2017 FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY
A Focus on Older Adults 50-80

Funded by AARP Foundation
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background &amp; Methodology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Eating</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Confusion</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packaged Foods</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Values</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2017 FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

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Background


This year, the survey investigates important issues regarding the food information landscape, health and diet, food components, food production, sustainability, and food safety.

In addition to the main study, a special companion study was conducted in partnership with AARP that focuses only on consumers age 50 and older. This report represents the findings of the companion study.

Methodology

• This report presents the results of an online survey of 1,002 Americans ages 50 to 80. Fielding took place from March 10 to March 29, 2017. The duration of the survey was 22 minutes, on average.

• The results were weighted to ensure that they are reflective of the American population ages 50 to 80, as seen in the 2016 Current Population Survey. Specifically, they were weighted by age, education, gender, race/ethnicity, and region.

• The survey was conducted by Greenwald & Associates, using ResearchNow’s consumer panel.
General Demographics

Gender
- Male: 47%
- Female: 53%

Age
- 50 - 64: 60%
- 65 - 80: 40%

Race/Ethnicity
- White: 73%
- Hispanic: 10%
- African American: 10%
- Asian or Pacific Islander: 5%
- Other: 1%

Household Income
- Less than $35,000: 24%
- $35,000 to $49,999: 22%
- $50,000 to $74,999: 16%
- $75,000 to $99,999: 10%
- $100,000 to $149,999: 12%
- $150,000 and above: 7%
- Don’t know: *
- Prefer not to answer: 9%

Education
- Less than high school: 2%
- Graduated high school: 40%
- Some college: 19%
- AA degree/technical/vocational: 8%
- Bachelor's degree: 19%
- Graduate/professional degree: 13%

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### Household Demographics

#### U.S. region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Marital status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with partner</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single, never married</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced or separated</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Type of location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small town</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Type of residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrangement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I own the property where I live</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I rent the property where I live</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have another arrangement</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Children’s ages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newborn - 2 years old</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - 6 years old</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 - 12 years old</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 - 17 years old</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 or older</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not have any children</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Health Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diseases</th>
<th>Multiple responses accepted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High blood pressure</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High cholesterol</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress/anxiety/depression</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight/obesity</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osteoporosis</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart disease</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stroke</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADHD</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BMI score</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal or Low</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obese</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Older adults are highly motivated to achieve better health, and are more likely to adopt healthy eating behaviors compared to their younger counterparts.

But this overall motivation doesn’t translate into better health outcomes for all, especially the lower income aging population. This demographic faces barriers that lead them to lag behind in the pursuit of good health.
Inequality in Health

Lower income consumers report poorer health, higher BMI, higher rate of diabetes and stress

52%
Describe their own health as “very good” or “excellent”

Self-Reported Health Status

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Health Status by Income

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Q: How would you describe your own health, in general? (n=1,002)
‘Healthy’ defined largely as lack of problems

Independence is key for adults 50+ and those who own their own home

How Consumers Define ‘Healthy’

- No/few health problems
- Body functioning properly, sufficient energy
- Fully independent/capable/mobile
- Eating healthy
- Health issues under control
- Being fit, in good shape, not overweight
- Capable of exercise and physical activity
- Maintain an active/social lifestyle
- Generally happy/comfortable/optimistic
- In good mental/emotional condition
- Nothing specific mentioned
- Simply being alive, living longer
- Sleep well at night
- Religion/spirituality/meditation
- Regular doctor check-ups
- No smoking, little or no drinking alcohol

Definition by Age

- No/few health problems
- Body functioning properly, sufficient energy
- Fully independent
- Eating healthy

Age:
- 50 to 64
- 65 to 80

23%
Of consumers who own their own house say being fully independent is a marker of health, vs. 15% of those who rent

Q: What does being “healthy” mean to you? (n=1,002)
Presence of healthy components important

Adults 50+ prioritize healthy components and food groups

How Consumers Define a Healthy Food

- High in healthy components or nutrients
- Part of an important food group that I need to build a healthy eating style
- Free from artificial ingredients, preservatives, or additives
- Low in unhealthy components or nutrients
- Minimally processed
- Natural
- Non-GMO
- Organic

Q: How do you define a healthy food? (n=1,002)

- 63% of those ages 65 to 80 say “part of an important food group”, vs. 52% of those ages 50 to 64
- 56% of women say “free of artificial ingredients”, vs. 43% of men
- 42% of higher income consumers say “low in unhealthy components”, vs. 32% of those with lower income
Fiber, Vitamin D, Whole Grains Top List

