two-thirds of Americans say they have given thought to the environmental sustainability of their foods and beverages.

Over the past year, how much thought have you given to whether your foods and beverages are produced in an environmentally sustainable way?



64%
THOUGHT ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY

Who is more likely to have given *a lot* of thought to the sustainability of what they consume?

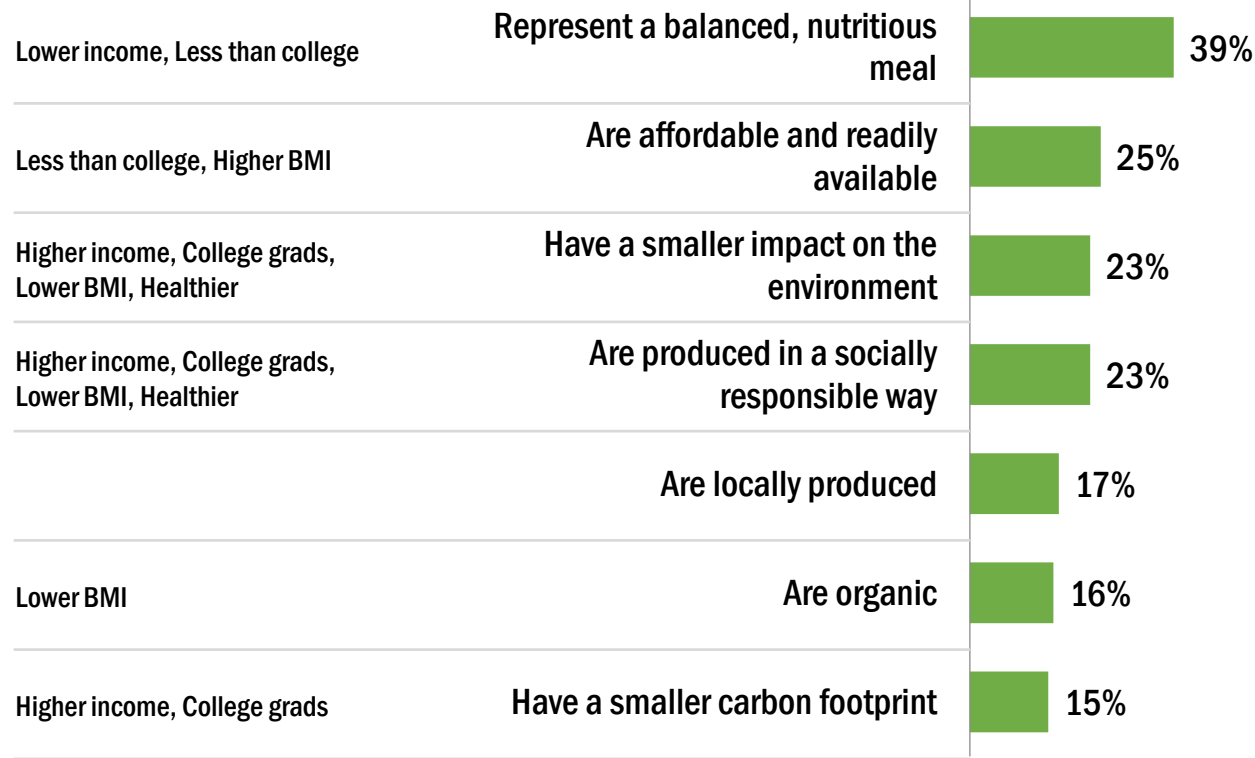
- Parents
- Women

2015 n=1,007; 2014 n=1,005; 2013 n=1,006
 In 2014, “sustainable” was changed to “environmentally sustainable.”
 Arrows indicate significant (.95 level) differences vs. prior year(s); color of arrow indicates comparison year.

