



2017 FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

A Focus on Older Adults 50-80



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Background

The International Food Information Council (IFIC) Foundation's *2017 Food & Health Survey*, "A Healthy Perspective: Understanding American Food Values," marks the 12th edition of an ongoing investigation into the beliefs and behaviors of Americans.

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.



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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



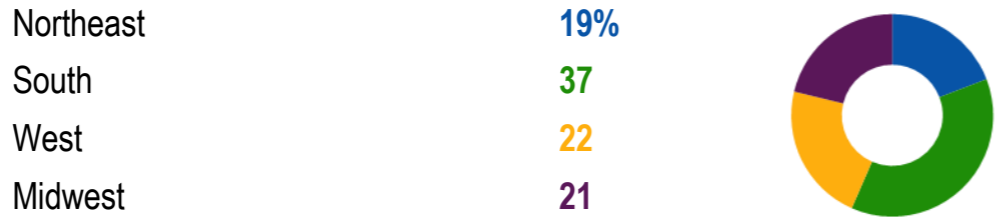
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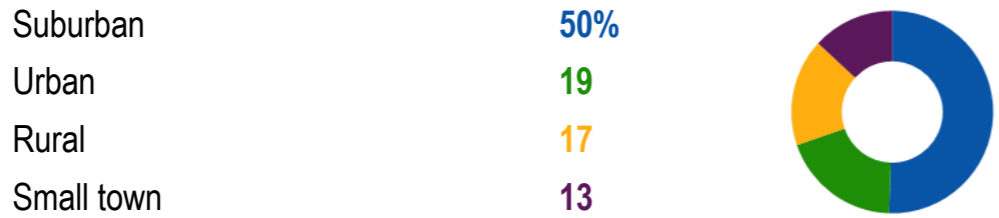
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Household Demographics

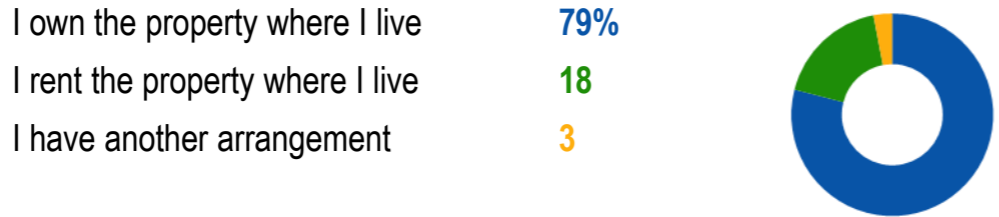
U.S. region



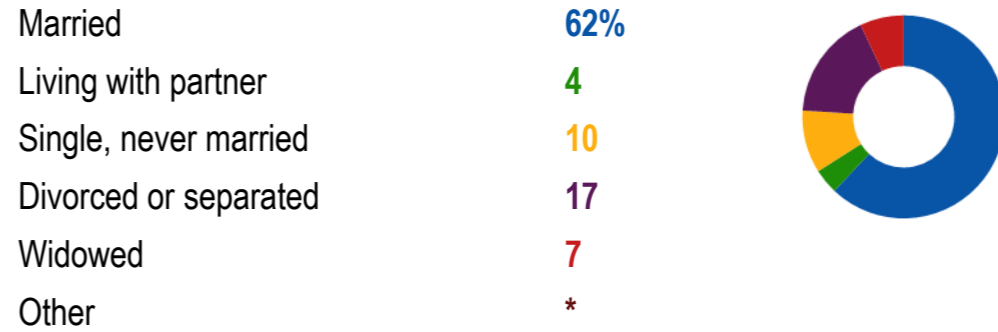
Type of location



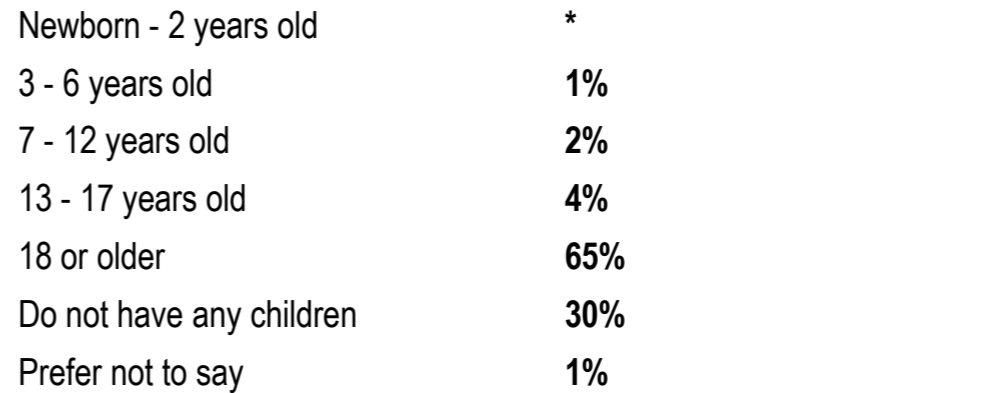
Type of residence



Marital status



Children's ages *Multiple responses accepted*



Health Demographics

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

BMI score	
Normal or Low	33%
Overweight	35
Obese	29
No answer	3



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HEALTHY EATING

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.



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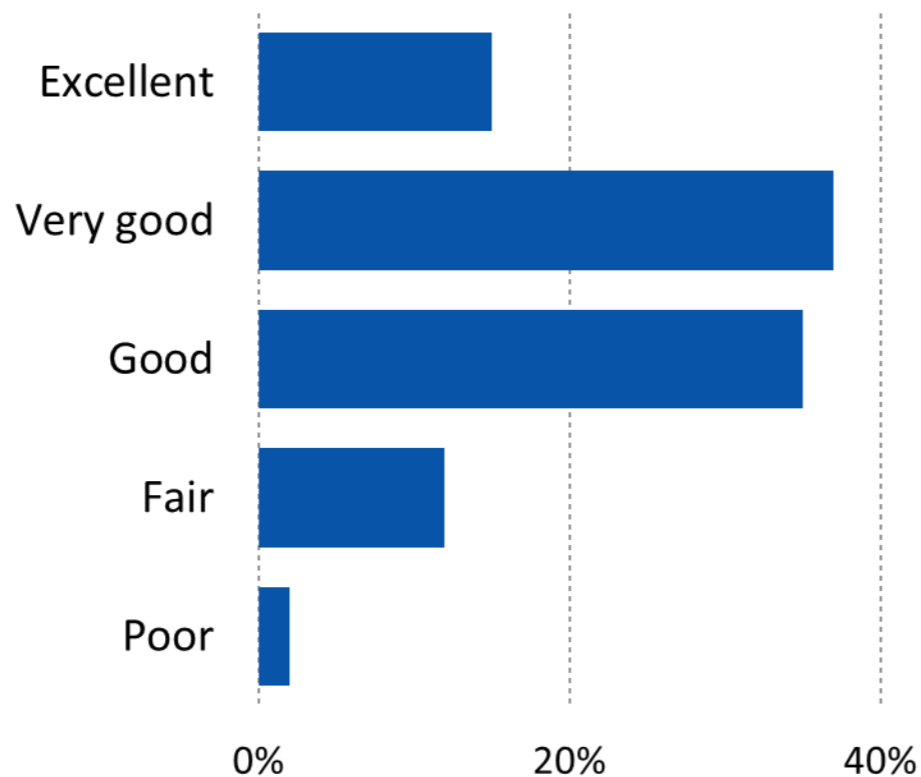
Inequality in Health

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

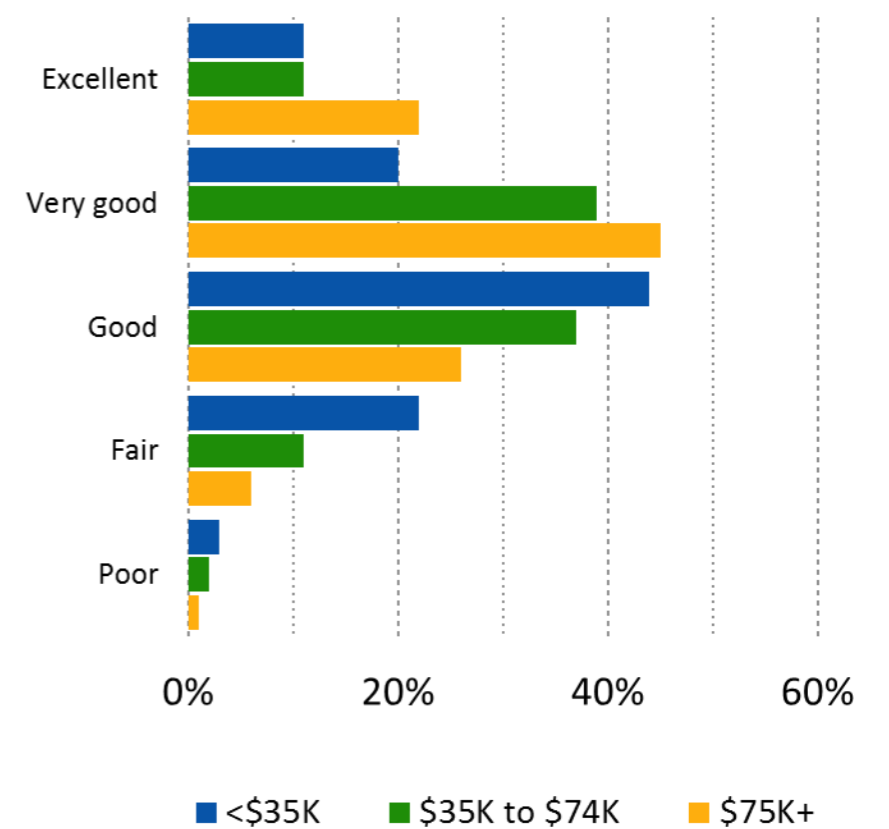
52%

Describe their own health as "very good" or "excellent"

Self-Reported Health Status



Health Status by Income



Q: How would you describe your own health, in general? (n=1,002)



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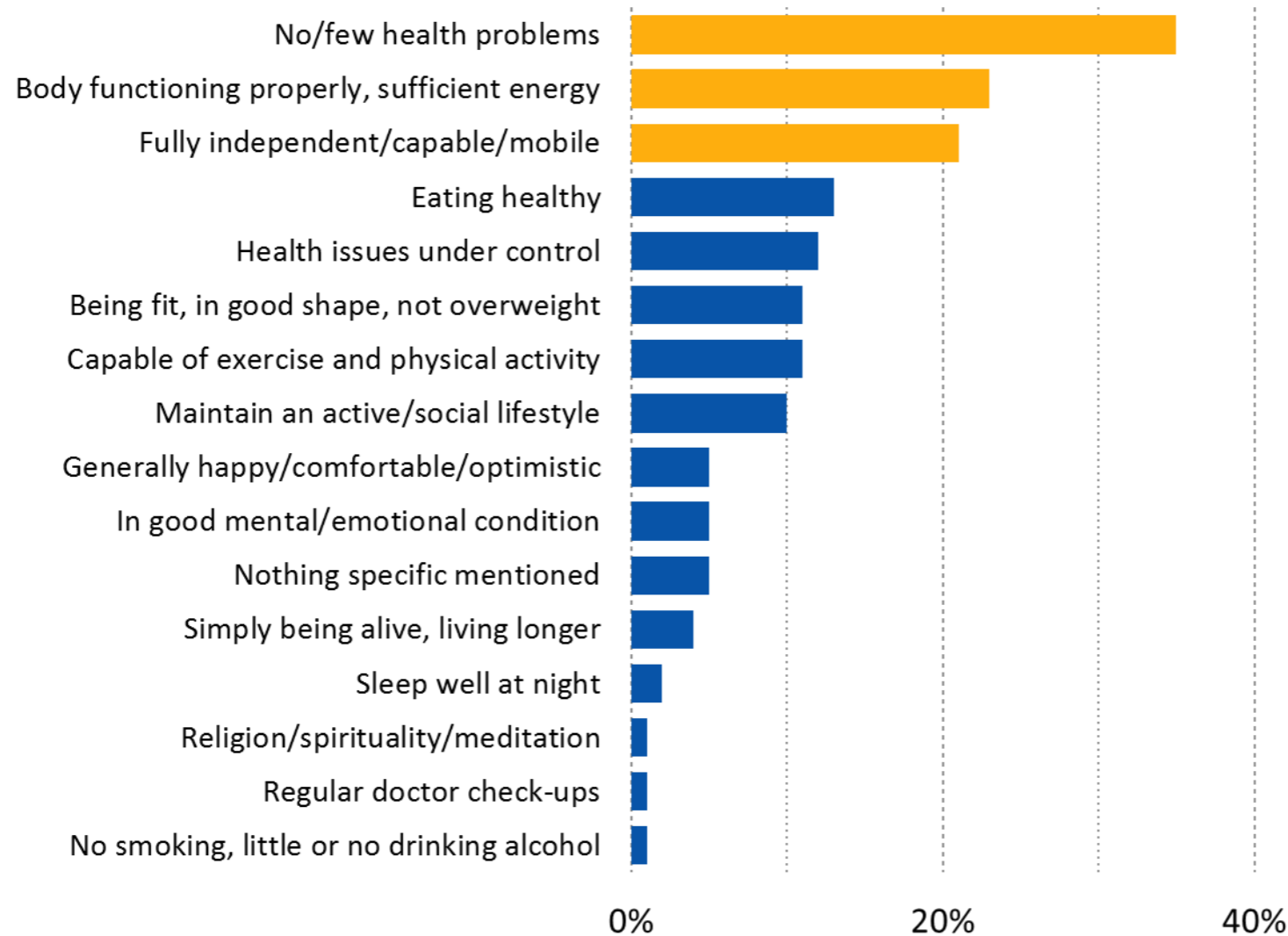
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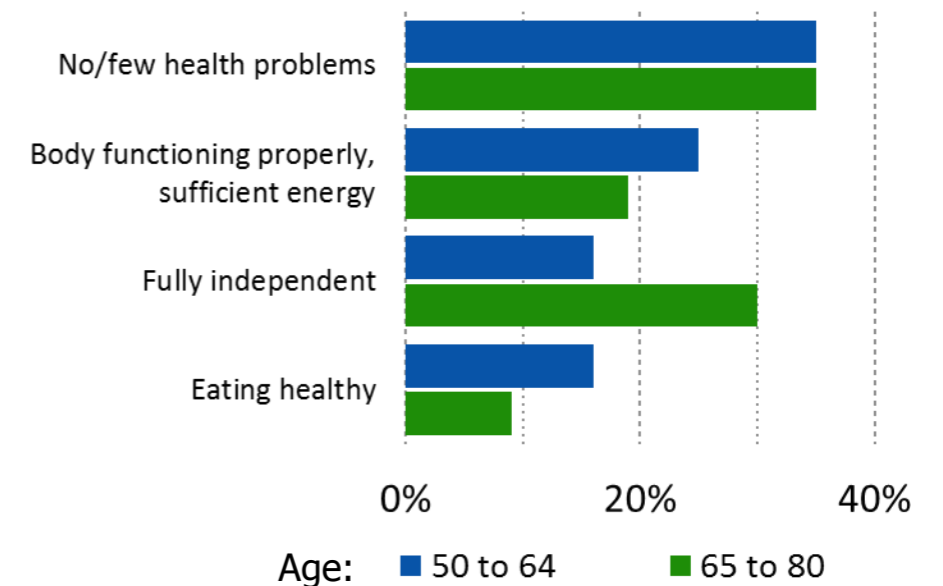
'Healthy' defined largely as lack of problems