Women are more likely to rate many of these components as healthy

Healthfulness of Specific Components

Q: How would you rate the healthfulness of each of the following? (n=1,002)

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Healthy eating style defined as the right mix

**Adults age 50+ are more likely than younger consumers to say this.**

How Consumers Define a Healthy Eating Style

- The right mix of different food groups
- Limited or no artificial ingredients or preservatives
- Can easily be incorporated into my daily routine
- Flexible and easy to maintain over time
- Eating only foods I define as healthy
- Natural foods
- Can include higher calorie treats in moderation
- Everything you eat over a long period of time
- Organic foods
- Non-GMO foods

71% of consumers describe a healthy eating style as the right mix of food groups.

Q: How do you define a healthy eating style? (n=1,002)
Consumers take many steps to be healthy
*Adults age 50+ are more likely to be doing many of these actions*

### Steps Taken In Past Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Began doing in past year</th>
<th>Have been doing for more than a year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drink more water or other fluids to stay hydrated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat more fruits and vegetables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made small changes to achieve an overall healthier diet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut back on foods higher in saturated fat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut calories by drinking low- and no-calorie beverages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut back on foods higher in salt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat more foods with whole grains</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consume smaller portions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare sodium in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut back on full-fat dairy and replace with a low- or no-fat alternative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance calories to manage my weight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% Doing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age 18-49</th>
<th>Age 50+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drink more water or other fluids to stay hydrated</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat more fruits and vegetables</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made small changes to achieve an overall healthier diet</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut back on foods higher in saturated fat</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut calories by drinking low- and no-calorie beverages</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut back on foods higher in salt</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat more foods with whole grains</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consume smaller portions</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare sodium in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut back on full-fat dairy and replace with a low- or no-fat alternative</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance calories to manage my weight</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: Over the past year, which of the following, if any, have you made an effort to do? (n=1,002)
Internal motivation drives action
The top three choices are ranked roughly the same generally, but differ by demographics

Reasons Consumers Take Steps
(of those taking any action)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to protect my long-term health / prevent future health conditions</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to lose weight</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to feel better and have more energy</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to prevent weight gain</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to improve my health so I can have more independence in life</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I noticed a change in my physical appearance</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was diagnosed with a health condition</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A conversation with my personal health care professional</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to prevent any changes in my physical appearance</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to set a good example for my friends and family</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A conversation with a friend or family member</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A news article or study that discussed the effects of poor eating habits</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: Which of the following motivated you to make an effort to change your eating habits? Select all that apply. (Of those who made changes in the past year, n=596)

Groups More Likely

- Age 65 to 80
- College grad
- Higher income
- Better health

- Less than college degree
- Higher income
- Women
- Lives in small town

External factors less frequently inspire changes in eating habits.
Almost half know something about MyPlate

Men and those with less income are more likely to have never seen the graphic

37% of consumers with lower income have never seen the graphic before, vs. 28% of those with higher income.

Almost half know something about MyPlate

Familiarity with the MyPlate Graphic

- 39% of men say they have never seen the graphic before, vs. 29% of women.

Q: How familiar are you, if at all, with the following graphic? (n=1,002)

- 37%: I have never seen it before
- 28%: I have seen it but know very little about it
- 20%: I have seen it and know a fair amount about it
- 8%: I have seen it and know a lot about it
- 7%: Not sure
MyPlate at healthcare professional offices

Nearly 3 in 10 are not sure where they have seen the graphic

Where Consumers Have Seen the MyPlate Graphic
(Of those familiar with graphic)

- Personal healthcare professional’s office
- Grocery store or market
- On a food package
- School
- Registered Dietitian Nutritionist’s office
- Other
- Community Center
- Website
- Gym
- Senior Center
- Not sure

Q: Where have you seen the following graphic? (Of those familiar with MyPlate graphic, n=652)
One in seven follow specific eating patterns or diets

Women are more likely to follow an eating pattern/diet, especially unbranded and branded diets

Followed a Specific Eating Pattern or Diet in Past Year

15% Yes

Eating Pattern/Diet Followed

- Unbranded diets
- Branded diets
- Fewer unhealthy foods or nutrients
- More healthy foods or nutrients

Examples:
- Paleo, Vegan, Vegetarian
- Weight Watchers, Atkins, Whole 30
- Low carb, sugar, fat, sodium
- More vegetables, fruit, protein

Q: Have you followed any specific eating pattern or diet at any time in the past year? (n=1,002)