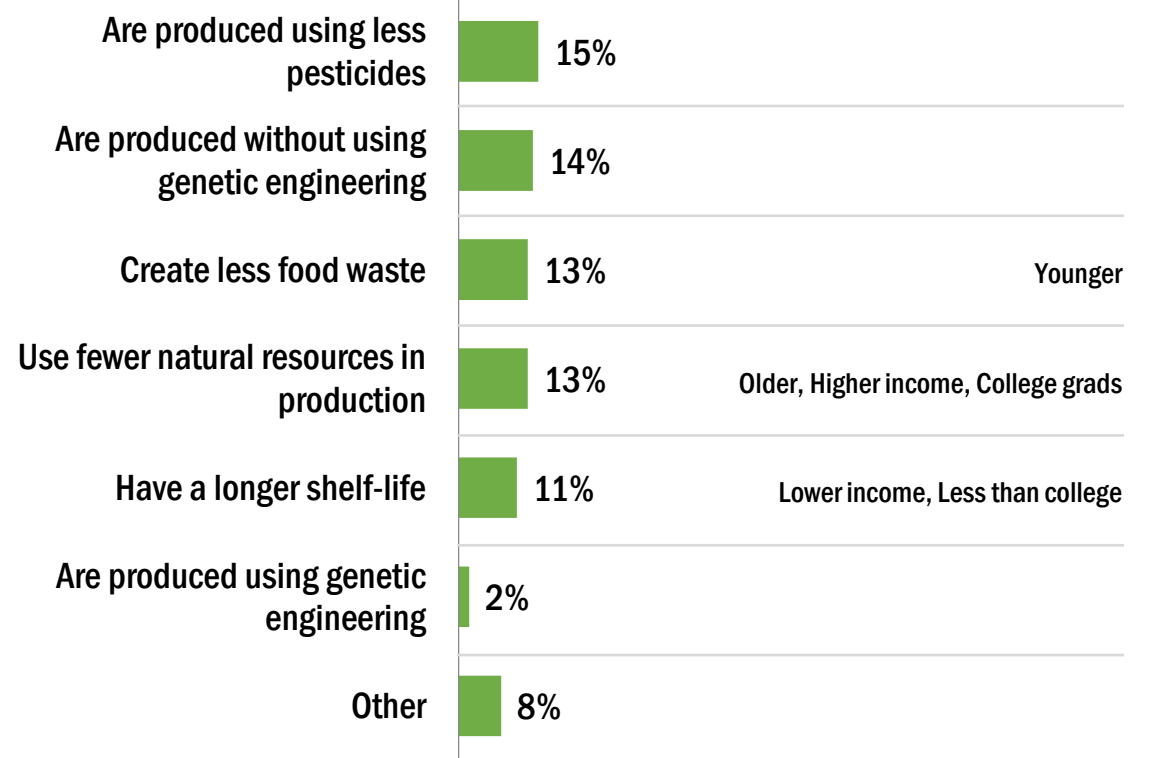
Four in ten Americans believe that a sustainable diet means that the foods they eat represent a balanced, nutritious meal.

A sustainable diet means that the foods you eat...
(Please select up to 3.)

Groups more likely to select:



Groups more likely to select:

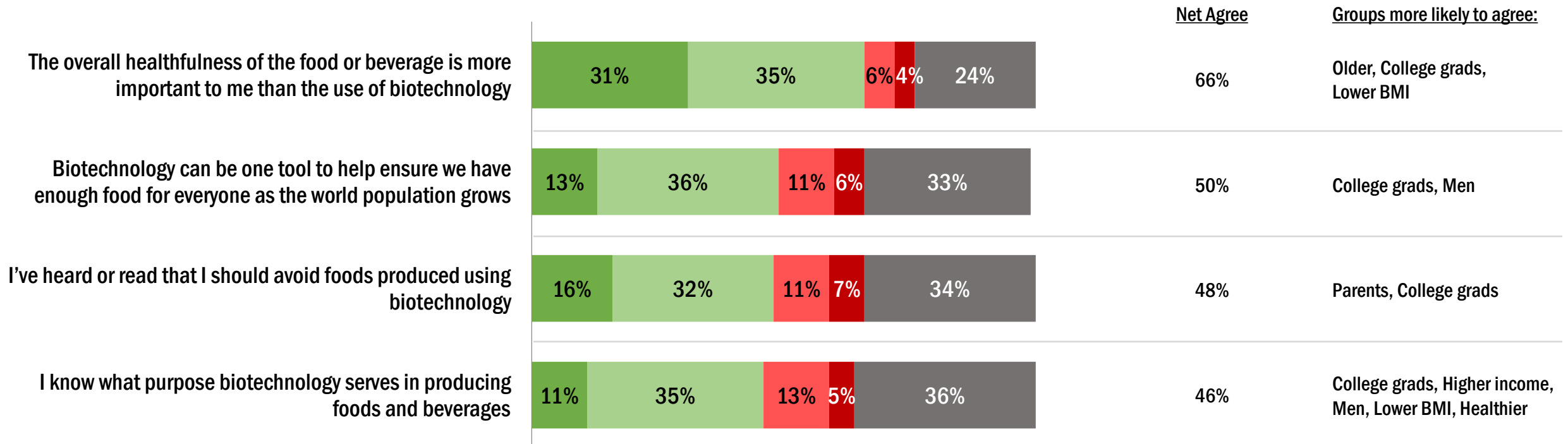


2015 n=1,007

Two-thirds of Americans agree that the overall healthfulness of the food or beverage is more important than the use of biotechnology.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about food biotechnology?
(That is, the use of science and technologies such as genetic engineering to enhance certain attributes of foods?)

■ Agree strongly ■ Agree somewhat ■ Disagree somewhat ■ Disagree strongly ■ Not sure