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

How Consumers Define 'Healthy'



Definition by Age



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)



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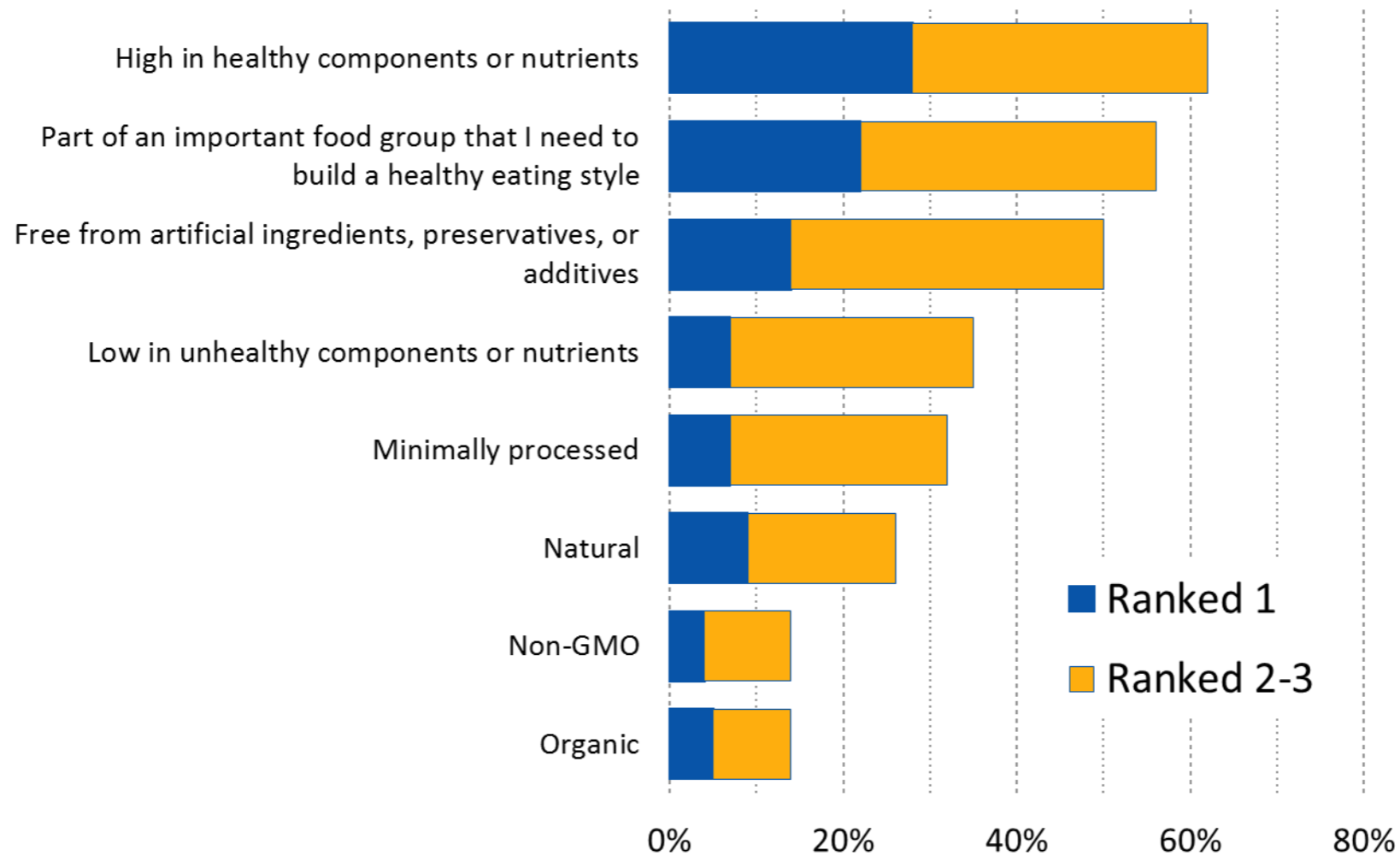
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Presence of healthy components important

Adults 50 + prioritize healthy components and food groups

How Consumers Define a Healthy Food



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

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



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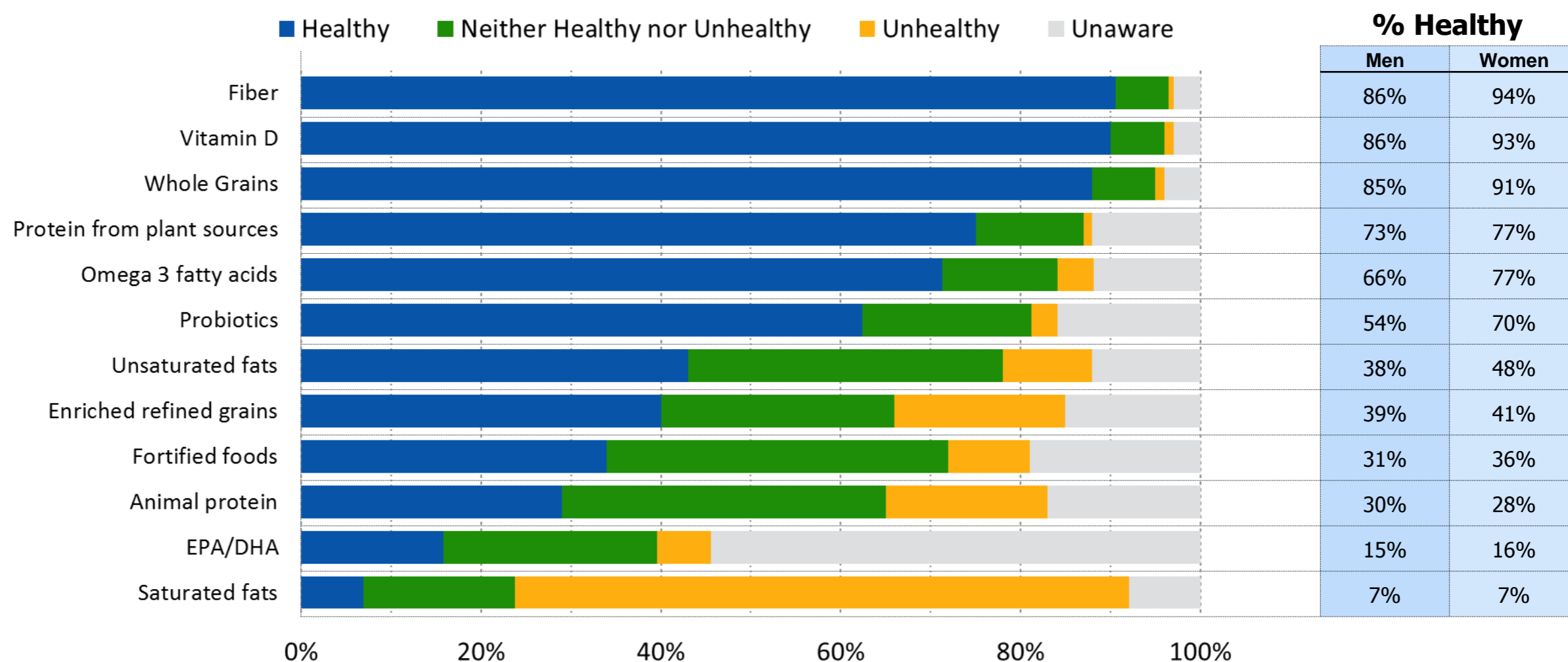
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Fiber, Vitamin D, Whole Grains Top List

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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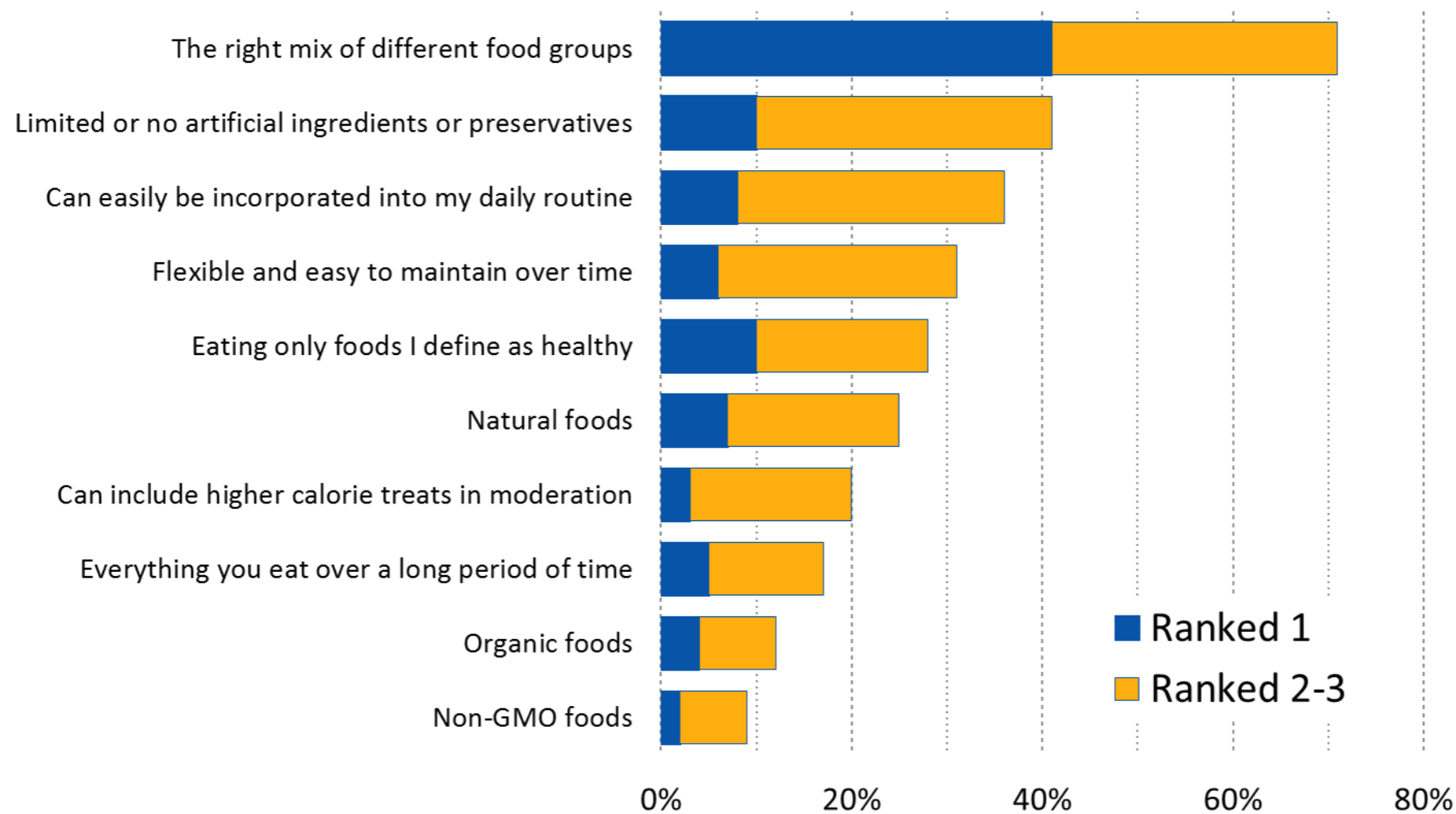
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Healthy eating style defined as the right mix

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

How Consumers Define a Healthy Eating Style



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)



