



International
Food Information
Council

Navigating the Consumer Information Landscape

Kris Sollid, RD
Senior Director, Research & Consumer Insights
International Food Information Council (IFIC)
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Food Forum



INTERNATIONAL FOOD INFORMATION COUNCIL (IFIC) DISCLOSURES

ABOUT IFIC

IFIC is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) education and consumer research organization with a mission to effectively communicate science-based information about food safety, nutrition, and sustainable food systems.

GOVERNANCE

IFIC is governed by a Board of Trustees, the majority of whom are from public academic institutions, along with an Assembly that includes government liaisons.

SUPPORT

IFIC is supported primarily through grants and contributions from the broad-based food, beverage, and agricultural industry.

IFIC does not lobby and does not represent any product, company, or industry. For more information, visit www.ific.org.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL FOOD INFORMATION COUNCIL (IFIC)

OUR VISION

A global environment where science informs food decisions.

OUR MISSION

We serve the public good by effectively communicating science-based information about food safety, nutrition and sustainable food systems.

IFIC PROGRAM PLATFORMS

To demonstrate IFIC's thought leadership in action, we:

- **Deliver best-in-class research and consumer insights** to inform food, nutrition and health stakeholders.
- **Promote science communications** to positively impact consumer behavior and public health.
- **Convene critical thought leaders** to advance the food systems dialogue and science-based decision-making.

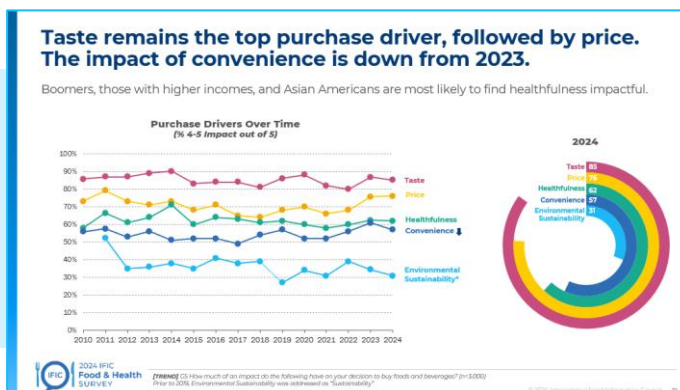
Annual IFIC Food & Health Survey



Annually, IFIC surveys 3,000 Americans about their food behaviors, beliefs, and perceptions.

2024 marks the 19th consecutive year of the IFIC Food & Health Survey, making it one of the most influential and widely referenced annual consumer surveys in the U.S. for academic researchers, healthcare professionals, industry stakeholders, media, and policymakers.

DOWNLOAD THE SURVEY
on foodinsight.org



Monthly IFIC Spotlight Surveys



IFIC generates monthly consumer insights through our Spotlight Surveys.

Each month, we engage 1,000 Americans to measure knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about timely and relevant topics in food. Our Spotlight Surveys align with the topics of our monthly expert webinar series, educational resources, messaging, and content development.



DOWNLOAD THE SURVEYS
on foodinsight.org



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

More than half of Americans (56%) replace traditional meals with snacking or by eating smaller meals, according to the 2024 IFIC Food & Health Survey. Emerging as its own eating pattern, snacking has become increasingly popular among consumers, especially Gen Z, Millennials, women, and those whose relationship status is single.

While *nutrition advocates* have struggled to formally define the word snack, nearly all Americans tell us that when they eat or drink something between meals, to them, it is a snack. A rarity that widespread agreement emerges around food and nutrition, this noteworthy finding is one of many eye-opening takeaways from the IFIC Spotlight Survey on snacking.

As consumers make food decisions, *nutrition advocates* taste and price: they want to enjoy the food they eat, and they require affordability—the foundational elements consumers need before considering healthfulness. To the matter of taste, most consumers favor sweet and salty flavors in their snacks, followed by the sensation of crunch, and the inclusion of beverages.

Likewise, consumers tend to snack spontaneously, and very few emphasize nutrition. Half (51%) say they have calorie goals for their snacks, and only one in ten consumers confirm they leverage their typical snacks as a moment to add nutrition.

Whether a result of busy schedules or on-the-go lifestyles, data from this IFIC Spotlight Survey show that opportunities exist to help consumers get more from their snacks—more nutrition without sacrificing taste. Snacking is poised to be one eating occasion to meet multiple goals, and understanding the heterogeneity of consumer desires and their associated snacking *profiles* is an important element to meet the challenges associated with snacking and to fully realize the health and nutrition opportunities. IFIC commissioned this IFIC Spotlight Survey: American Consumer Perceptions of Snacking to study U.S. consumer mindset related to snacking.

Source: 2024 IFIC Spotlight Survey: American Consumer Perceptions of Snacking



IMPLICATIONS

Americans' diet quality rating, as measured by the *Healthy Eating Index*, is 58 out of 100. Often described as a "faling score," health professionals and nutrition scientists agree that improving diet quality is a priority to advance health and well-being of Americans. Specifically, resources like the *Choosing Wisely* website provide advice on "what promotes health, and help prevent it."

The emergence of snacking as its own eating pattern presents an opportunity to enhance overall health. In this survey, we sought to improve the healthfulness of snacking by providing consumers with reminders or prompts to choose healthier options for snacking. Nutrition communicators should also incorporate foods and beverages rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and American diet quality. While most eat guidelines, and profound, diverse, everyday snacks, which presents a challenge.

In other words, it will take more work to help consumers and help them incorporate their snacks, while still eating healthy, and understanding the heterogeneity of consumer desires and their associated snacking *profiles* is an important element to meet the challenges associated with snacking and to fully realize the health and nutrition opportunities. IFIC commissioned this IFIC Spotlight Survey: American Consumer Perceptions of Snacking to study U.S. consumer mindset related to snacking.

Source: 2024 IFIC Spotlight Survey: American Consumer Perceptions of Snacking

More Americans say they snack in the afternoon and evening, but morning snacks get highest net healthy rating.
Net healthy rating of snacks steadily declines throughout the day from Morning (+34%) to Late-Night (-11%).