Branded diets are more common among women and those with higher income
Diet choice driven by friends and family

As with those ages 18 to 49, consumers over 50 say a friend or family member is top influence

Top Influence on Decision to Follow a Specific Eating Pattern or Diet
(Of those following an eating pattern/diet)

Q: Which of the following information sources most influenced your decision to choose this eating pattern or diet? (n=155)

- Friend or family member
- Conversation with Personal Healthcare Professional
- News article or headline
- Conversation with Registered Dietitian Nutritionist
- Healthcare professional on TV or social media
- Reading a scientific study
- Health-focused website
- Health, food, or nutrition bloggers
- Conversation with fitness professional
- Fitness professional on TV or social media
- Registered Dietitian Nutritionist on TV or social media
- Conversation with wellness counselor or health coach
- A food company or manufacturer
- Other

1 in 3
Selected an eating pattern or diet based on info from friends or family

Q: Which of the following information sources most influenced your decision to choose this eating pattern or diet? (n=155)
Weight loss/cardio health most desired

1 in 4 desire weight loss, although this trails the 4 in 10 of those ages 18 to 49 who say the same

Most Desired Health Benefits From Food

- Weight loss/management
- Cardiovascular health
- Energy
- Digestive health
- Immune function
- Muscle health
- Bone health
- Mental health
- Memory/cognition
- Focus/alertness
- Oral health
- Other
- None of the above

Q: Which of the following health benefits are you most interested in getting from foods or nutrients? (n=1,002)
Half know where to get desired benefit

Americans over 50 are more able to name a specific source of their most desired health benefit

Can Consumers Name a Food or Nutrient That Provides Most Desired Benefit

- **49%** Yes

Only **40%** of consumers age 18-49 can name a specific source to get the benefit they desire most

Q: Can you name a food or nutrient that you would seek out to help with this health benefit? (Of those who named a desired benefit, n=964)
Sugars top list of likely sources of weight gain
1 in 4 say all sources are equally likely to cause weight gain

Source of Calories Most Likely to Cause Weight Gain

- Sugars
- Carbs
- Fats
- Protein
- All sources are the same
- Not sure

25% Of consumers age 50-80 say all sources of calories are equally likely to cause weight gain

17% Of consumers age 18-49 say all sources of calories are equally likely to cause weight gain

Q: What source of calories is the most likely to cause weight gain? (n=1,002)
Over half use nutrition info when eating out

Doing so is more common among healthier and wealthier consumers

65%
Of those in excellent or very good health use nutrition info when eating out, vs. 40% of those in fair/poor health

71%
Of those with higher income use nutrition info when eating out, vs. 44% of those with lower income

62% of women use nutrition info when eating out, vs. 50% of men

Use of Nutrition Info When Eating Away From Home

I will not eat something when eating out without first checking the nutritional information

I will regularly use nutrition information to decide what to have when eating out

I will sometimes use nutrition information to decide what to have when eating out

I have noticed nutrition information before, but haven’t paid any attention to it

I have not noticed or seen any nutrition information when eating out at restaurants

56%
Use nutrition info at least sometimes when eating away from home

Q: How, if at all, have you used nutrition information when eating away from home? (n=1,002)
The food information landscape is not easy to navigate. Consumers face a great deal of conflicting information about what to eat and what to avoid, leading many to doubt the choices they make.

Healthcare professionals are considered most trustworthy, but friends and family have significant influence when it comes to actual sources of information.
Health Professionals are most trusted

*Older adults have more trust in these sources than younger generations*

### Trusted Sources About Which Foods to Eat/Avoid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>5 - A lot</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1 - Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conversation with Registered Dietitian Nutritionist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation with Personal Healthcare Professional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation with wellness counselor or health coach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading a Scientific Study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation with fitness professional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Dietitian Nutritionist on TV or social media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health-focused website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend or family member</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Agency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare Professional on TV or via social media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News Article or Headline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health, food or nutrition bloggers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness Professional on TV or social media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A food company or manufacturer</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: How much would you trust information from the following on which foods to eat and avoid? (n=1,002)

**Women have greater trust in nearly all sources.**

54% of those with higher income highly trust scientific studies, vs. just 39% of lower income consumers.