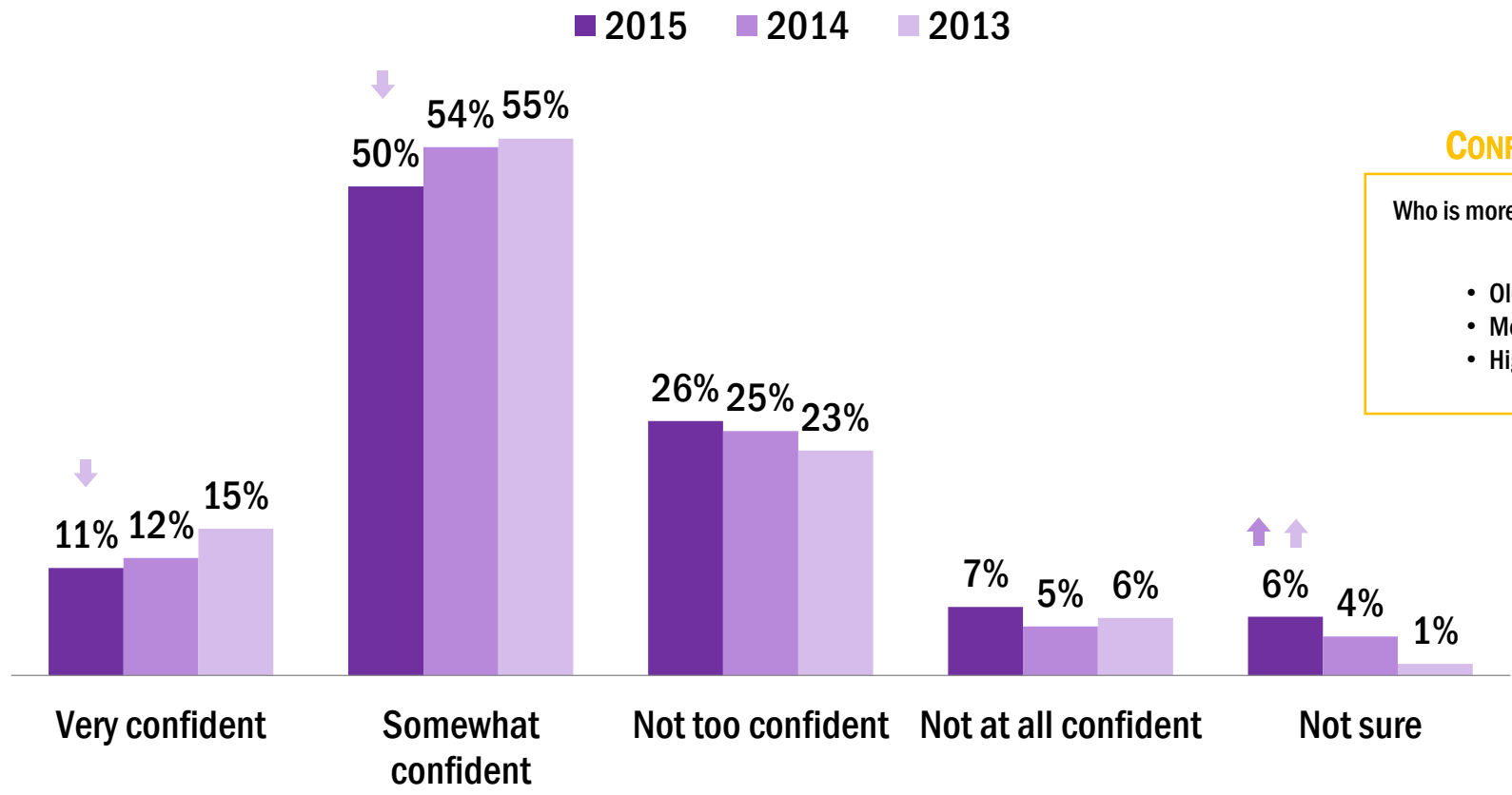


2015 n=1,007



Six out of ten Americans are confident in the U.S. food supply's safety.

Overall, how confident are you in the safety of the U.S. food supply?



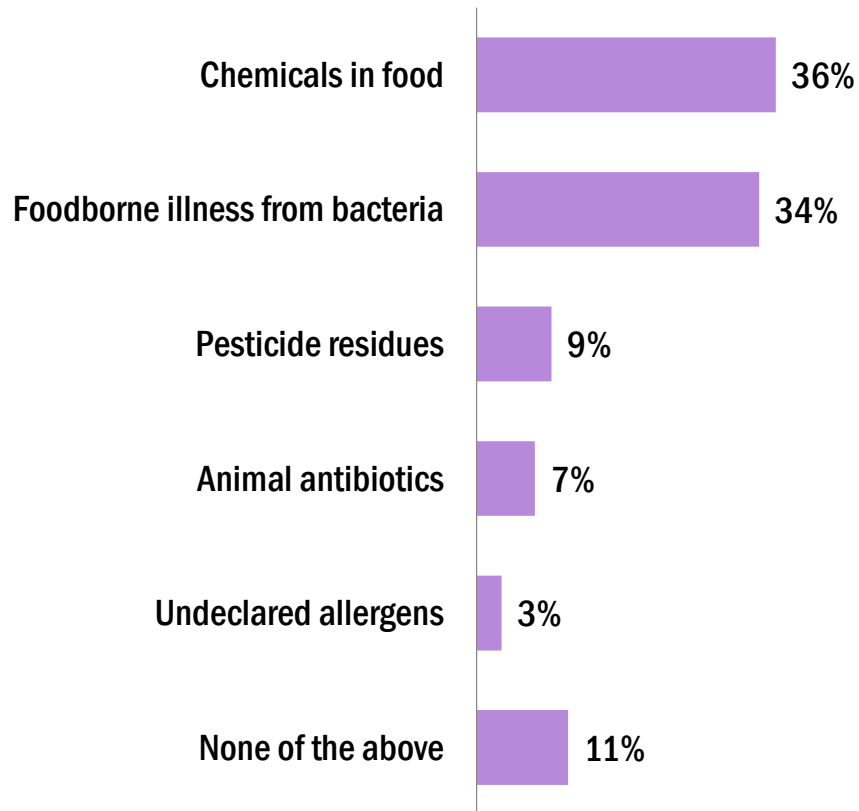
61%
CONFIDENT IN FOOD SUPPLY

- Who is more likely to be confident in the U.S. food supply?
- Older
 - Men
 - Higher income

2015 n=1,007; 2014 n=1,005; 2013 n=1,006
Arrows indicate significant (.95 level) differences vs. prior year(s); color of arrow indicates comparison year.