Time of Day	Healthy Rating	Unhealthy Rating	Net Healthy Rating
Typical morning snack	34%	29%	+34%
Typical afternoon snack	18%	38%	-20%
Typical evening snack	1%	28%	-17%
Typical late-night snack	3%	22%	-11%

Source: 2024 IFIC Spotlight Survey: American Consumer Perceptions of Snacking

EATING PATTERNS & DIETS

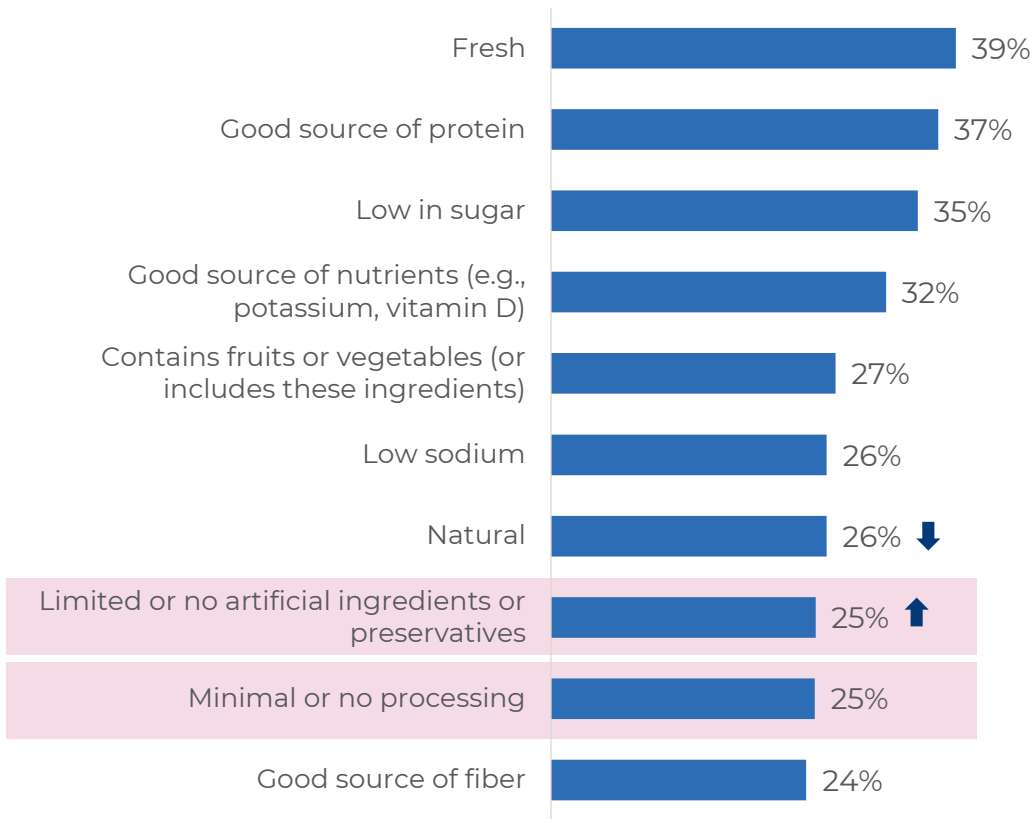


2024 IFIC
Food & Health
SURVEY

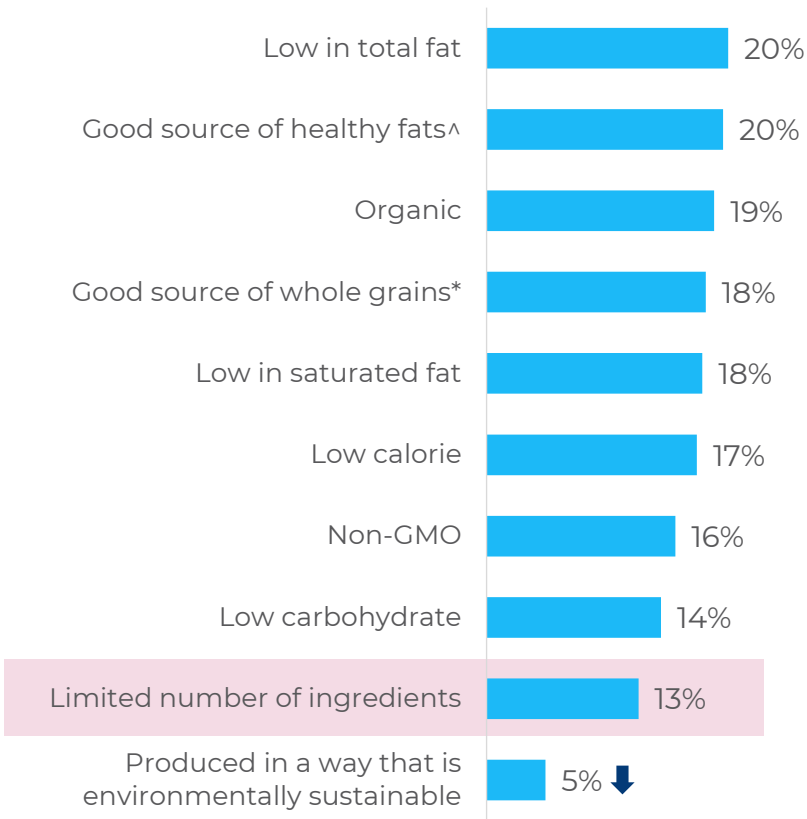
“Fresh,” “Good source of protein,” and “Low in sugar” remain the top three criteria used to define a healthy food.

Compared with 2023, fewer defined a healthy food as “natural” and more defined a healthy food as having “limited or no artificial ingredients or preservatives.”