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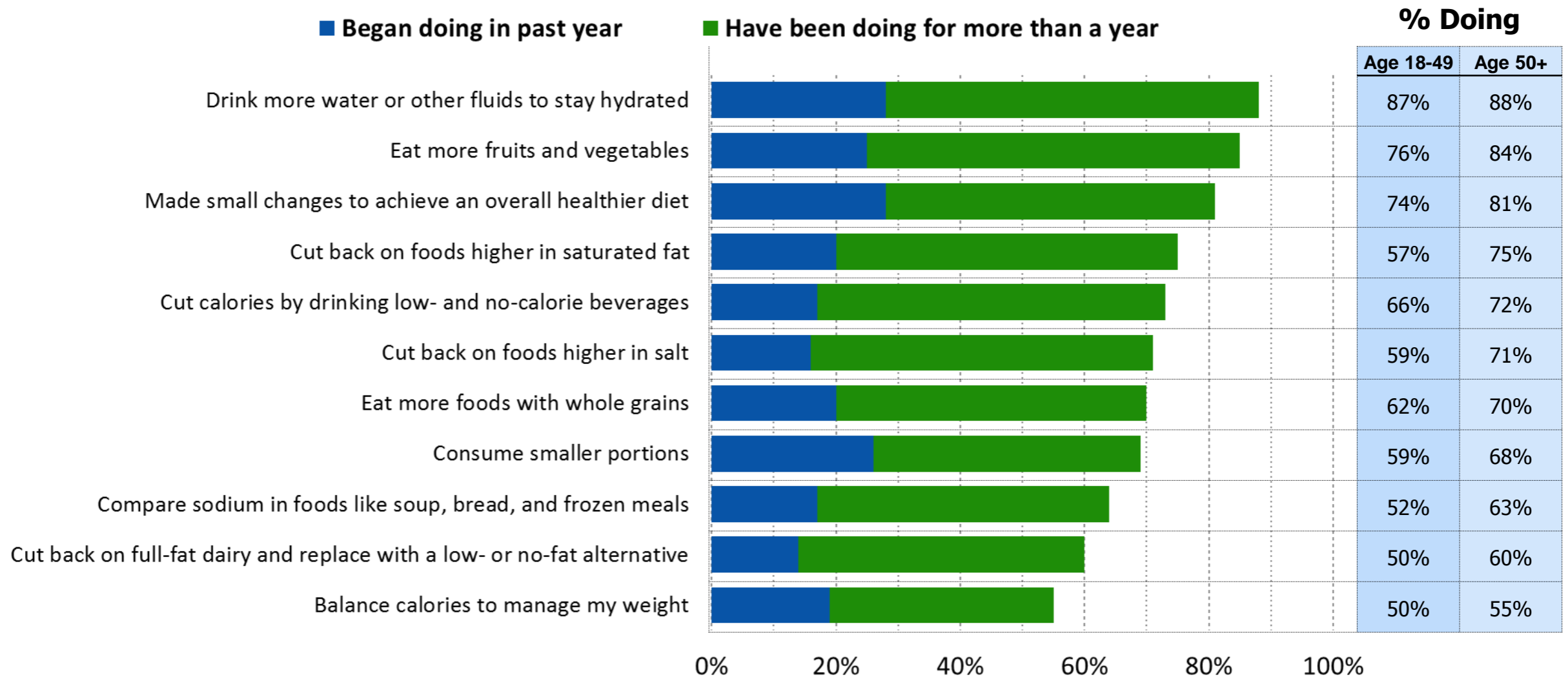
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Consumers take many steps to be healthy

Adults age 50+ are more likely to be doing many of these actions

Steps Taken In Past Year



Q: Over the past year, which of the following, if any, have you made an effort to do? (n=1,002)



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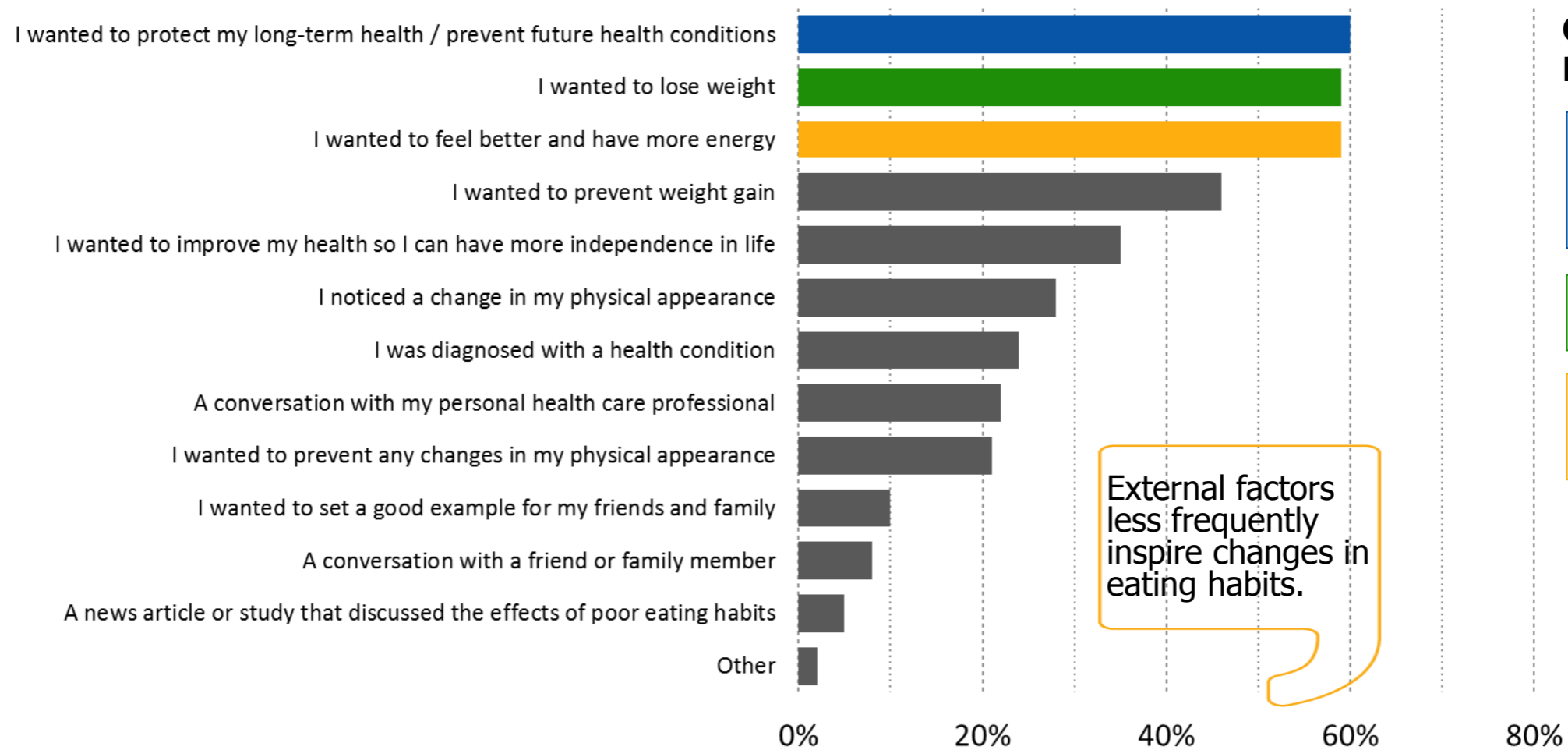
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Internal motivation drives action

The top three choices are ranked roughly the same generally, but differ by demographics

Reasons Consumers Take Steps (of those taking any action)



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.

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)



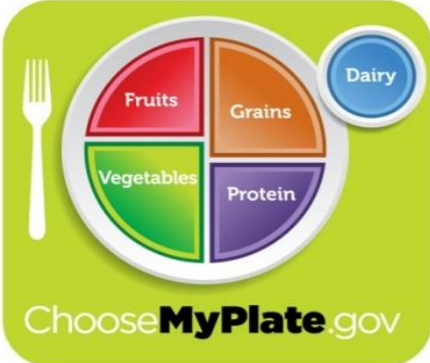
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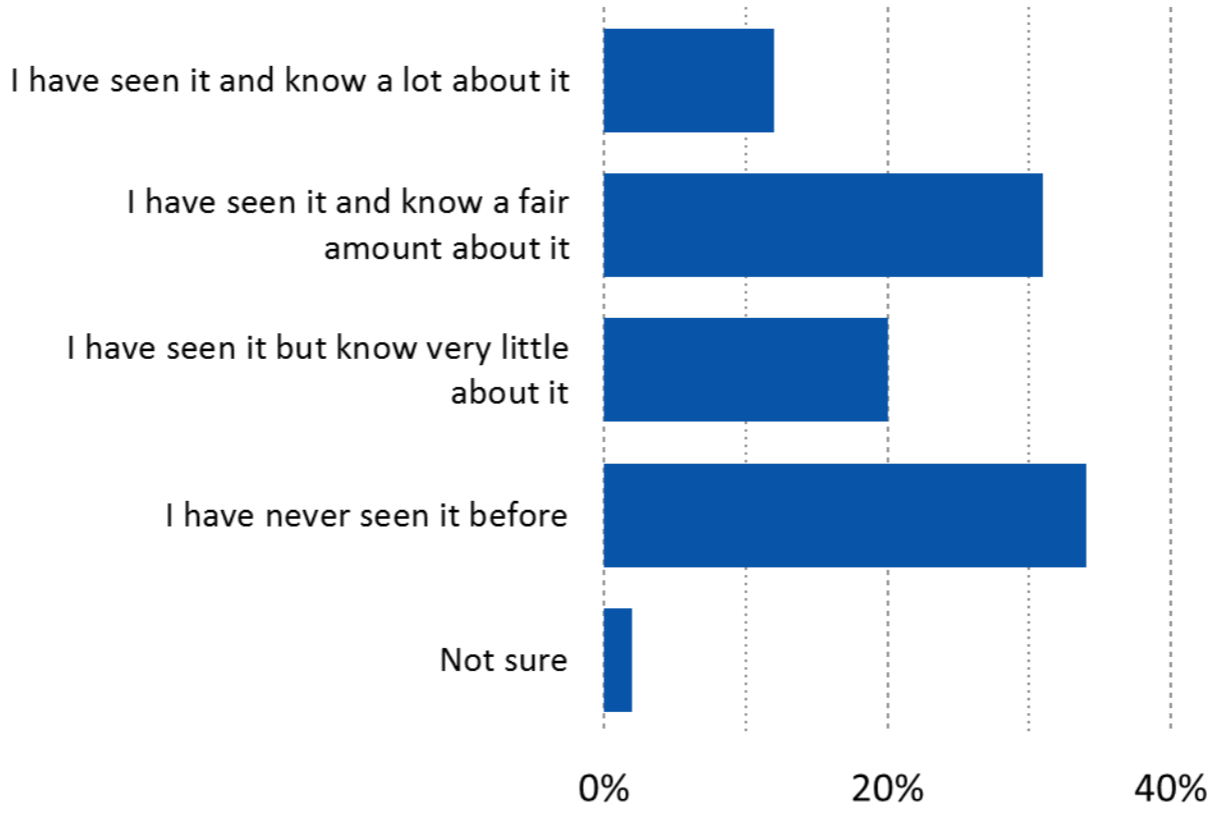
Almost half know something about MyPlate

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

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)



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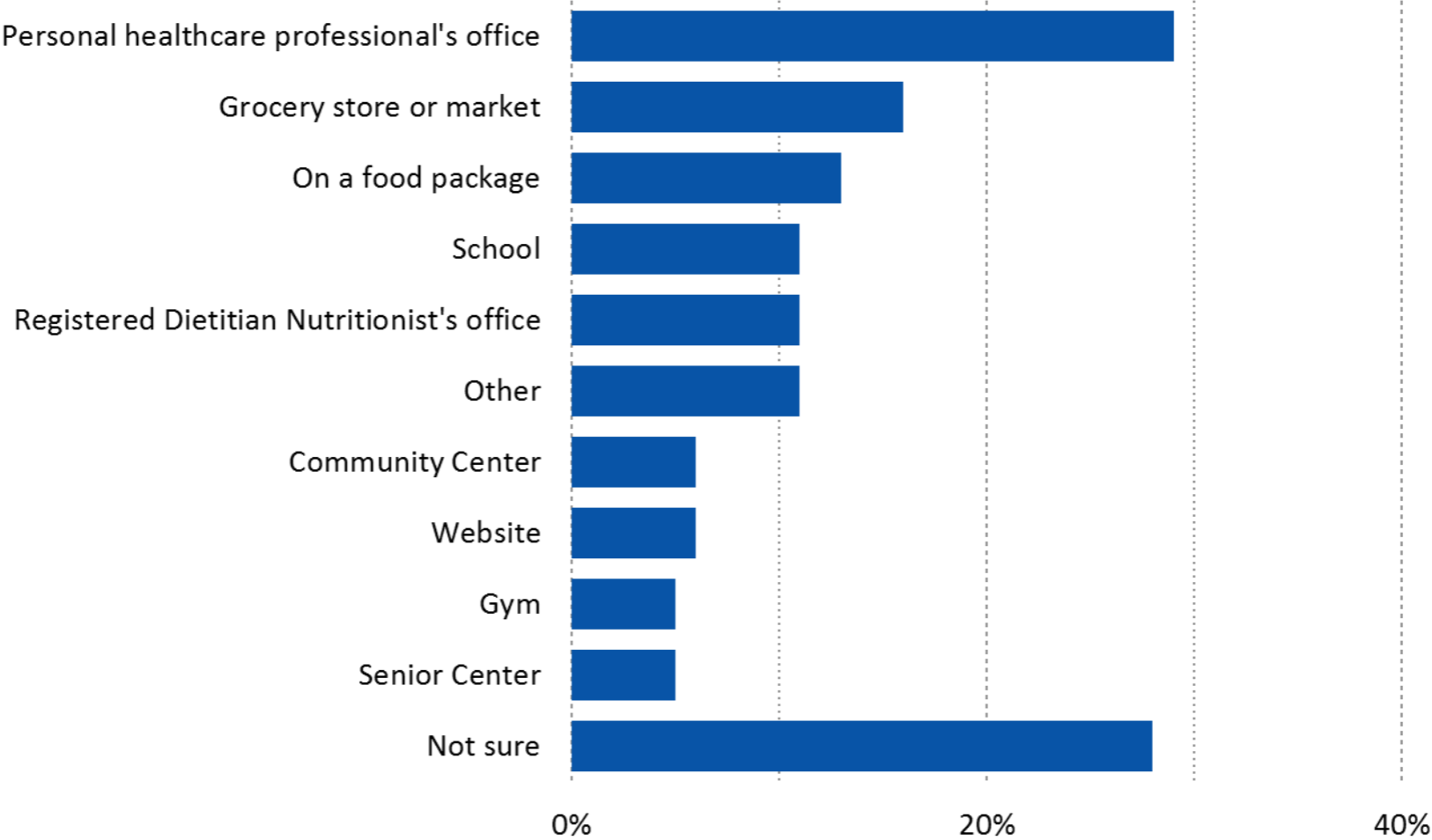
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MyPlate at healthcare professional offices