Consumers age 50-80 are more trusting than younger consumers of conversations with a healthcare prof. and a RDN. They are less trusting of the news, bloggers, and a fitness or healthcare prof. on social media.
Healthcare professionals a top source
Family/friends are also a top source, but this informal advice is more common for younger Americans

Q: How often do you get information from the following on which foods to eat and avoid? (n=1,002)

Sources for Information About Which Foods to Eat/Avoid

- Conversation with Personal Healthcare Professional
- Friend or family member
- Conversation with Registered Dietitian Nutritionist
- Reading a Scientific Study
- Health-focused website
- Conversation with wellness counselor or health coach
- News Article or Headline
- Conversation with fitness professional
- Registered Dietitian Nutritionist on TV or social media
- Healthcare Professional on TV or via social media
- Government Agency
- A food company or manufacturer
- Health, food or nutrition bloggers
- Fitness Professional on TV or social media

22% Of those with higher income regularly get info from scientific studies, vs. 12% of lower income consumers.

The same is true for college educated vs. those with less than a college degree.

20% Of those from urban areas regularly get info from fitness professionals, vs. 7% of those from rural areas.

Consumers age 50-80 are less likely than younger consumers to get info from family and friends.
Trust and Reliance

Healthcare professionals and RDNs stand out on trust, but RDNs are much less common

Level of Trust vs. Reliance as a Source

Q: How much would you trust information from the following on which foods to eat and avoid? (n=1,002), Q: How often do you get information from the following on which foods to eat and avoid? (n=1,002)
Conflicting advice drives doubt

8 in 10 confront conflicting advice yet those age 50-80 are more confident in choices than younger age groups

"There is a lot of conflicting information about what foods I should eat or avoid."

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
"There is a lot of conflicting information about what foods I should eat or avoid." (n=1,002)

"The conflicting information about what I should be eating makes me doubt the choices I make." (Of those who think there is conflicting information)

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

47%
Of consumers age 50-80 who think there is conflicting information say it makes them doubt their choice.

61%
Of consumers age 18-49 who think there is conflicting information say it makes them doubt their choice.

2017 FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY
Funded by AARP Foundation
Priorities for Americans’ dollars

Saving is the top priority, but groceries, healthcare are also important for low-income adults

How Consumers Would Spend an Extra $100

Top 4 Responses by Income

Q: If you had an extra $100 to spend every month, what would you do with that money? Select up to 3 options. (n=1,002)
Priorities for Americans’ time
Social and physical activity are top priorities; rest is a priority for lower income adults

How Consumers Would Spend an Extra 4 Hours

Spend time with friends or family
Be physically active
Clean or update my home
Sleep or rest
Spend more time cooking
Go out to eat
Get more done at work
Other

Top 4 Responses by Income

Q: If you had an extra 4 hours every week, how would you likely spend that time? Select up to 3 options. (n=1,002)
Factors beyond nutrition create health halo

Form, place of purchase and length of ingredient list, among other factors, affect the perceived healthfulness of nutritionally identical products.

If Two Products Have the Same Nutrition Facts Panel, Which is Healthier?

Q: Imagine you came across two food products that had the exact same Nutrition Facts panel. Would any of the following details lead you to believe that one of the products was more likely to be healthier? (n=1,002)

- Product A is canned and Product B is frozen
- Product A has a longer ingredients list than Product B
- Product A is purchased at a convenience store and Product B is purchased at a natural foods store
- Product A costs $0.99 and Product B costs $2.00
- Product A is a fresh product and Product B is frozen
- Product A is a fresh product and Product B is canned
- Product A is a name brand and Product B is a generic (store brand)
PACKAGED FOODS

Packaging information is key when shopping for groceries – expiration dates, nutrition facts, and ingredient lists are used frequently. In fact, older Americans consult these sources of information even more frequently than their younger counterparts.

Packaging functionality is important, too – especially the ability to reseal the package.
Taste, healthfulness reign supreme

Americans 50+ are more influenced by these factors, along with brand but to a lesser degree.

Drivers of Food/Beverage Purchases

Q: How much of an impact do the following have on your decision to buy foods and beverages? (n=1,002)

- **Taste**: 88% of consumers age 50+ say taste is a top driver, vs. 79% of those under 50.
- **Healthfulness**: 70% of consumer age 50+ say healthfulness is a top driver, vs. 59% of those under 50.
- **Price**: 38% of consumer age 50+ say brand is a top driver, vs. 31% of those under 50.