Definition of Healthy Food (Top Choices)



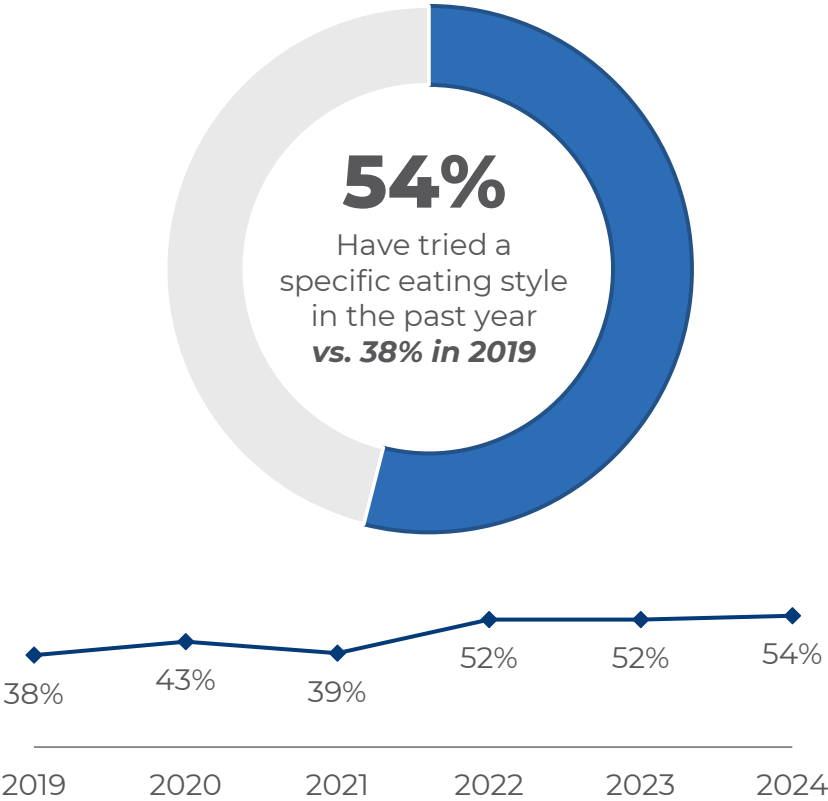
Definition of Healthy Food (Less Common)



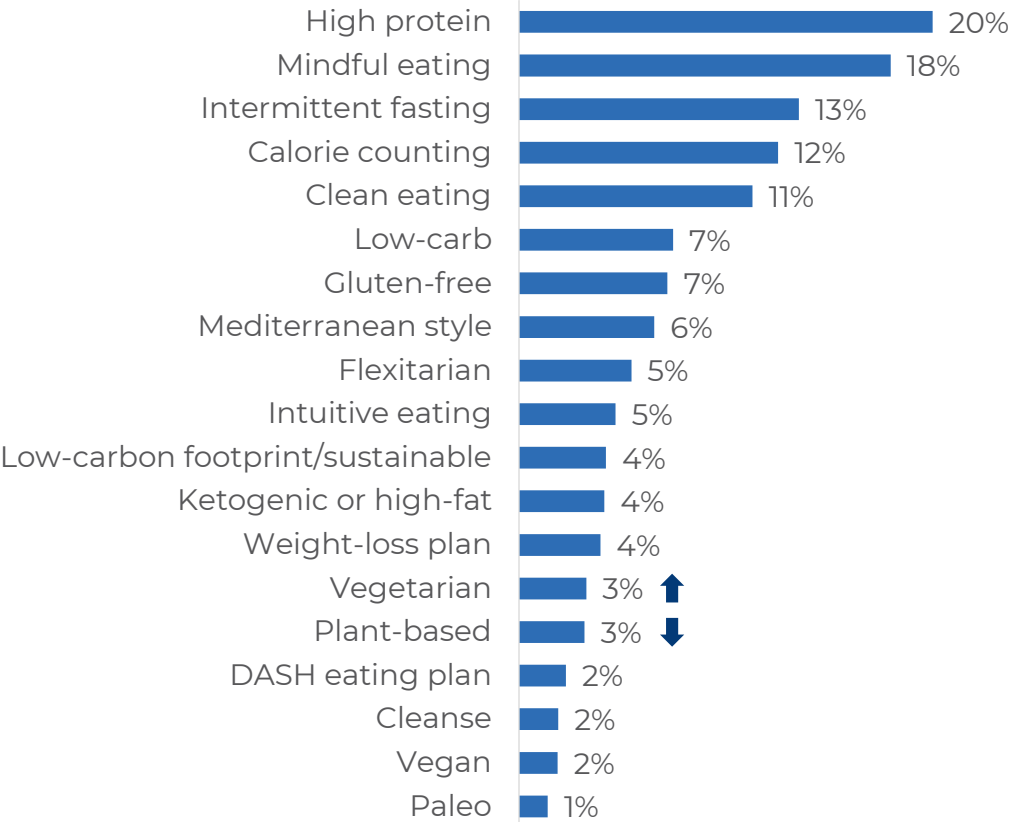
More than half of Americans followed a specific eating pattern or diet in the past year.

High protein and mindful eating remain the most common eating pattern or diet in 2024.