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)



Q: Where have you seen the following graphic? (Of those familiar with MyPlate graphic, n=652)



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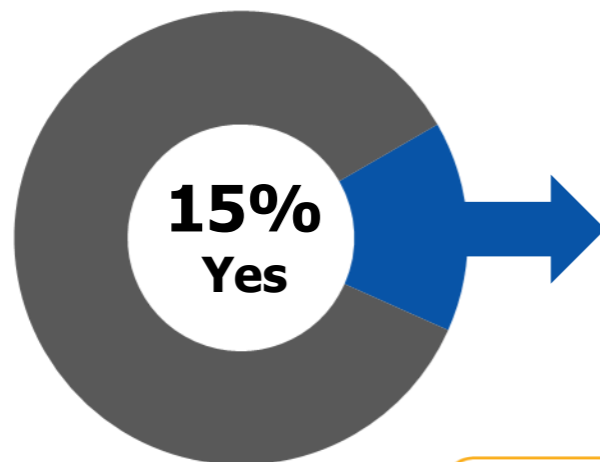
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One in seven follow specific eating patterns or diets

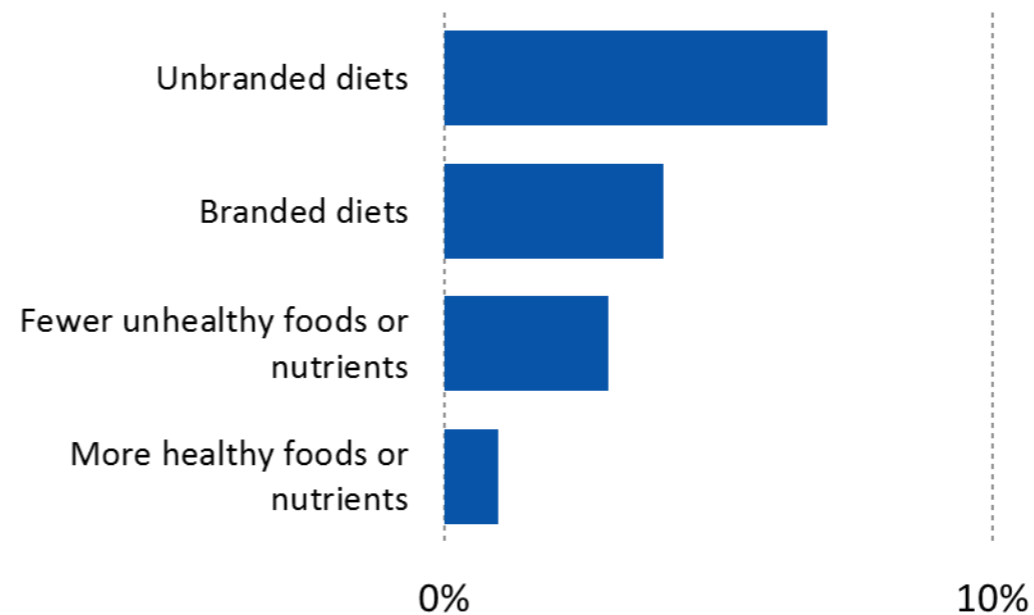
Women are more likely to follow an eating pattern/diet, especially unbranded and branded diets

Followed a Specific Eating Pattern or Diet in Past Year



Branded diets are more common among women and those with higher income

Eating Pattern/Diet Followed



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)



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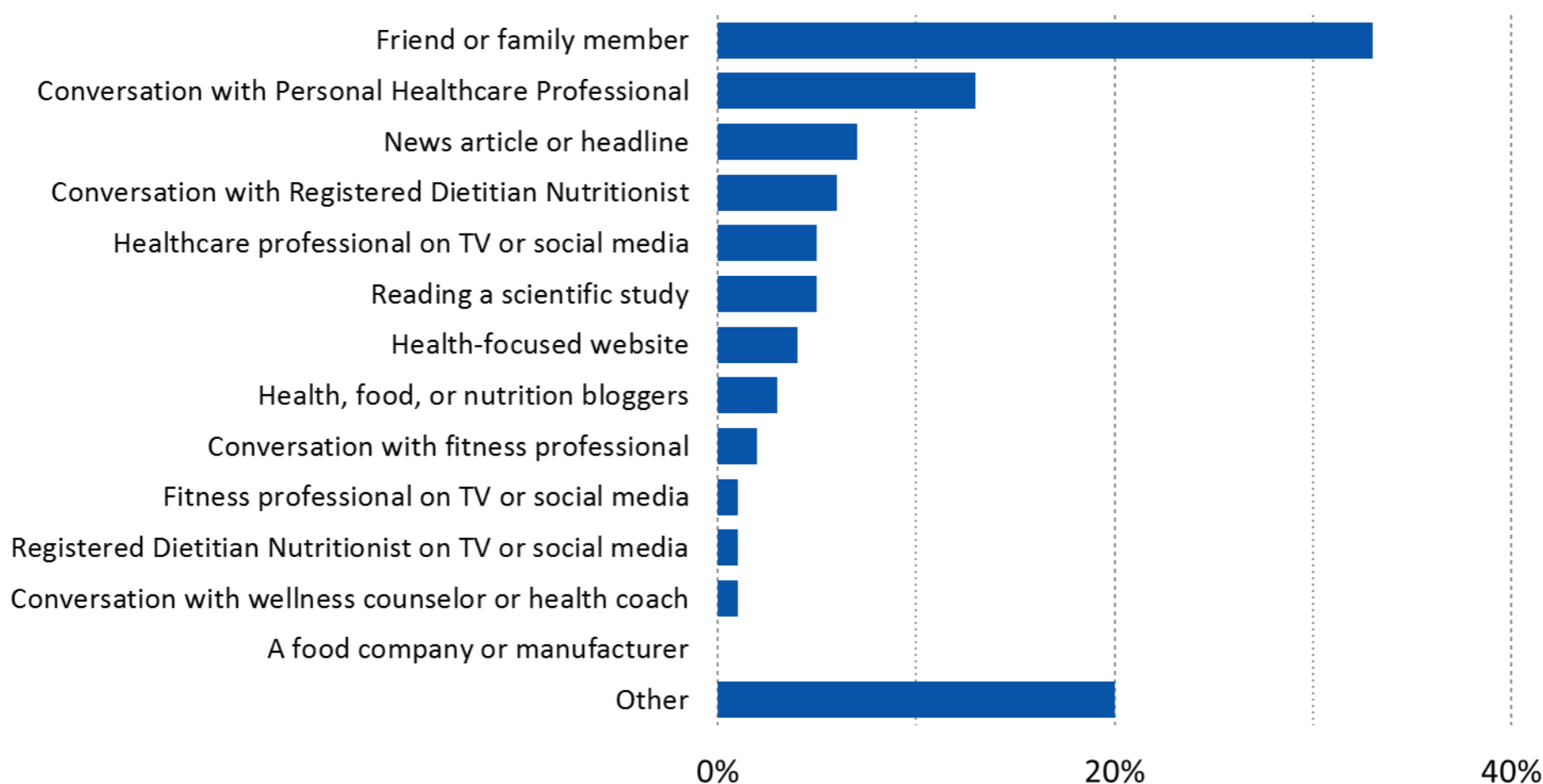
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Diet choice driven by friends and family

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)



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)



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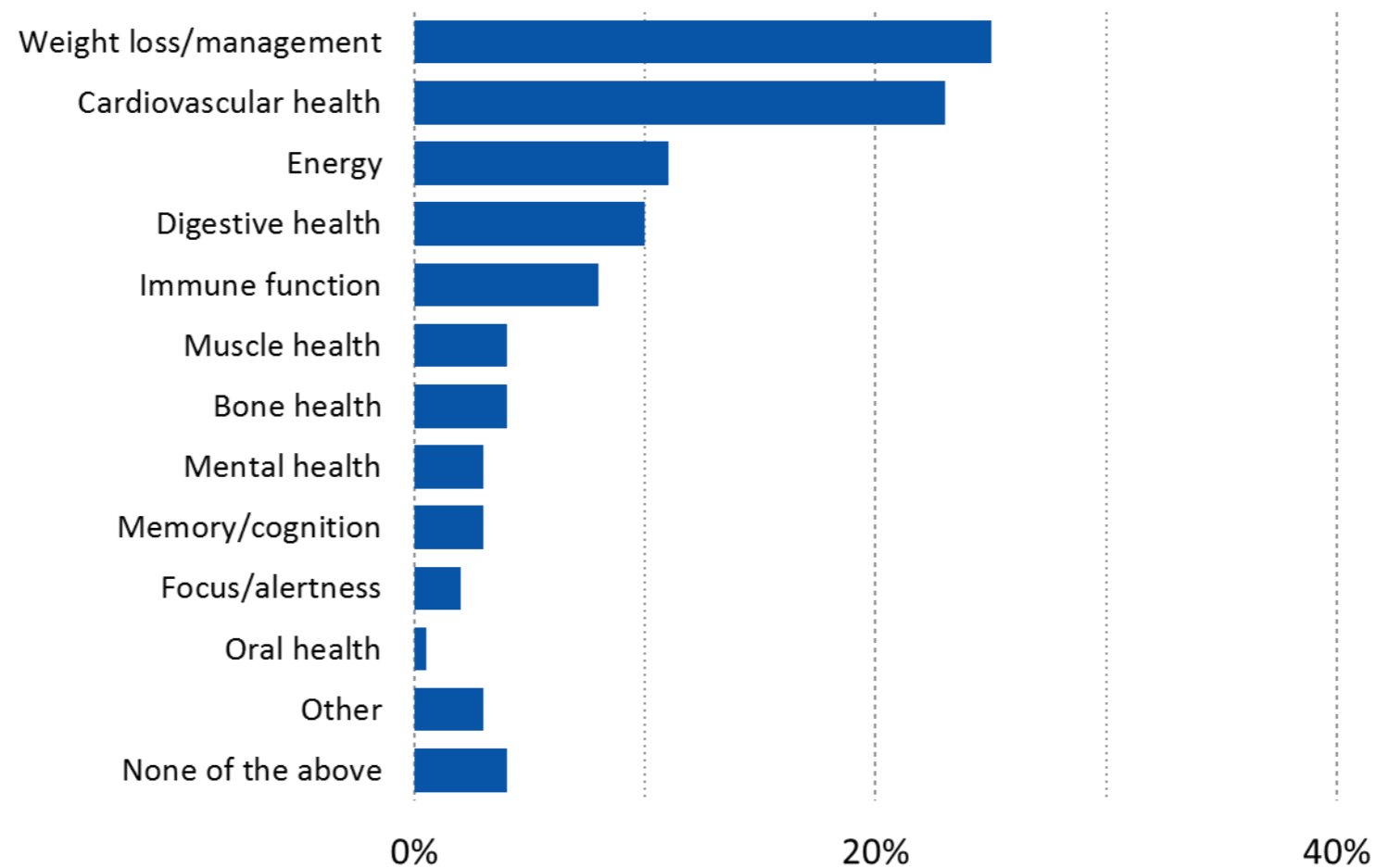
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Weight loss/cardio health most desired

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



25%

Of those ages 50 to 80 say "weight loss", vs. **39%** of those ages 18 to 49

Weight loss is more common among:

- Women
- Those from rural or suburban areas

Q: Which of the following health benefits are you most interested in getting from foods or nutrients? (n=1,002)



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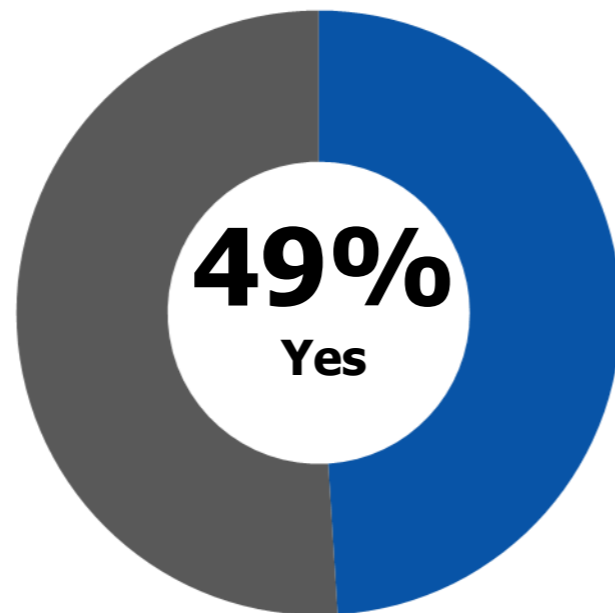
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Half know where to get desired benefit

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



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)