2017 FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

Funded by AARP Foundation
Supermarkets dominate as food outlet

Super-stores are more common among lower-income consumers; the opposite for discount clubs

Where Consumers Shop for Food/Beverages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outlet</th>
<th>5 - Always</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1 - Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supermarket</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Super-store</td>
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<tr>
<td>Warehouse/Discount club</td>
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<td>Farmers’ market</td>
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<td>Natural foods store</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drug store</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convenience store</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: How often do you shop for food and beverages at the following? (n=1,002)
Older consumers use packaging info more frequently

Expiration date and NFP are most frequently consulted pieces of info on packaging

Packaging Information Consulted During Purchase

- Expiration date
- Ingredients list
- Nutrition facts panel
- Calorie and other nutrition information on the front of the package via an icon or graphic
- Brand name
- Statements about nutrition benefits
- Statements about health benefits

Consults Info by Age (% 4 to 5 of 5)

Q: How often do you consult the following packaging information before deciding to purchase a food or beverage? (n=1,002)
Packaging functionality matters

Older adults care more about resealing, clear packaging, and individual portions

Q: How important are the following factors when you are purchasing a food or beverage? (n=1,002)

Importance of Packaging

- Package can be resealed and saved for later
  - 62% of those ages 65 to 80 say resealable packages are important, vs. 54% of those ages 50 to 64. Older consumers also care more about ease of opening.

- Ease of opening the product’s packaging
  - 66% of those renting their home say resealable packages are important, vs. 55% of those who own. Renters also care more about individual portions.

- Clear or see-through packaging

- Individually portioned packaging

- Recyclable packaging

46% of lower income consumers say ease of opening is important, vs. 33% of higher income consumers. Lower income consumers also care more about individual portions.
When it comes to what Americans eat and why, considerations go far beyond the factors that traditionally drive purchases - taste, price and convenience. How food is produced, where it comes from, its ingredients list, and perceived corporate values also have a significant impact on food decisions.
Importance of food production, values

Lower-income Americans are more likely to care about food waste

Q: How important are the following factors in your decision to purchase a food or beverage? (n=1,002)

Production-Related Purchase Factors

- Recognizing the ingredients listed on the package
- Knowing where the food comes from
- The number of ingredients on the food’s label
- Understanding how the food is produced
- Knowing that the manufacturer shares my values
- Knowing that the manufacturer has a commitment to reducing food waste

Women are more likely to care about recognizing ingredients, knowing where food comes from, the number of ingredients, and how food is produced.

74%
Of those ages 65 to 80 say that recognizing ingredients listed is important, vs. 67% of those 50 to 64.
Older consumers also care more about knowing where food comes from.

31%
Of lower-income consumers say knowing the manufacturer is committed to reducing food waste is important, vs. 22% of higher-income consumers.
Restaurant choice goes beyond taste
Many care about where and how restaurant food is produced

37%
Of lower-income consumers say knowing a restaurant is committed to reducing food waste is important, vs.
23% of higher-income consumers

Factors When Choosing Where to Eat Out

Q: How important are the following factors when it comes to choosing a restaurant or cafeteria? (Split sample, n=486)
Labels have bigger impact on products

“No added hormones” is desired, especially for women and those with higher income

**Labels Consumers Regularly Seek on Packages/at Restaurants**

- No added hormones or steroids
- Pesticide-free
- Raised without antibiotics
- Natural
- Locally-sourced
- Non-“GMO”
- Organic
- Sustainably-sourced
- None of the above

**Q: Which of the following, if any, do you do on a regular basis? Select all that apply.**

- Buy foods and beverages because they are advertised on the label as...
- Eat at restaurants because they advertised their foods and beverages as...

45% of women buy food that is labeled as having no added hormones or steroids, vs. 33% of men.

43% Of those with higher income buy food that is labeled as having no added hormones or steroids, vs. 27% of those with less income.

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2017 FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

Funded by AARP Foundation
Older adults more confident in food supply

Foodborne illness, carcinogens, chemicals in food, pesticides are top food safety concerns for all consumers

Confidence in Safety of U.S. Food Supply

- Very confident
- Somewhat confident
- Not too confident
- Not at all confident
- Not sure

Confidence among Age Groups

- 55% Age 18 to 49
- 66% Age 50 to 64
- 76% Age 65 to 80

Most Important Food Safety Issues Today

- Foodborne illness from bacteria
- Carcinogens or cancer-causing chemicals in food
- Chemicals in food
- Pesticides / pesticide residues
- Food additives and ingredients
- Animal antibiotics
- Biotechnology / “GMO”s
- The presence of allergens in food
- Other

Q: Overall, how confident are you in the safety of the U.S. food supply? (n=1,002)
Q: What in your opinion are the three most important food safety issues today? (n=1,002)
2017 FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

Americans Ages 50-80 Report

http://www.foodinsight.org/Americans-50-Plus

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