Followed A Specific Eating Pattern or Diet in the Past Year



Type of Eating Pattern or Diet Followed





FOOD & INGREDIENT SAFETY

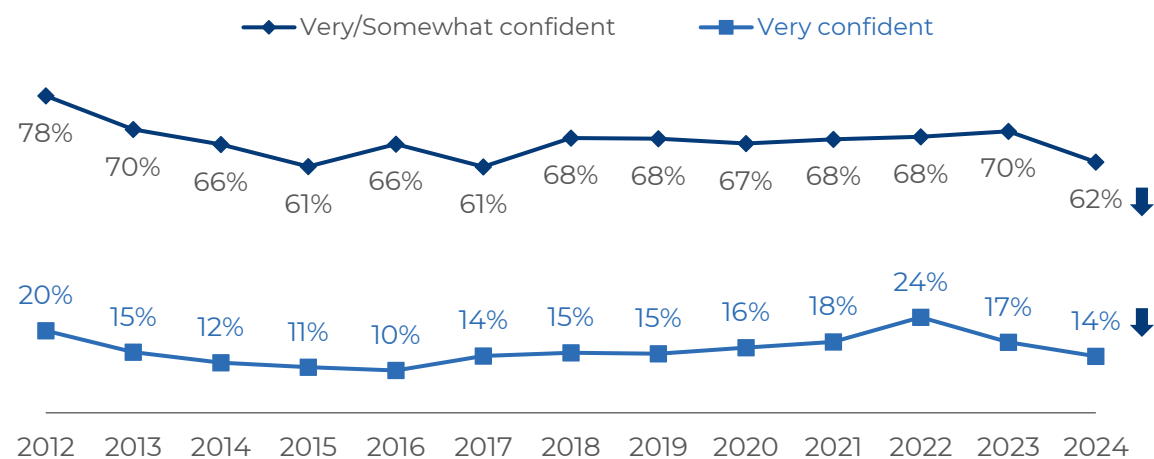
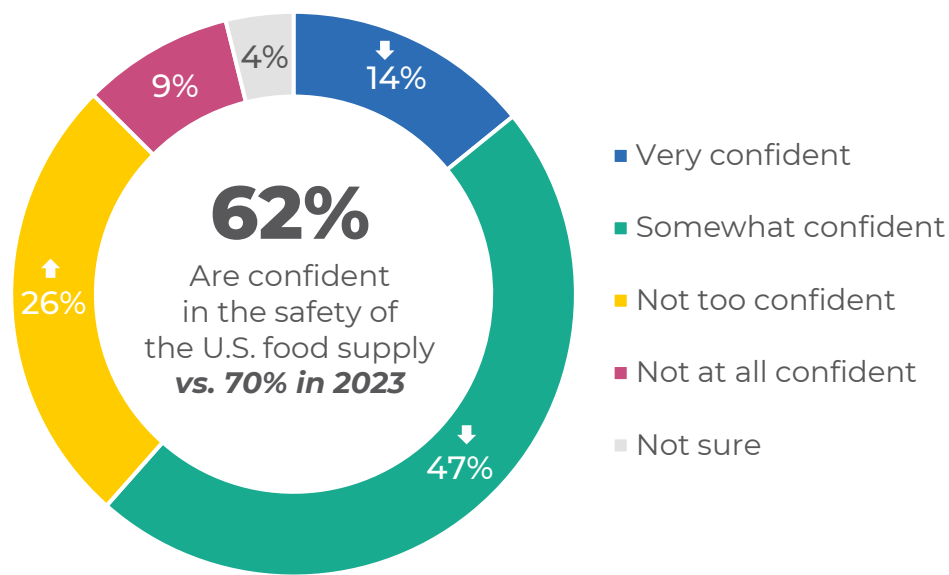


2024 IFIC
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SURVEY

Overall confidence in the safety of the U.S. food supply is down significantly in 2024.

Older generations, those with higher household income, and men are more confident in the safety of the U.S. food supply.

Confidence in the Safety of the U.S. Food Supply

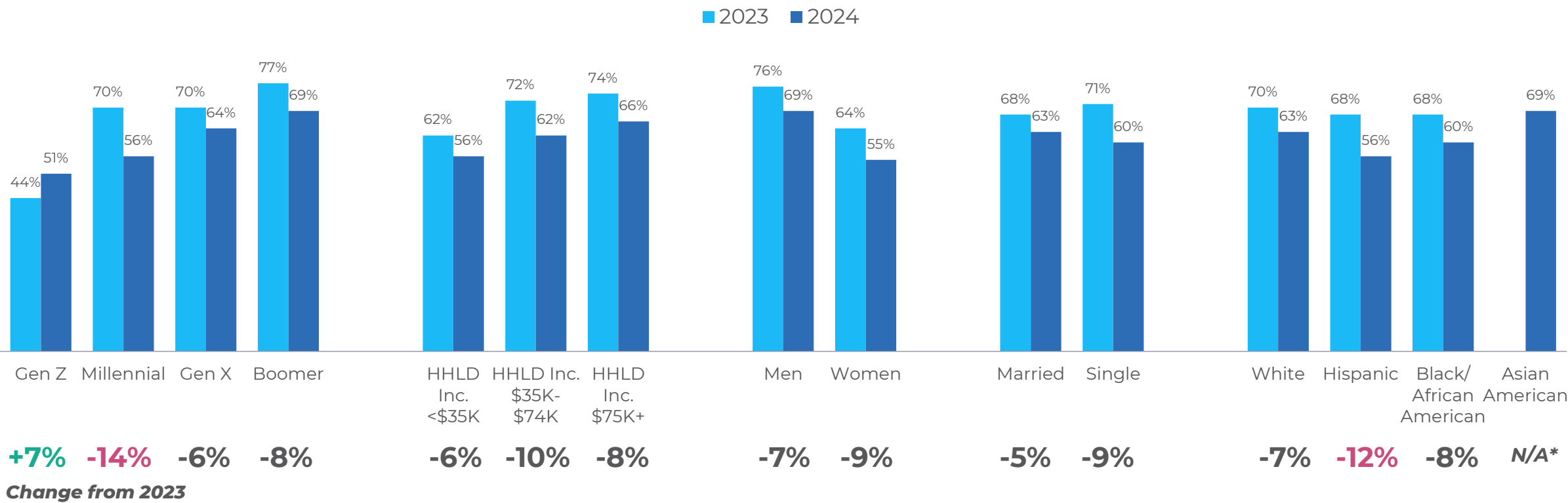


10-Year Trend
62%
Confident in 2024
vs. 66% in 2014

The decline in overall confidence is most notable for Millennials and Hispanic Americans.