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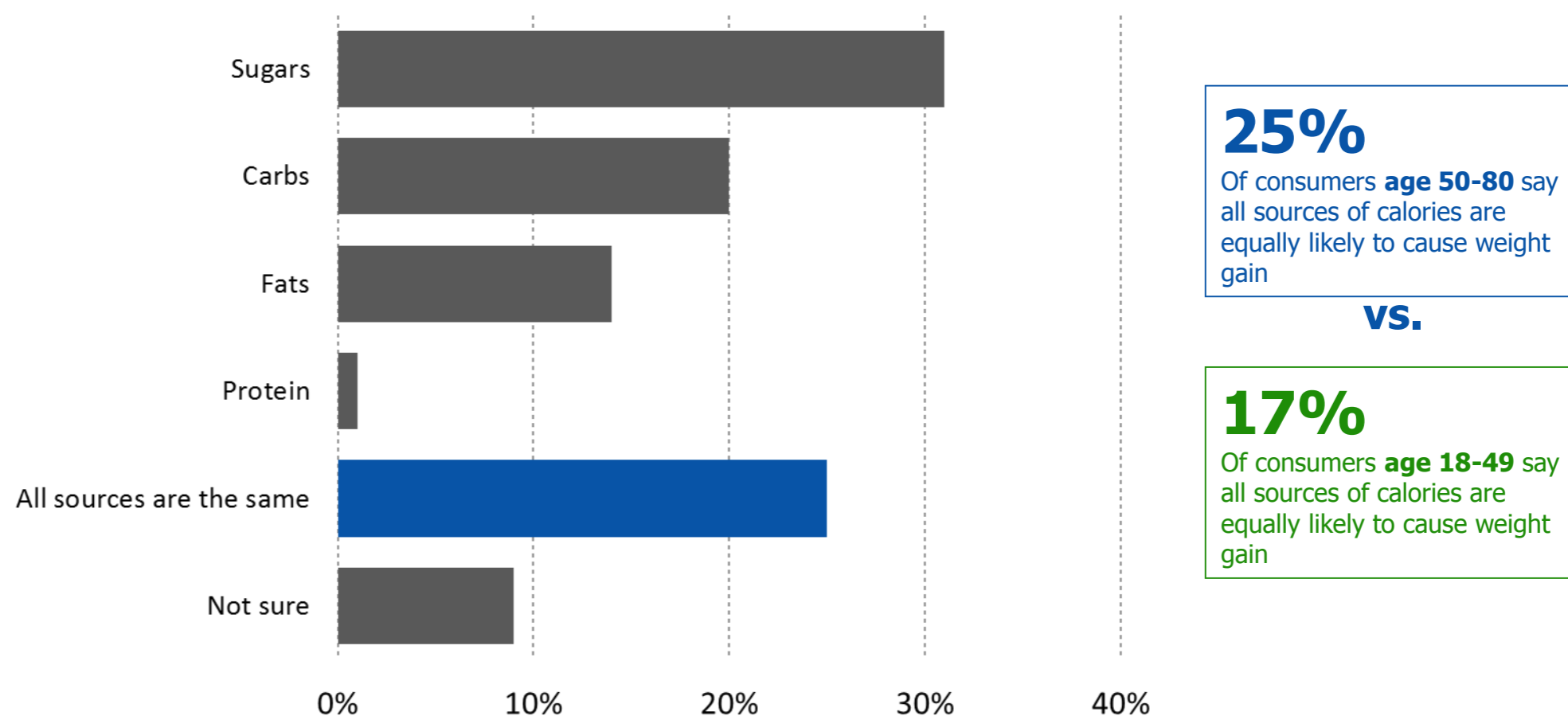
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Sugars top list of likely sources of weight gain

1 in 4 say all sources are equally likely to cause weight gain

Source of Calories Most Likely to Cause Weight Gain



Q: What source of calories is the most likely to cause weight gain? (n=1,002)



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Over half use nutrition info when eating out

Doing so is more common among healthier and wealthier consumers

Use of Nutrition Info When Eating Away From Home

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

- 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

0% 10% 20% 30% 40%

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)



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FOOD CONFUSION

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.



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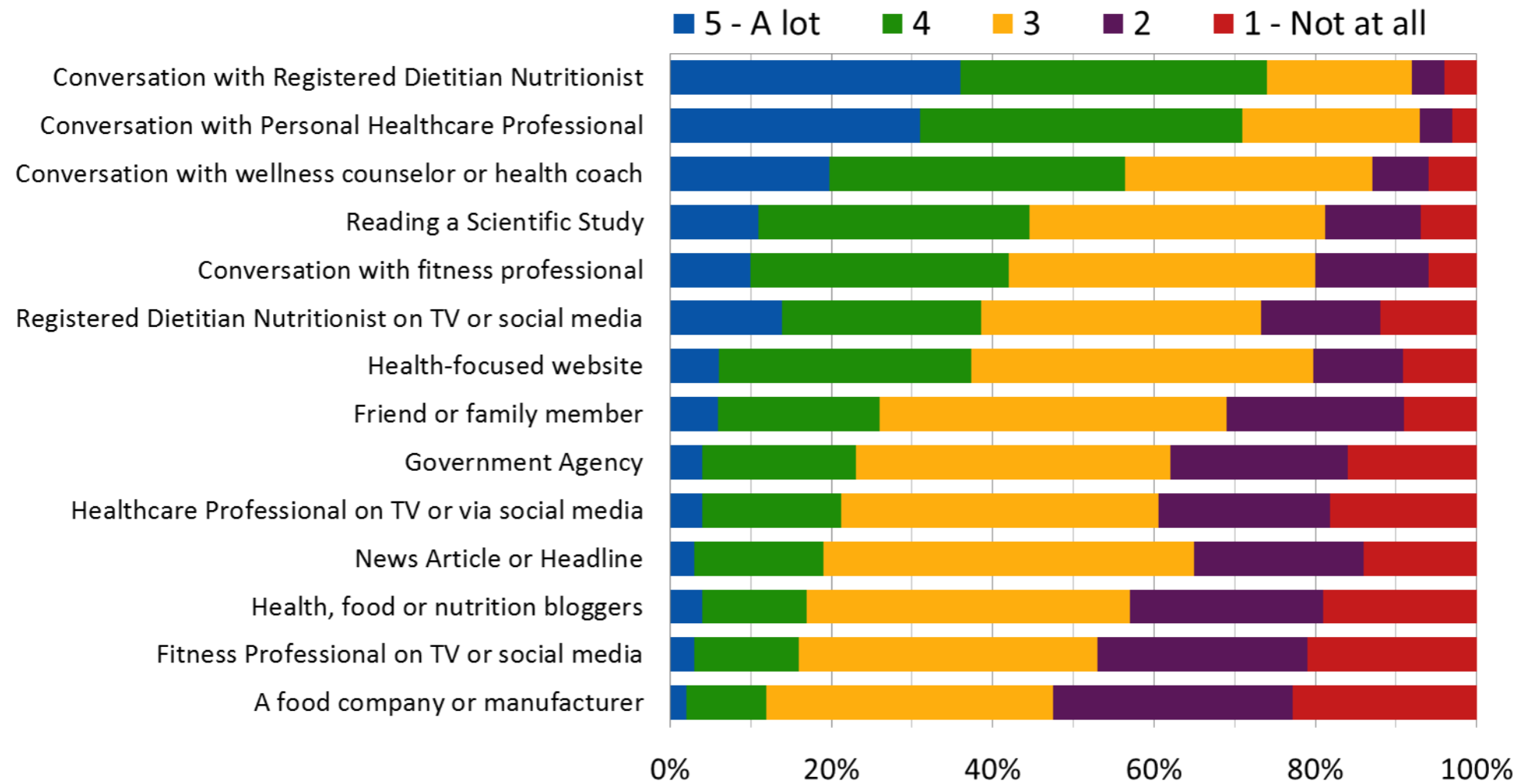
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Health Professionals are most trusted

Older adults have more trust in these sources than younger generations

Trusted Sources About Which Foods to Eat/Avoid



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.

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



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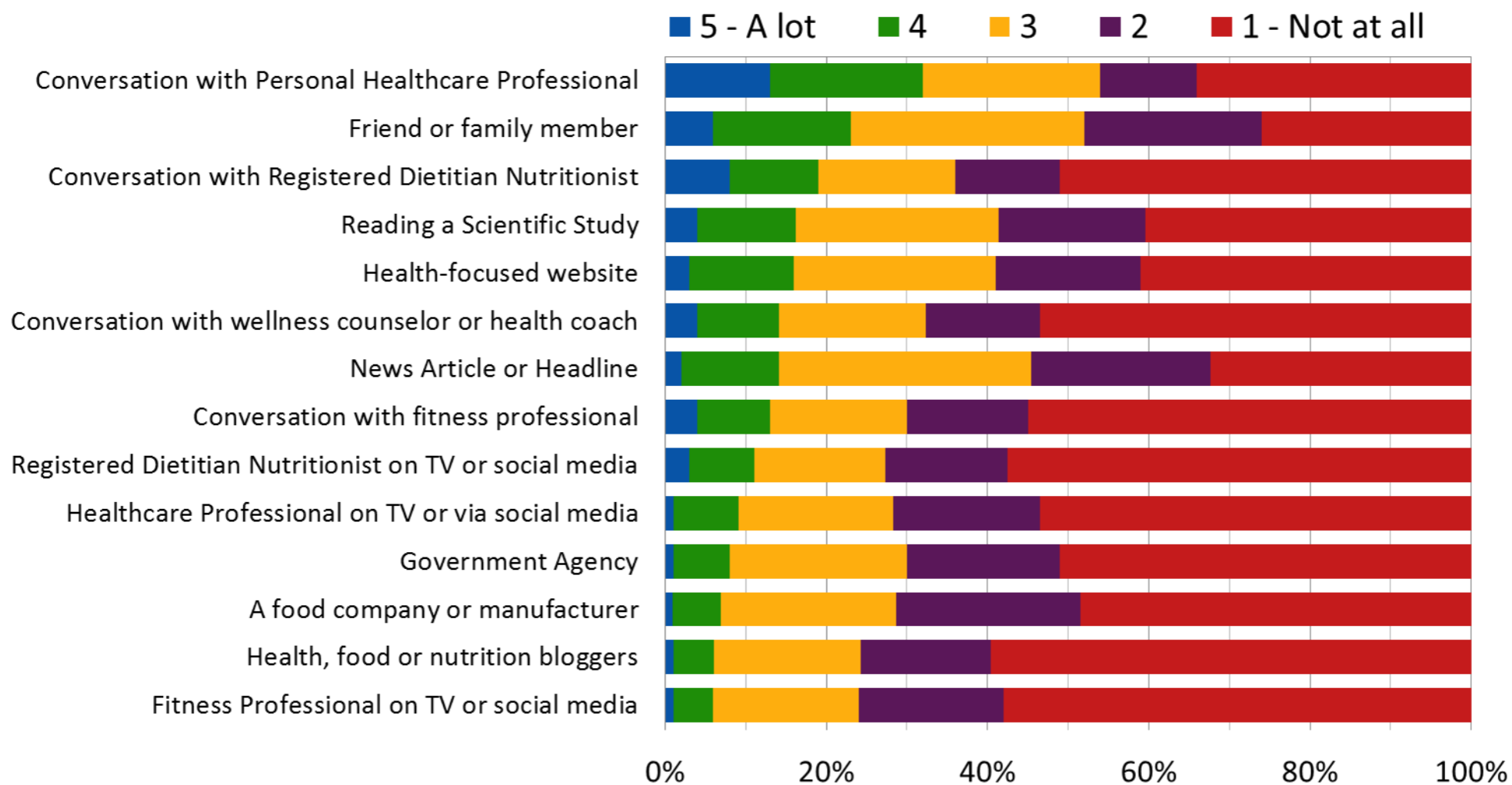
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Healthcare professionals a top source

Family/friends are also a top source, but this informal advice is more common for younger Americans

Sources for Information About Which Foods to Eat/Avoid



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.

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



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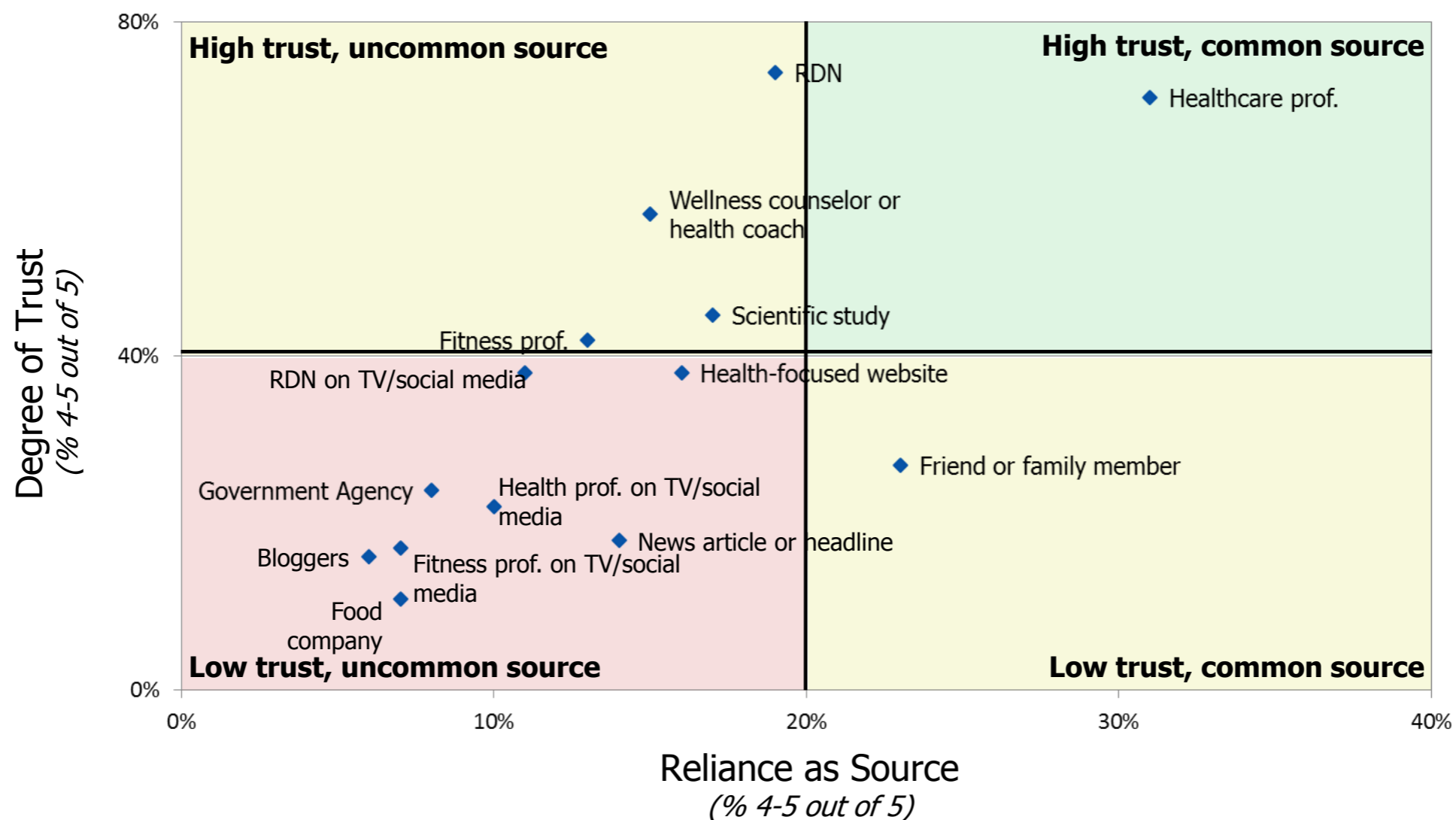
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Trust and Reliance