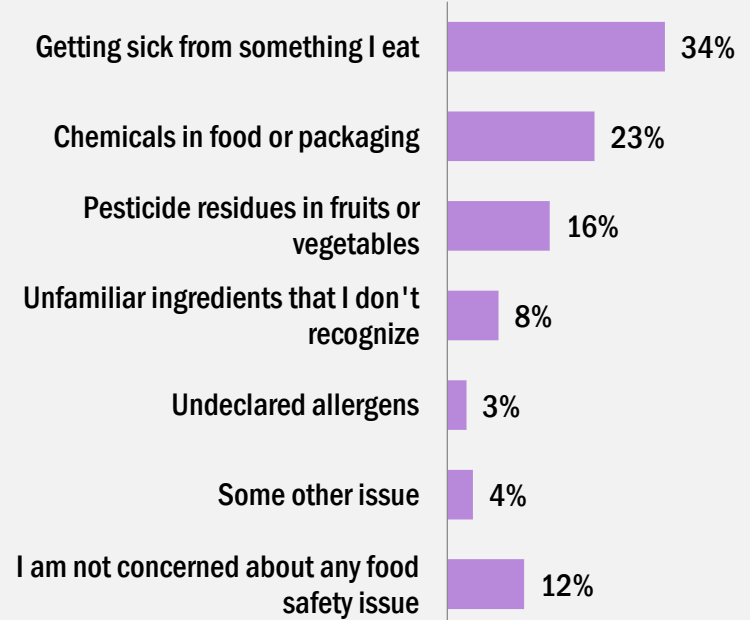
In 2014, less than a quarter of Americans thought of chemicals as a top safety issue when shopping. When asked in 2015 what issue matters most to their families, more than a third chose chemicals in food.

In your opinion, what is the most important food safety issue for you and your family today?



2014 Food & Health Survey:

What is the most important food safety issue you consider when shopping for food?