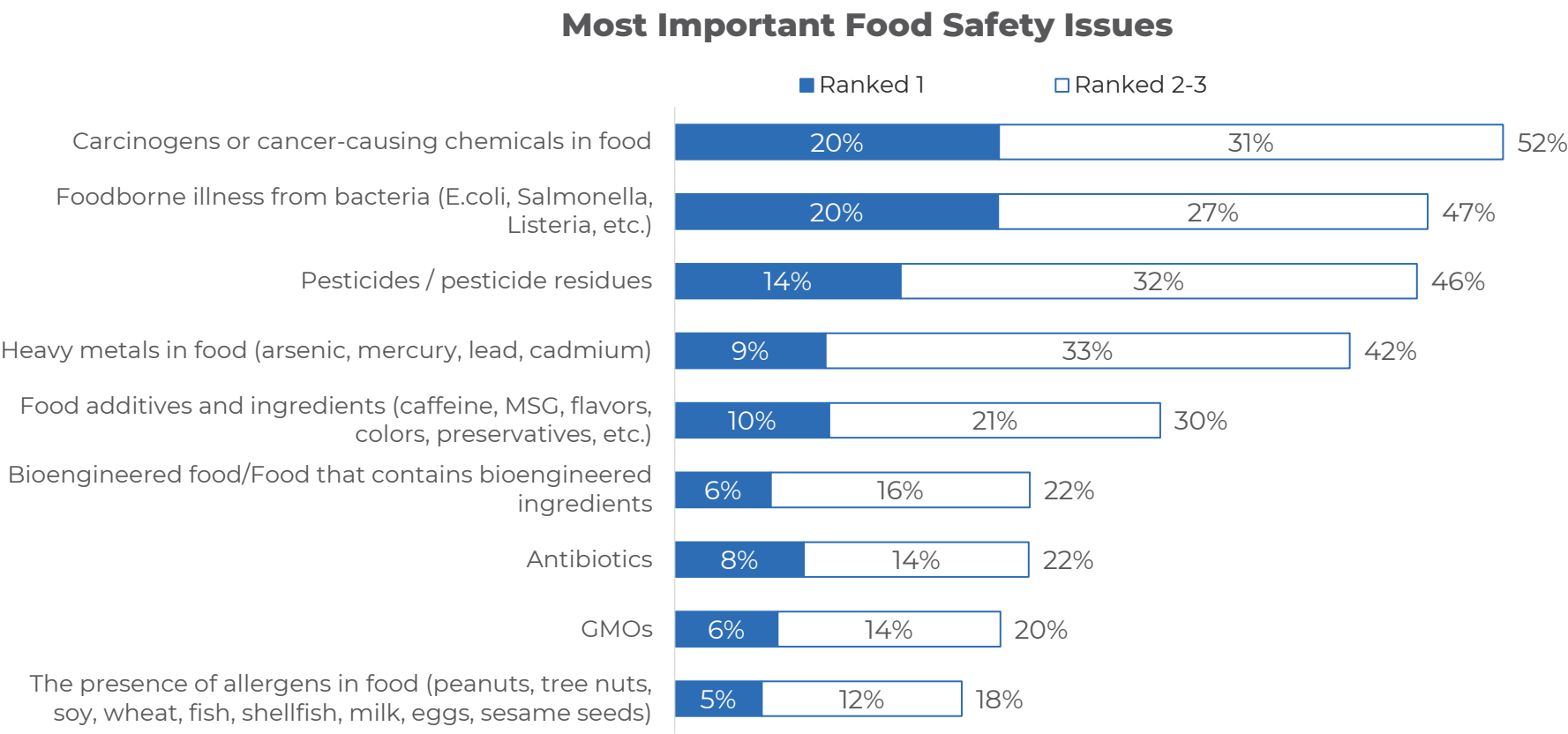
Confidence in the safety of the U.S. food supply among Gen Z has increased since 2023.

Which Demographics are Confident in the Safety of US Food Supply?
(% Very/somewhat confident)



Americans say carcinogens, foodborne illness from bacteria, and pesticides are the most important food safety issues.

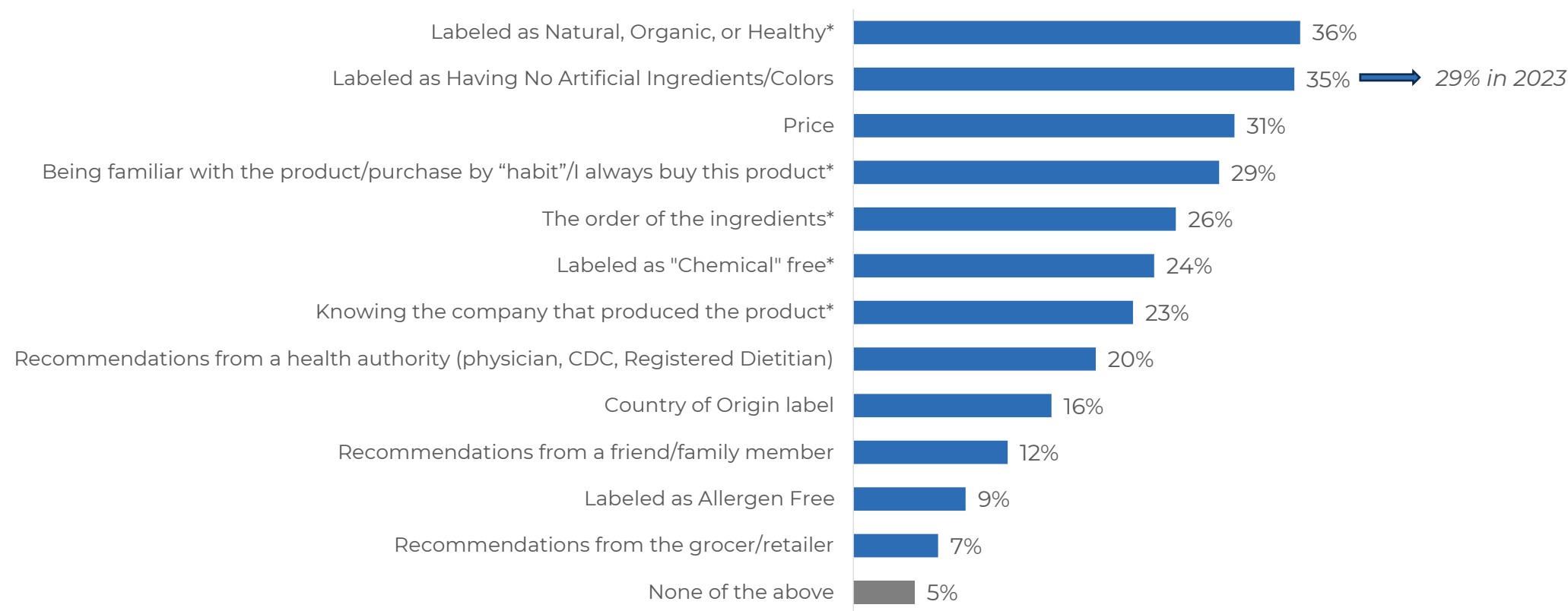
Younger generations are more likely than older generations to say GMOs and allergens are most important.