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)



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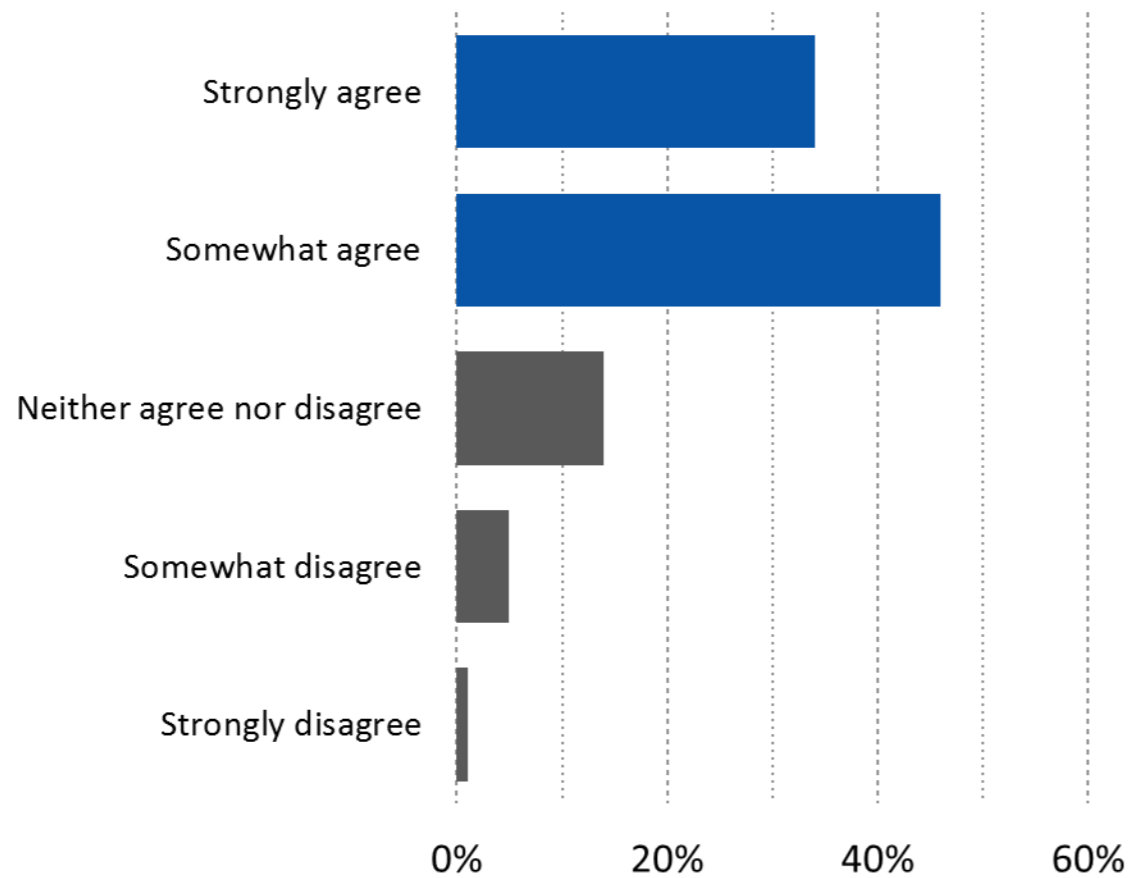
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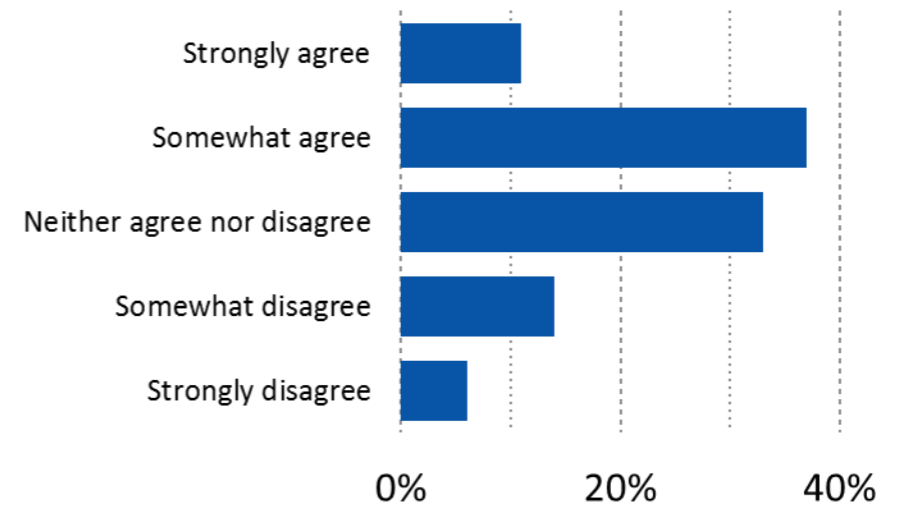
Conflicting advice drives doubt

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.”



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



47%

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

vs.

61%

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

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 agree about conflicting information, n=804)



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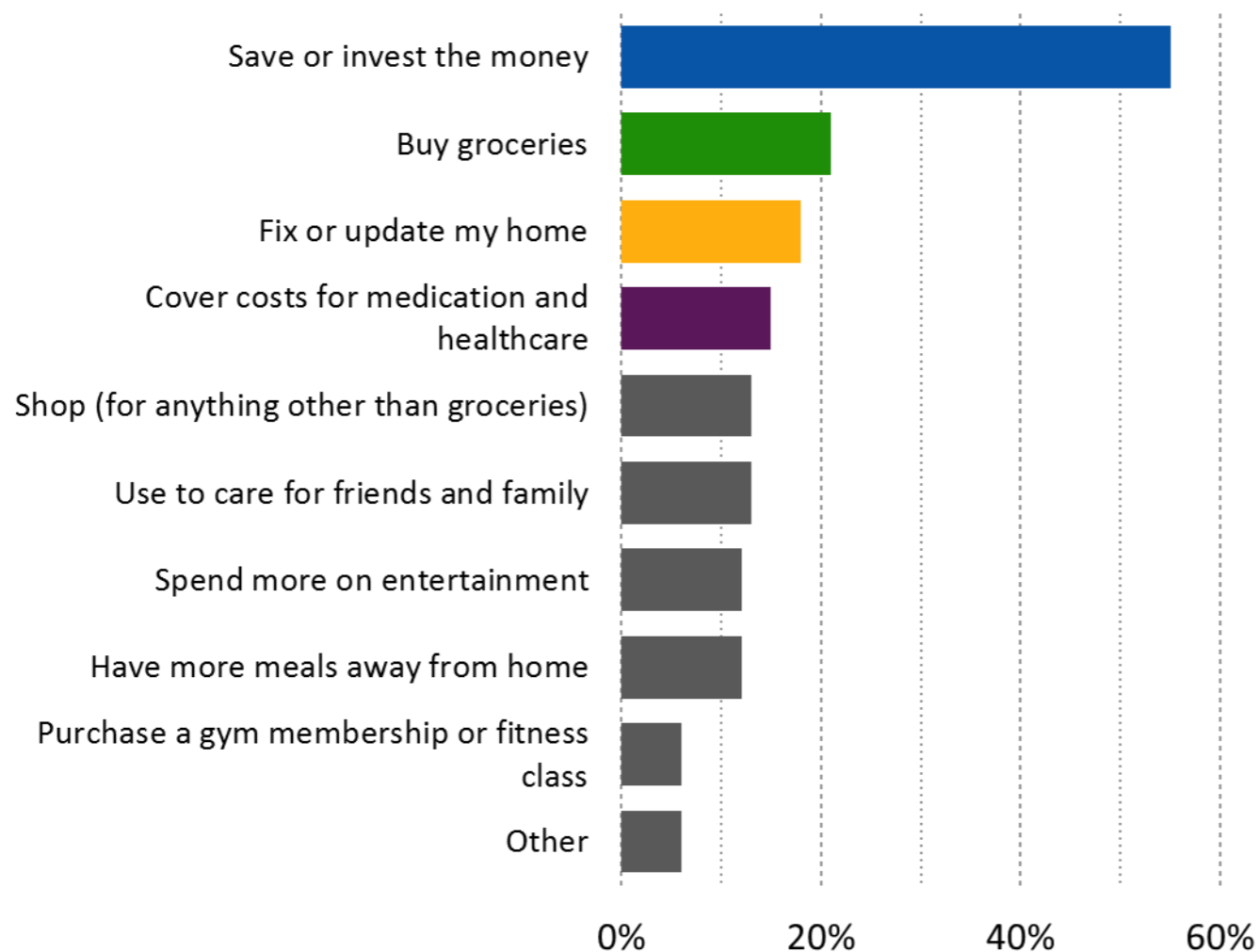
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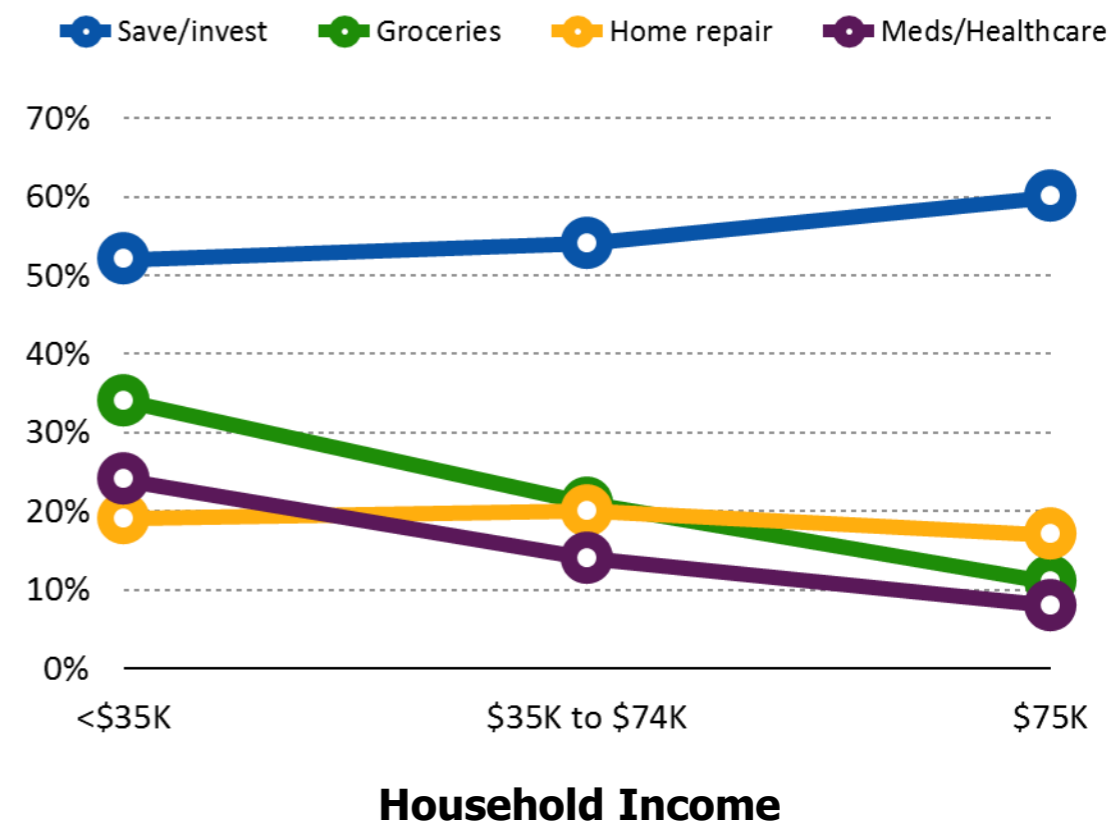
Priorities for Americans' dollars

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)