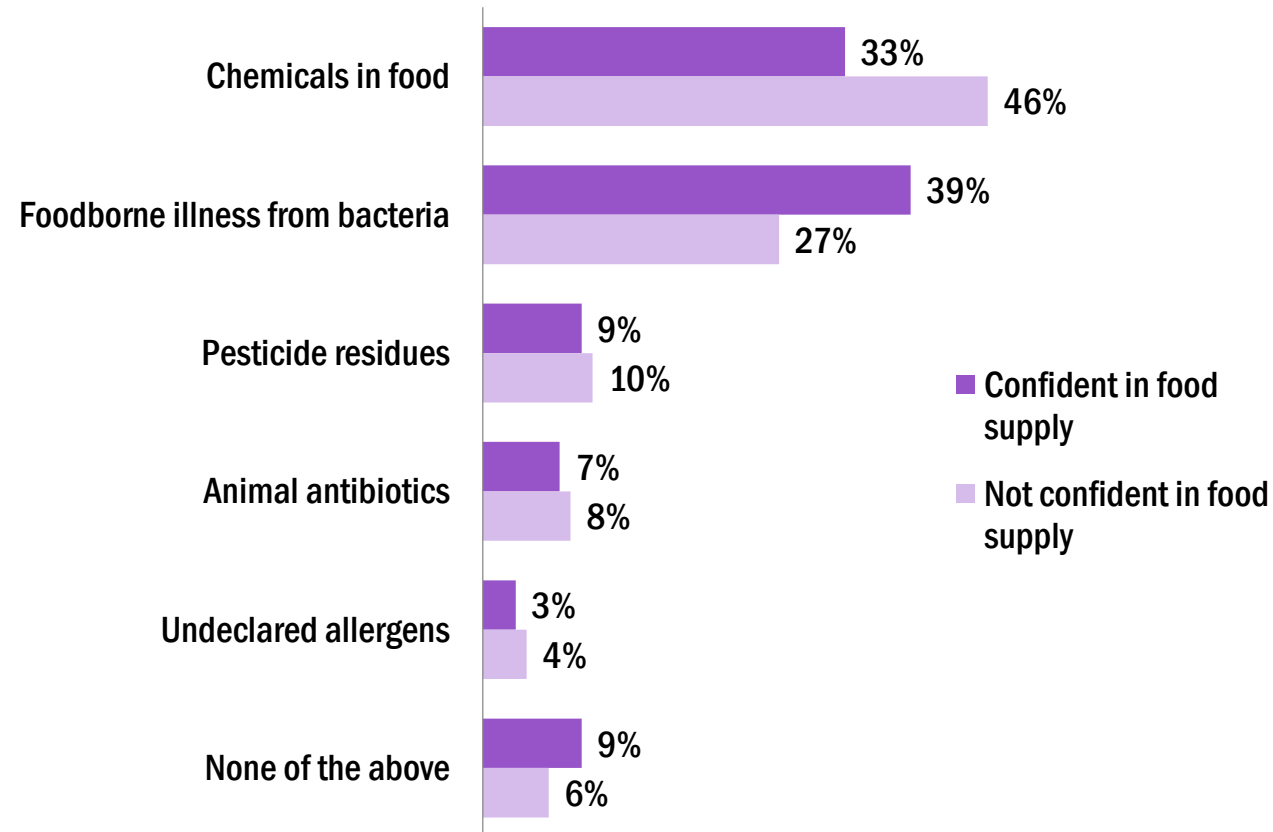


2015 n=1,007; 2014 n=1,005



Those who are not confident in the U.S. food supply are much more likely to be concerned about chemicals in food and less concerned about foodborne illness.