Foods labeled as “Natural,” “Organic,” or “Healthy,” or “No Artificial Ingredients/Colors” are top in-store safety signals.

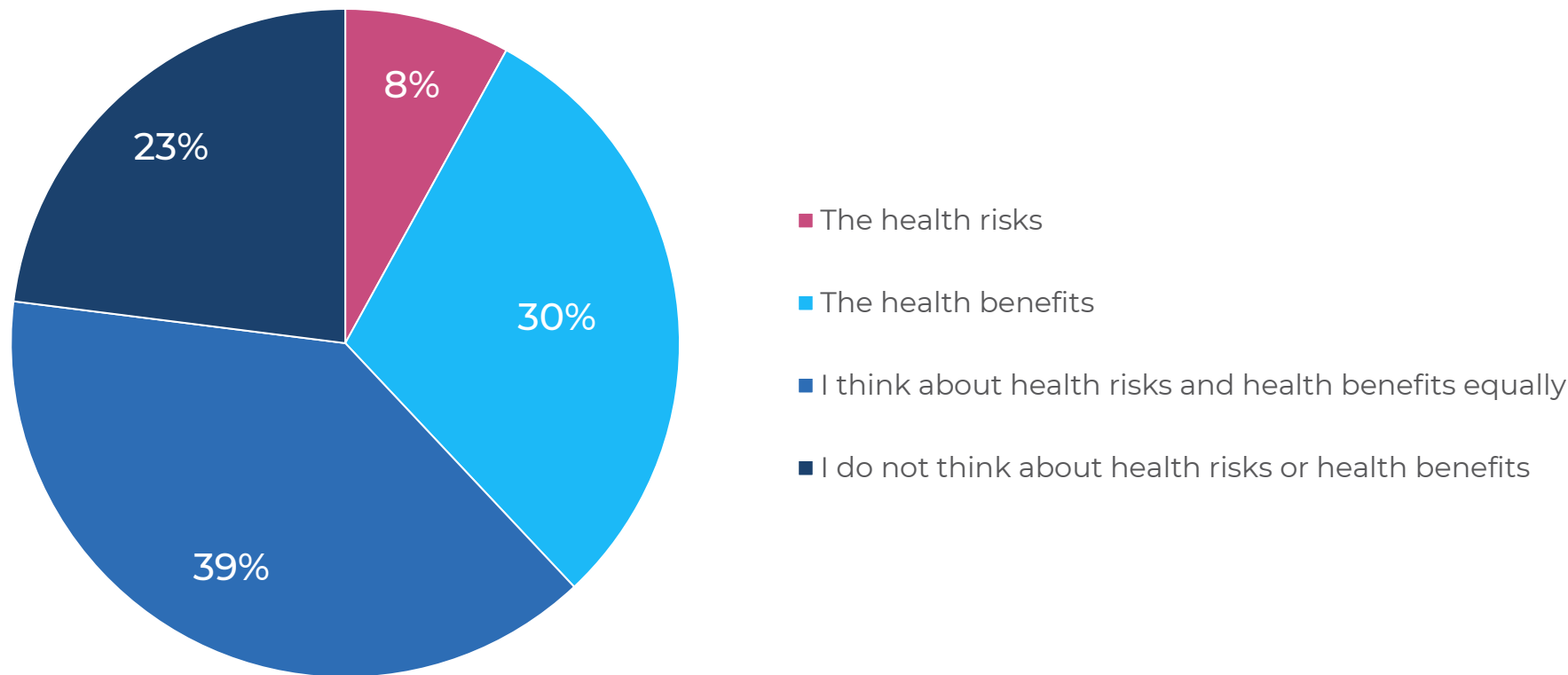
Older generations and those with higher household income are most likely to use labels indicating a food has no artificial ingredients or colors to inform their belief about a food’s safety while shopping.

Contributing Factors Towards Confidence in Safety of Food*



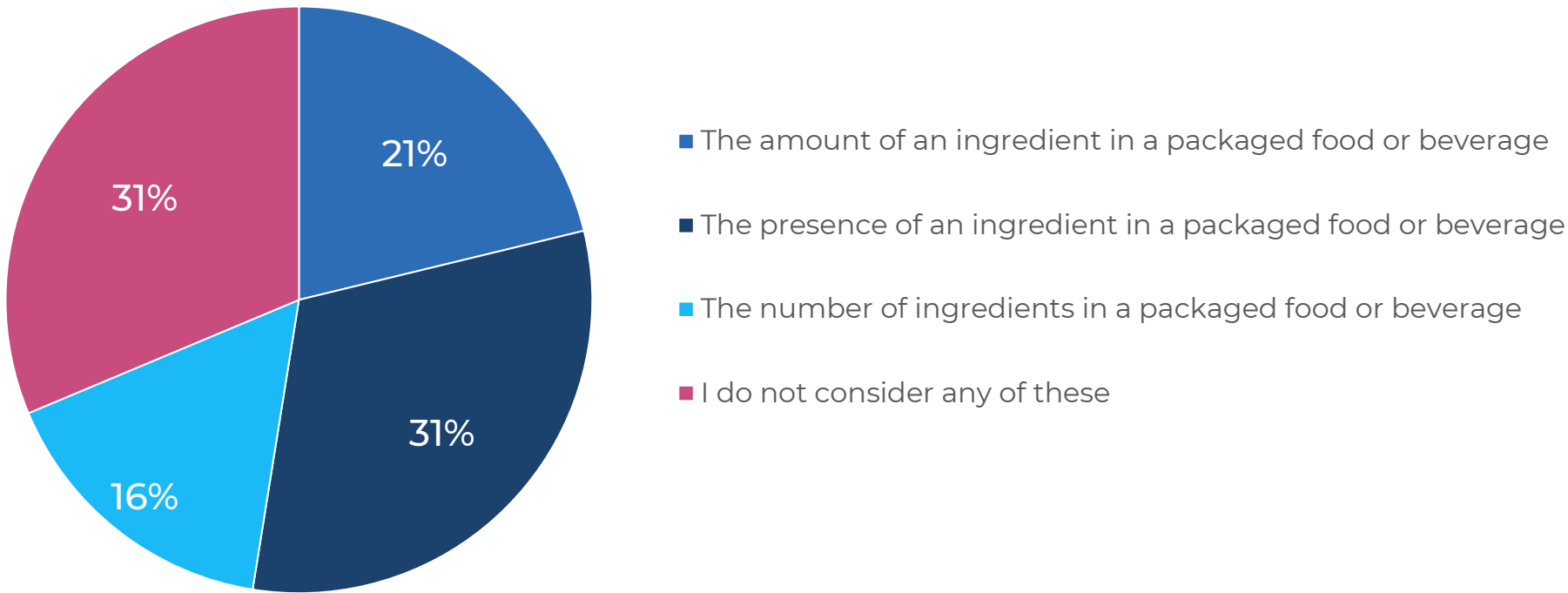
Nearly 1 in 4 Americans do not think about either the health risks or health benefits of what they eat and drink.