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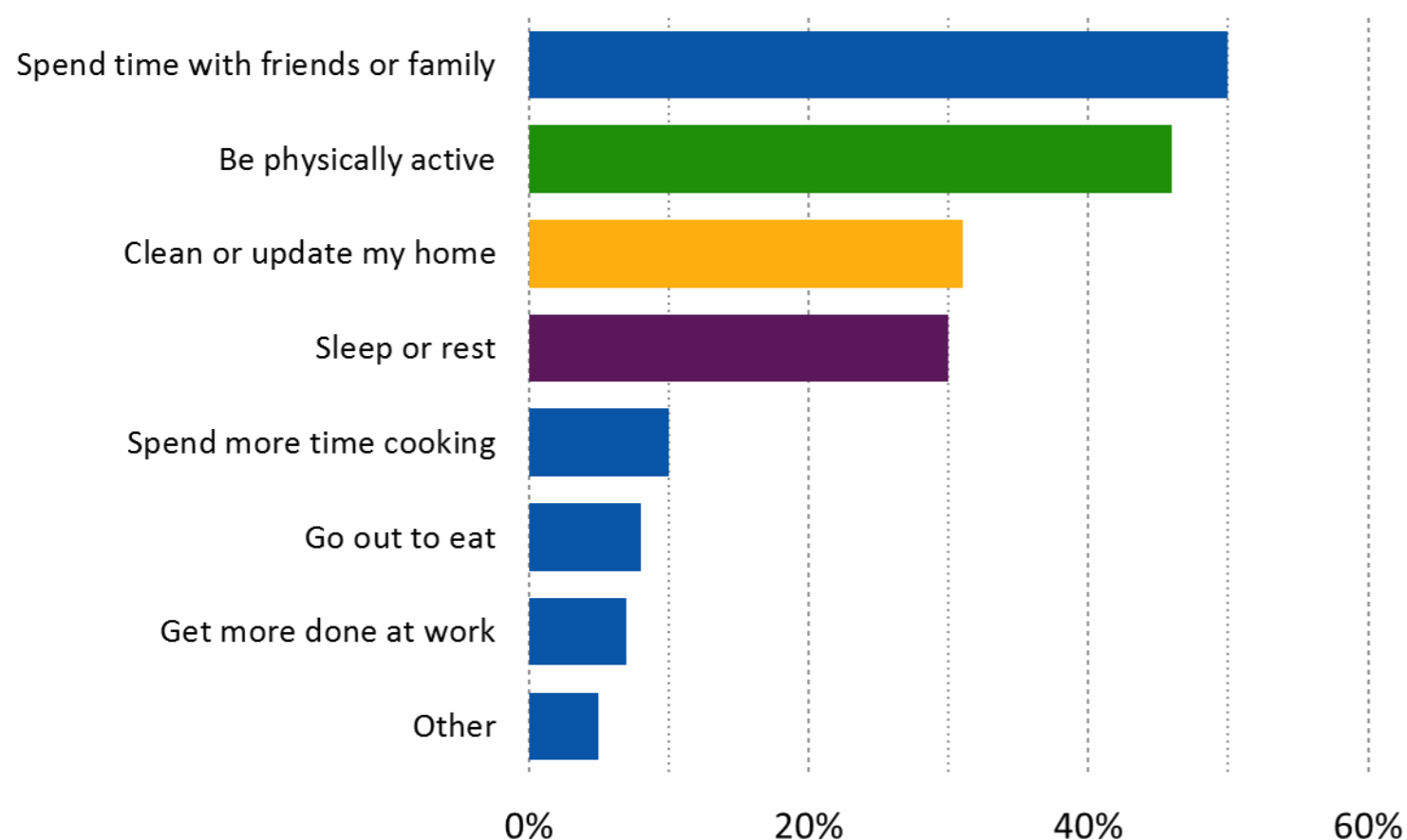
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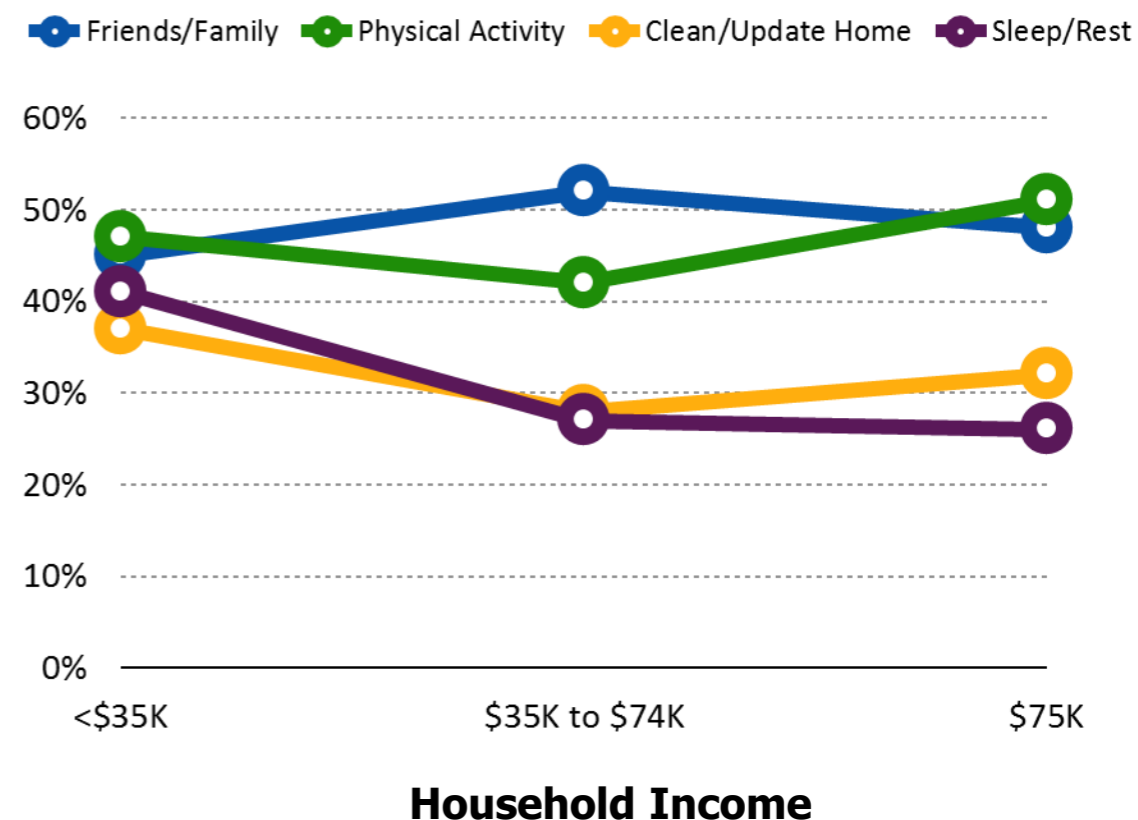
Priorities for Americans' time

Social and physical activity are top priorities; rest is a priority for lower income adults

How Consumers Would Spend an Extra 4 Hours



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)



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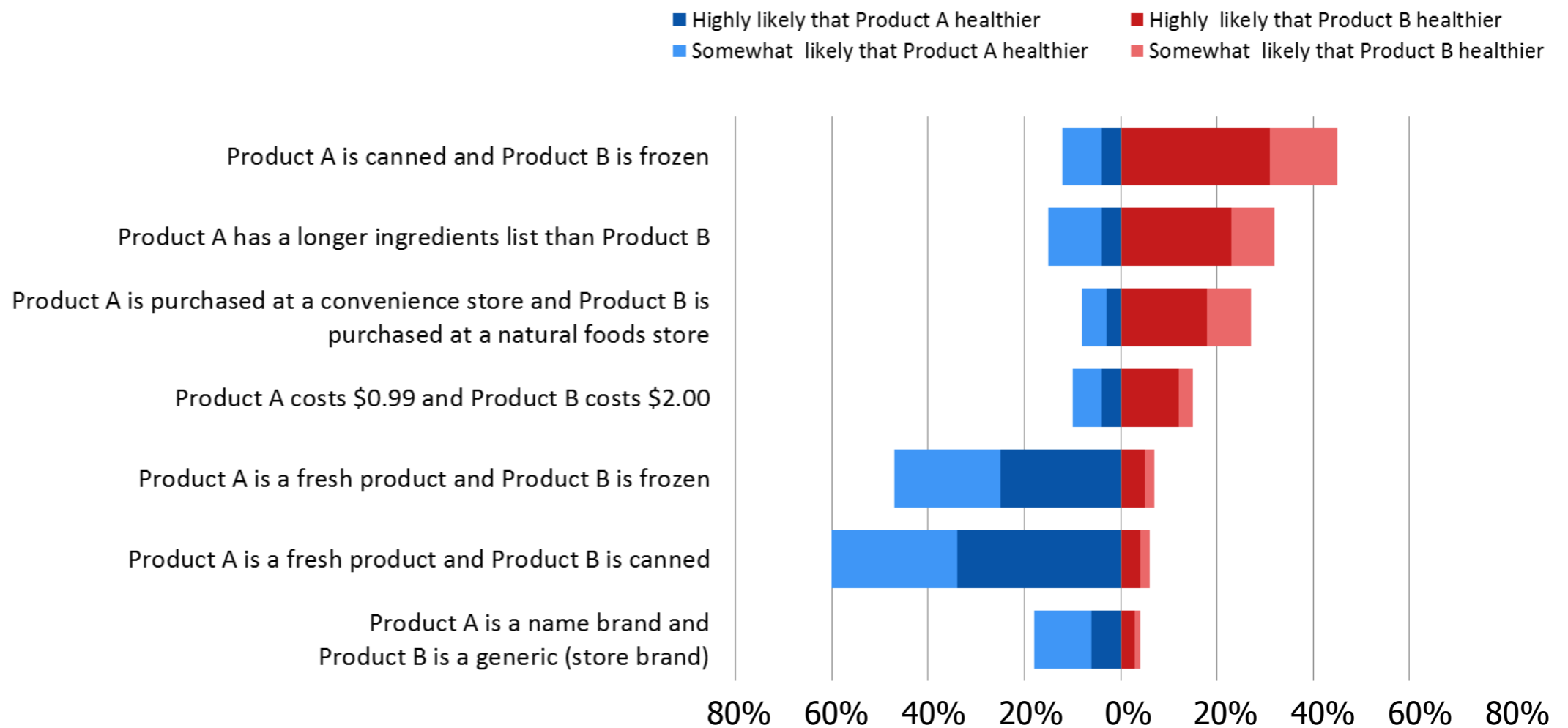
Factors beyond nutrition create health halo

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?

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 container (200g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	170
Calories from Fat	15
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 1.5g	2%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 10mg	3%
Sodium 85mg	4%
Potassium 260mg	6%
Total Carbohydrate 33g	11%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 10g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A	15%
Vitamin C	0%
Calcium	20%
Iron	0%
Vitamin D	20%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.



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)



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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.



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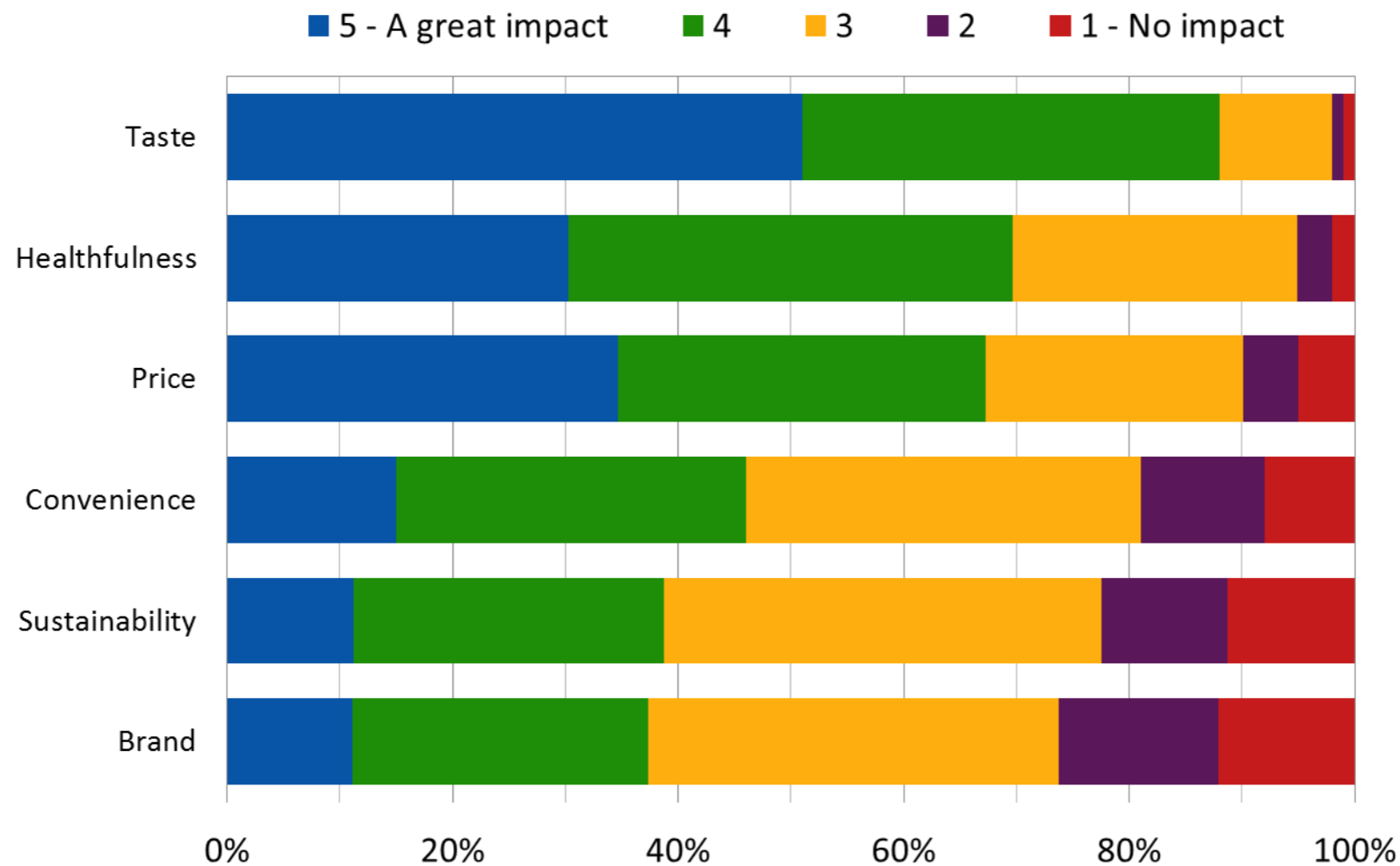
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Taste, healthfulness reign supreme

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

Drivers of Food/Beverage Purchases



88%

Of consumers age 50+ say taste is a top driver, vs. **79%** of those under 50.