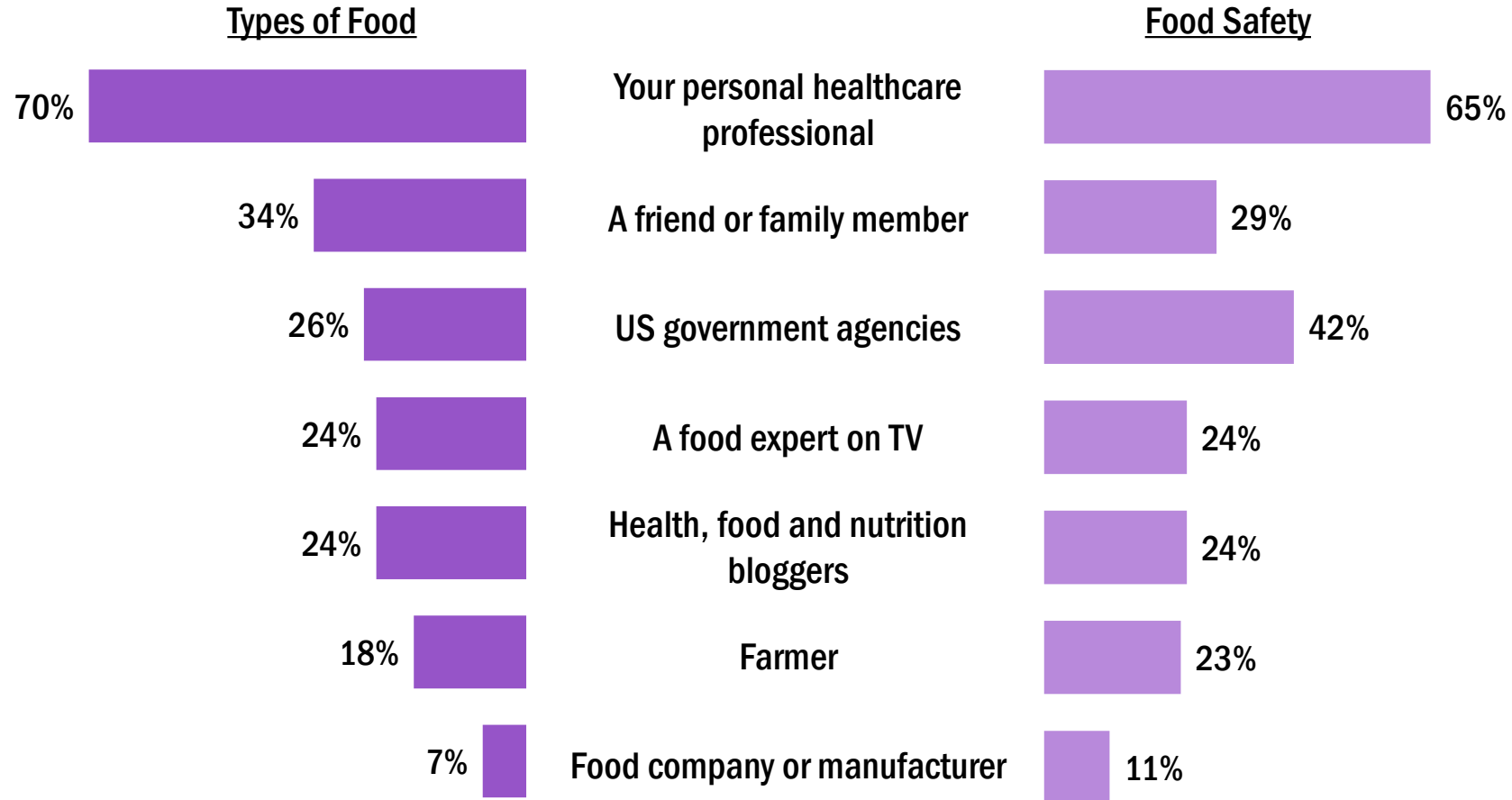
In your opinion, what is the most important food safety issue for you and your family today?



2015 confident in food supply n=610; not confident in food supply n=330

Personal healthcare professionals are the most trusted source for info about both types of food and food safety.

Which one of these sources would you *trust the most* to provide accurate information about the following issues?