Americans consider the health benefits of what they eat and drink (30%) more often than the health risks (8%). However, most Americans think about the risks and benefits equally (39%).



When considering potential health risks associated with packaged food and beverages, 3 in 10 Americans do not consider the amount, presence, or number of ingredients.

More Americans consider the presence of an ingredient (31%) to be most important when considering potential health risks than the amount of an ingredient (21%) or number of ingredients (16%).





TRUST IN FOOD & HEALTH INFORMATION SOURCES

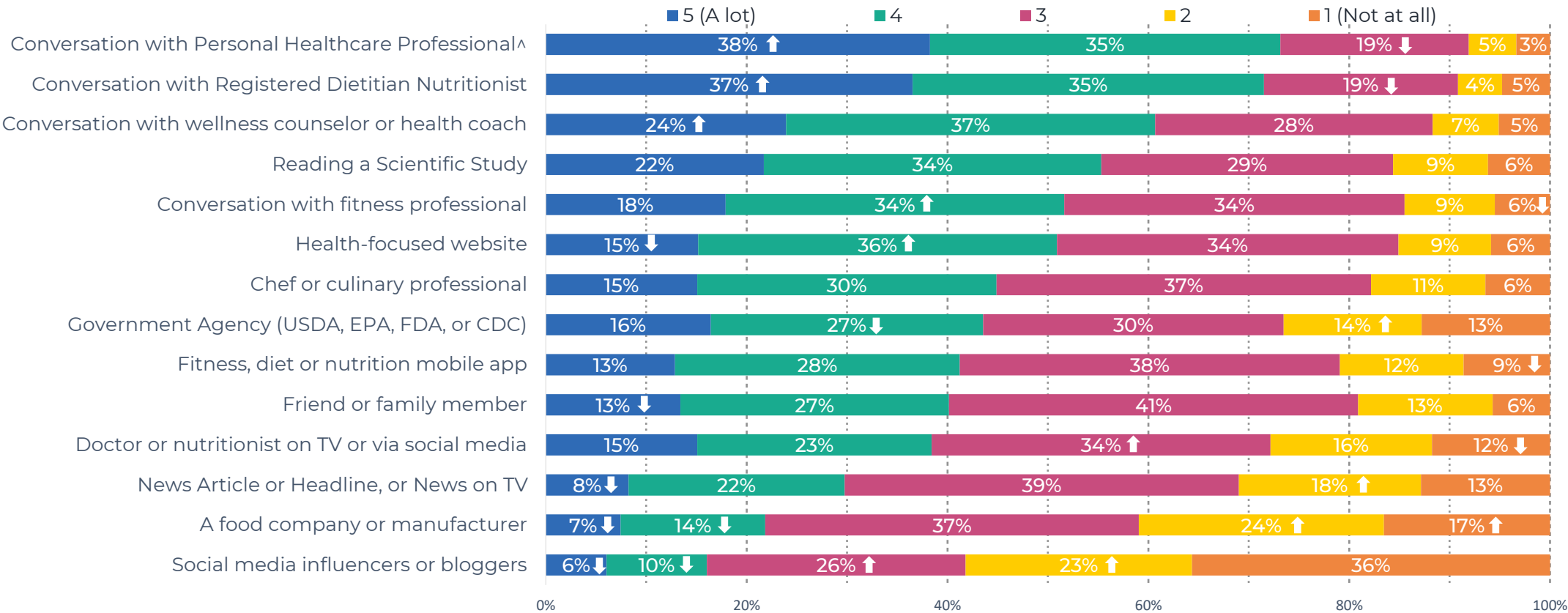


2024 IFIC
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SURVEY

Healthcare professionals and registered dietitians are the most trusted sources for what foods to eat and avoid.