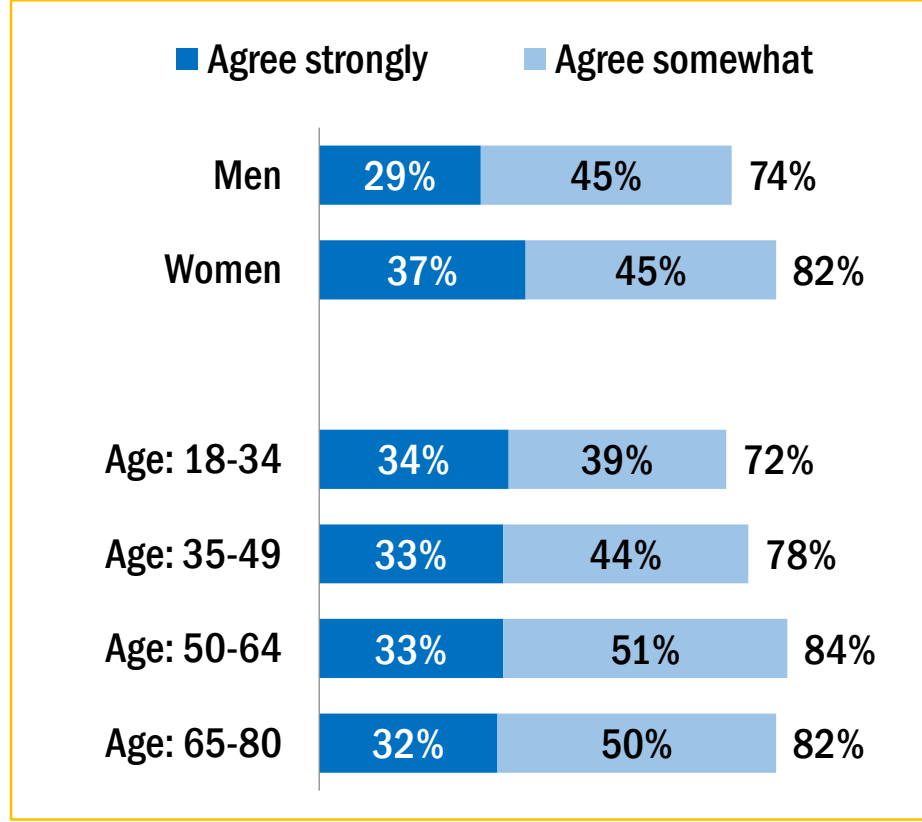
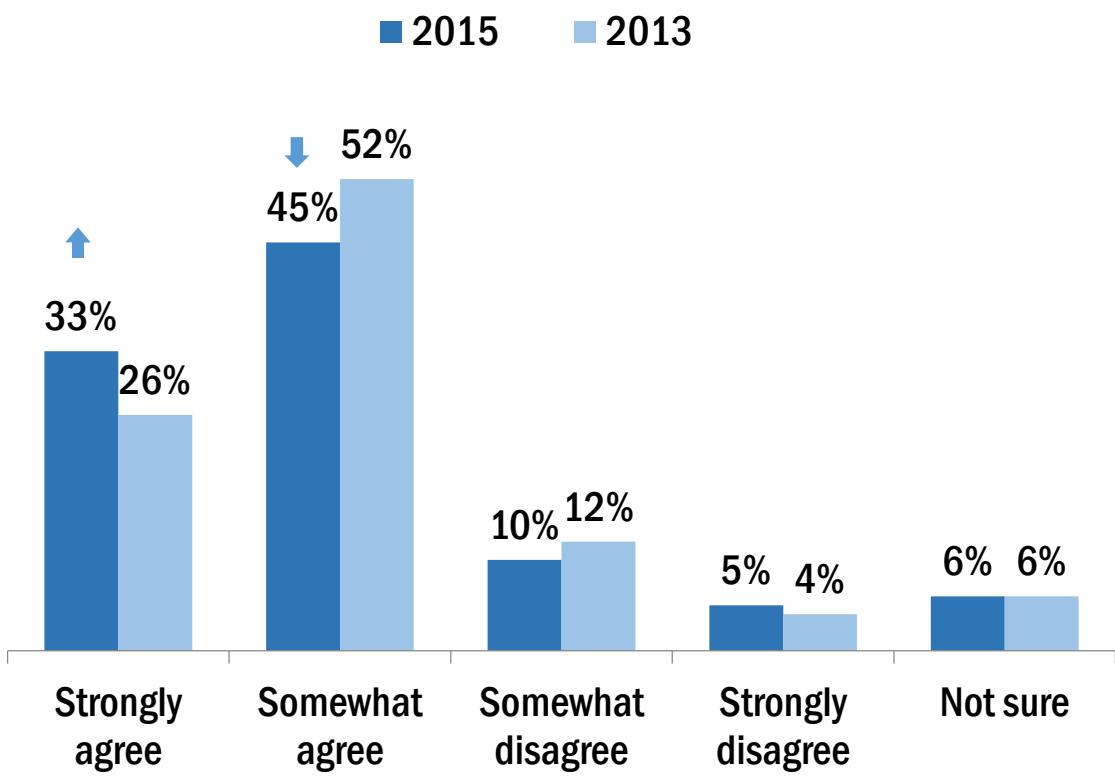
2015 n=1,007



Most Americans, particularly women and those age 50+, would rather hear what they should eat than what they should not eat.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“I would rather hear what I should eat than what I should not eat.”



2015 n=1,007; 2013 n=1,006