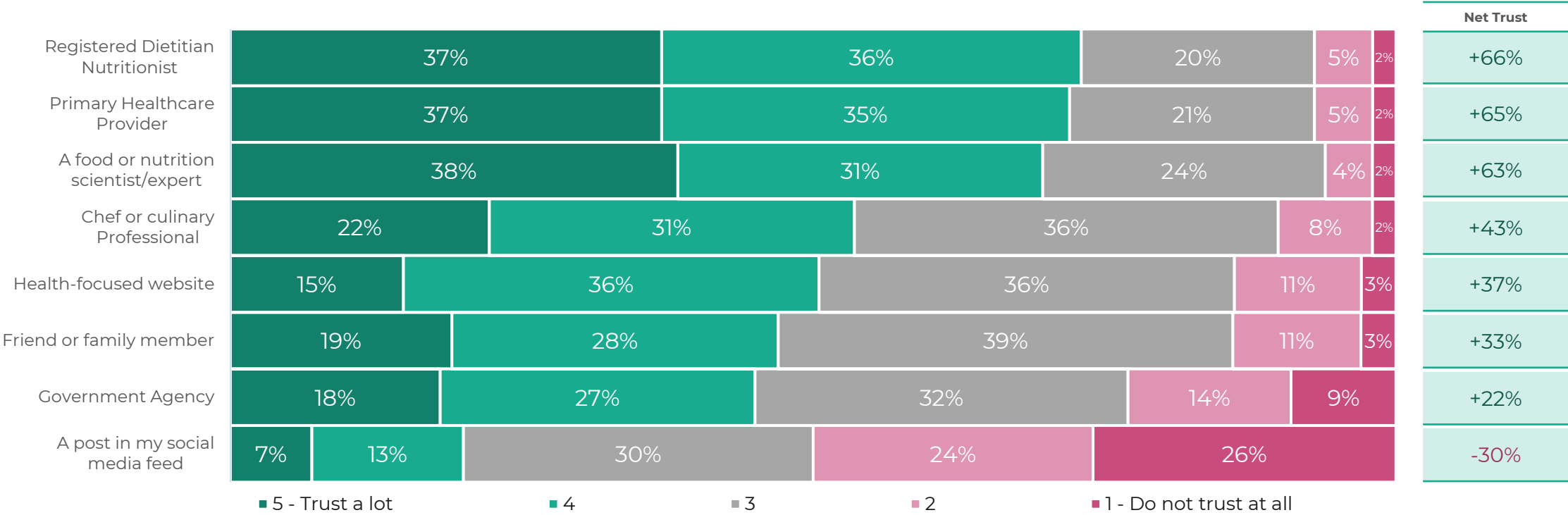
Trust in healthcare professionals and registered dietitians is significantly higher this year than it was in 2022.

Trust In Information About What Foods to Eat and Avoid By Source



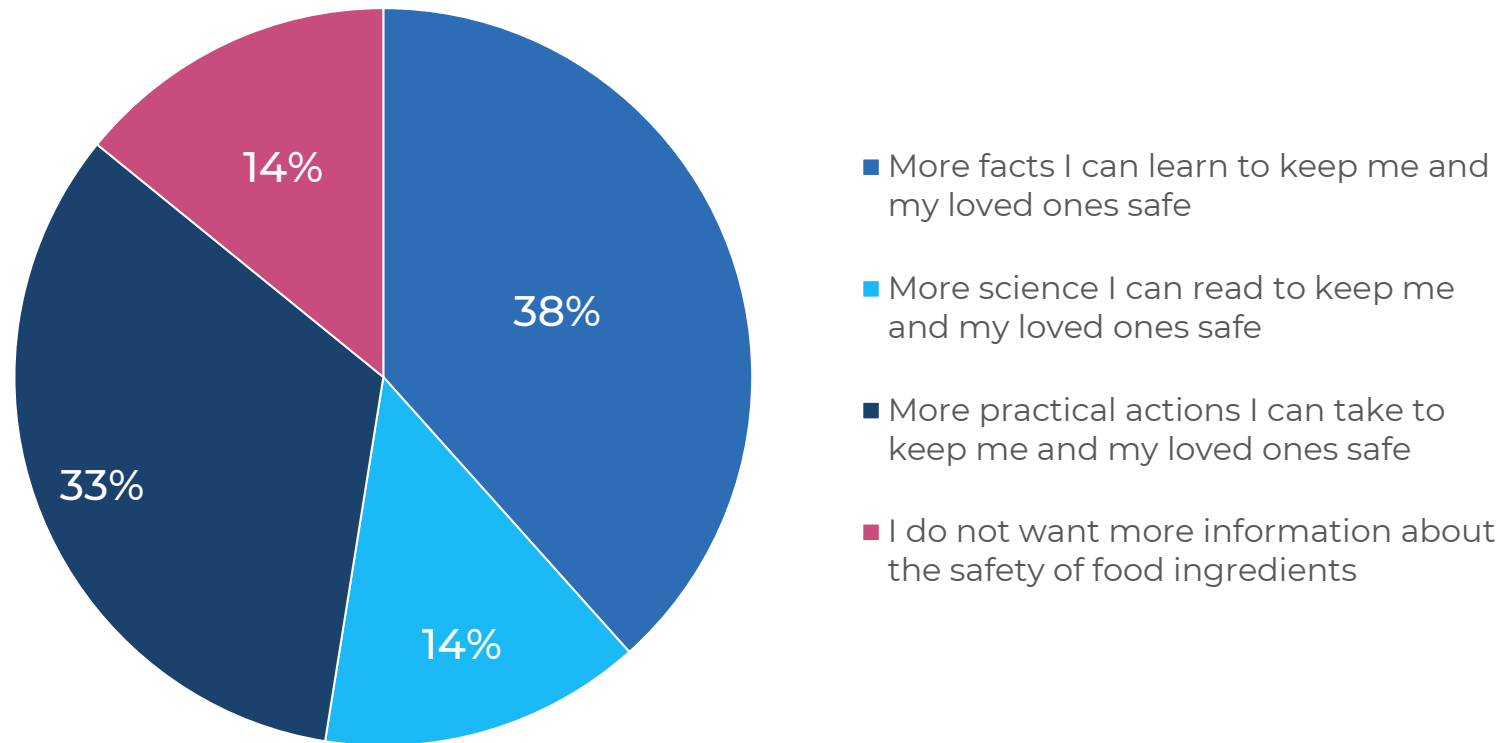
Among those who actively avoid certain food ingredients, trust about what food ingredients to eat and avoid is highest among dietitians, medical experts, and scientists.

While nearly 3 in 4 (73%) have high levels of trust in registered dietitian nutritionists, half (50%) express low levels of trust in posts they encounter in their social media feeds.



When it comes to the type of information about the safety of food ingredients that Americans want more of, facts and practical actions are more desired than science.

One in seven (14%) do not want more information about the safety of food ingredients.





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