70%

Of consumer age 50+ say healthfulness is a top driver, vs. **59%** of those under 50.

38%

Of consumer age 50+ say brand is a top driver, vs. **31%** of those under 50.

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



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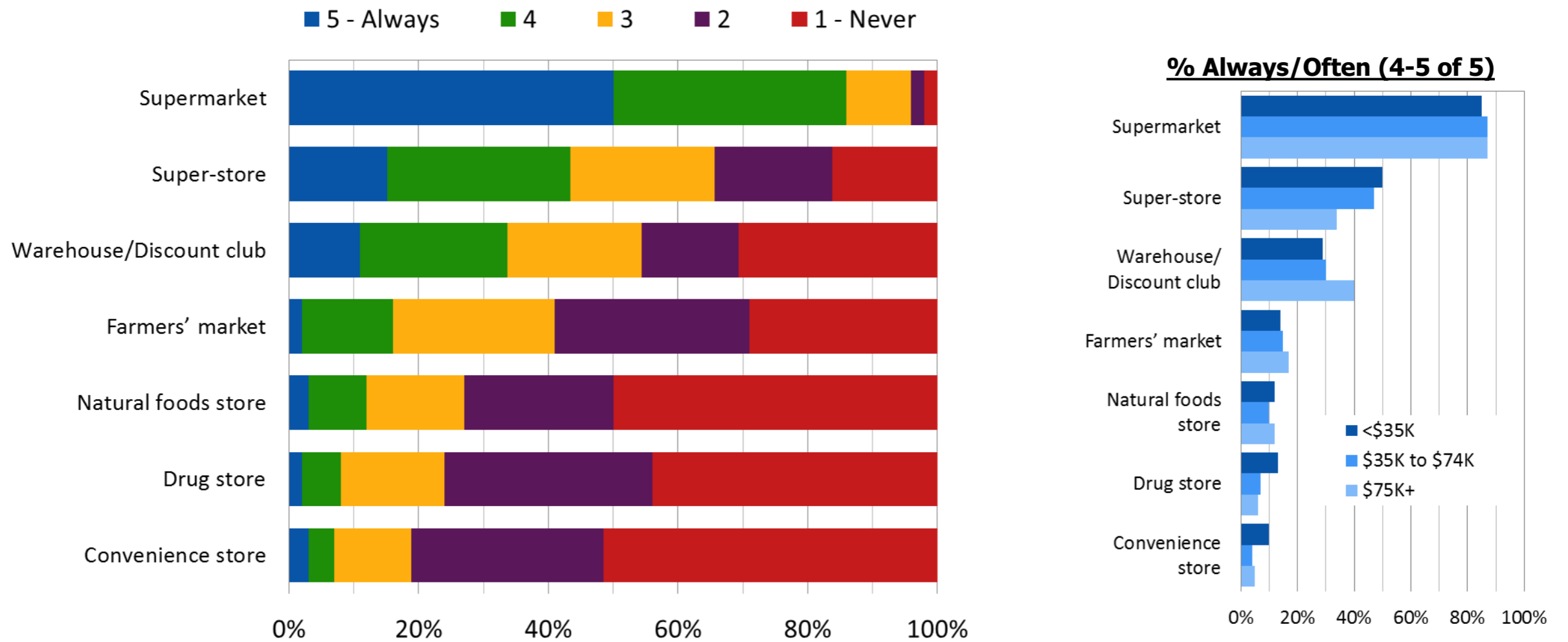
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Supermarkets dominate as food outlet

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

Where Consumers Shop for Food/Beverages



Q: How often do you shop for food and beverages at the following? (n=1,002)



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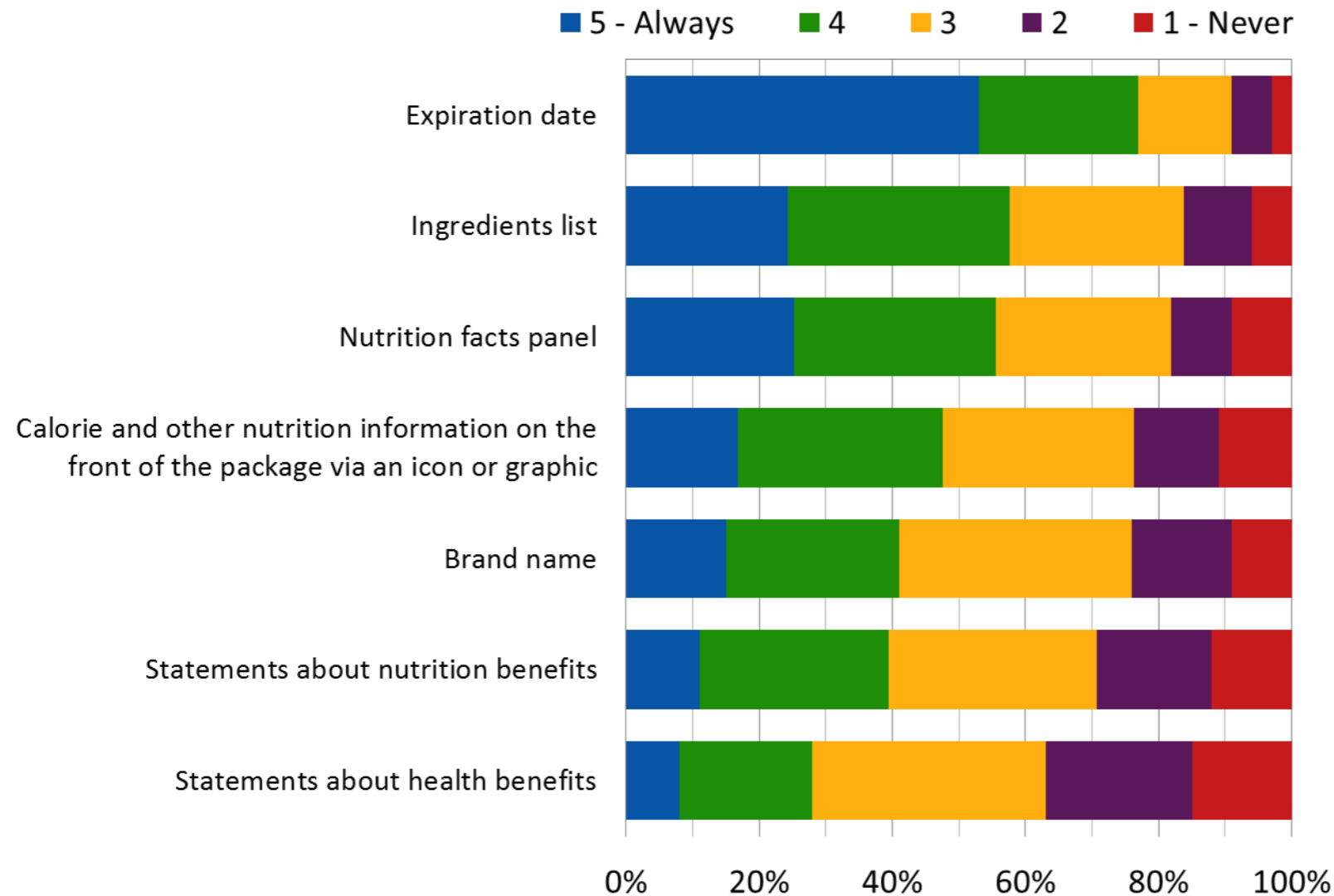
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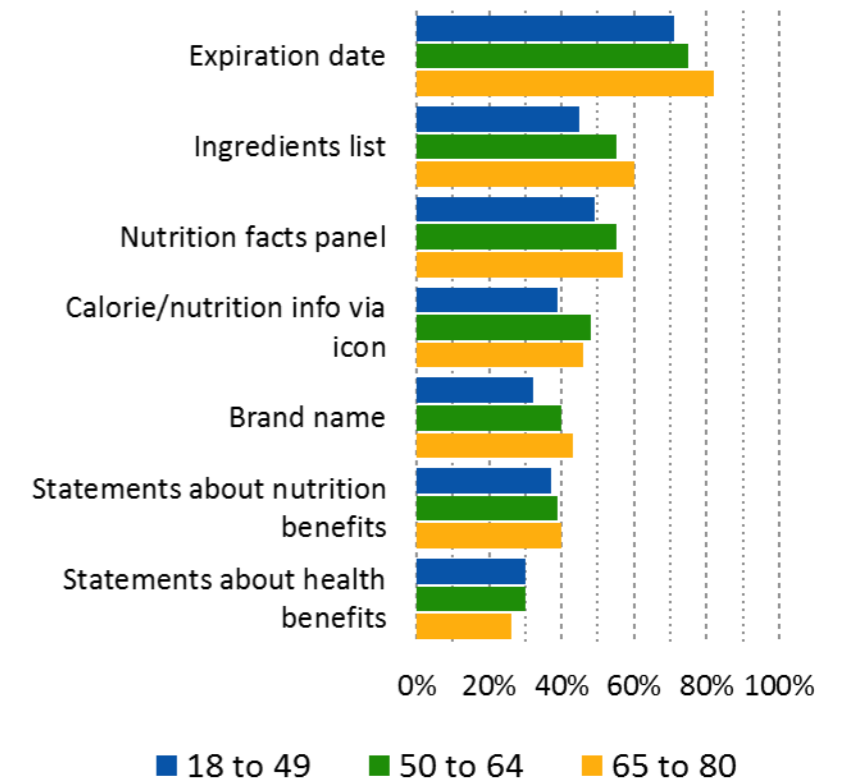
Older consumers use packaging info more frequently

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

Packaging Information Consulted During Purchase



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)



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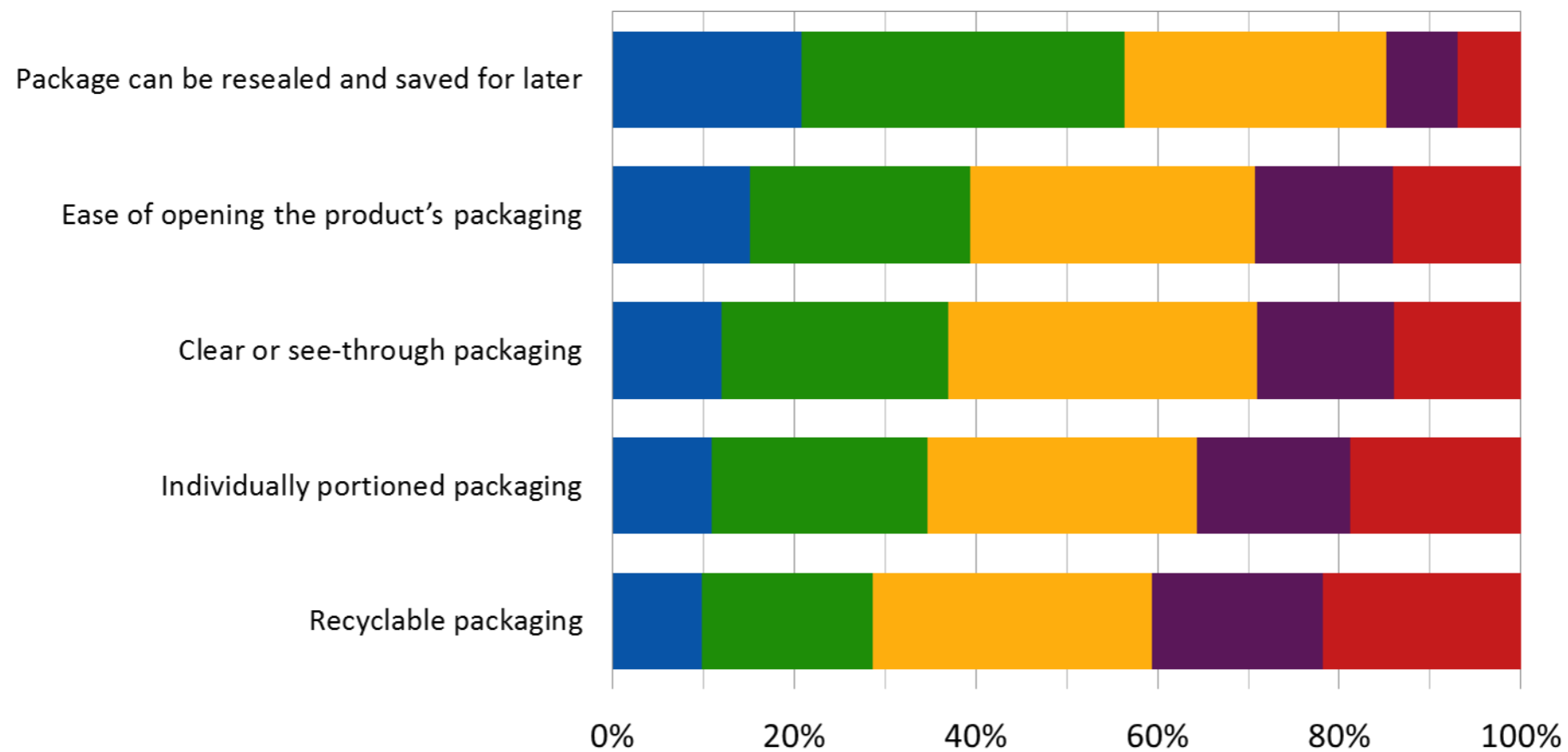
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Packaging functionality matters

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

Importance of Packaging

■ 5 - Extremely important ■ 4 ■ 3 ■ 2 ■ 1 - Not at all important



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.

66%

Of those renting their home say resealable packages are important, vs. **55%** of those who own. Renters also care more about individual portions.

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.

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



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FOOD VALUES

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.



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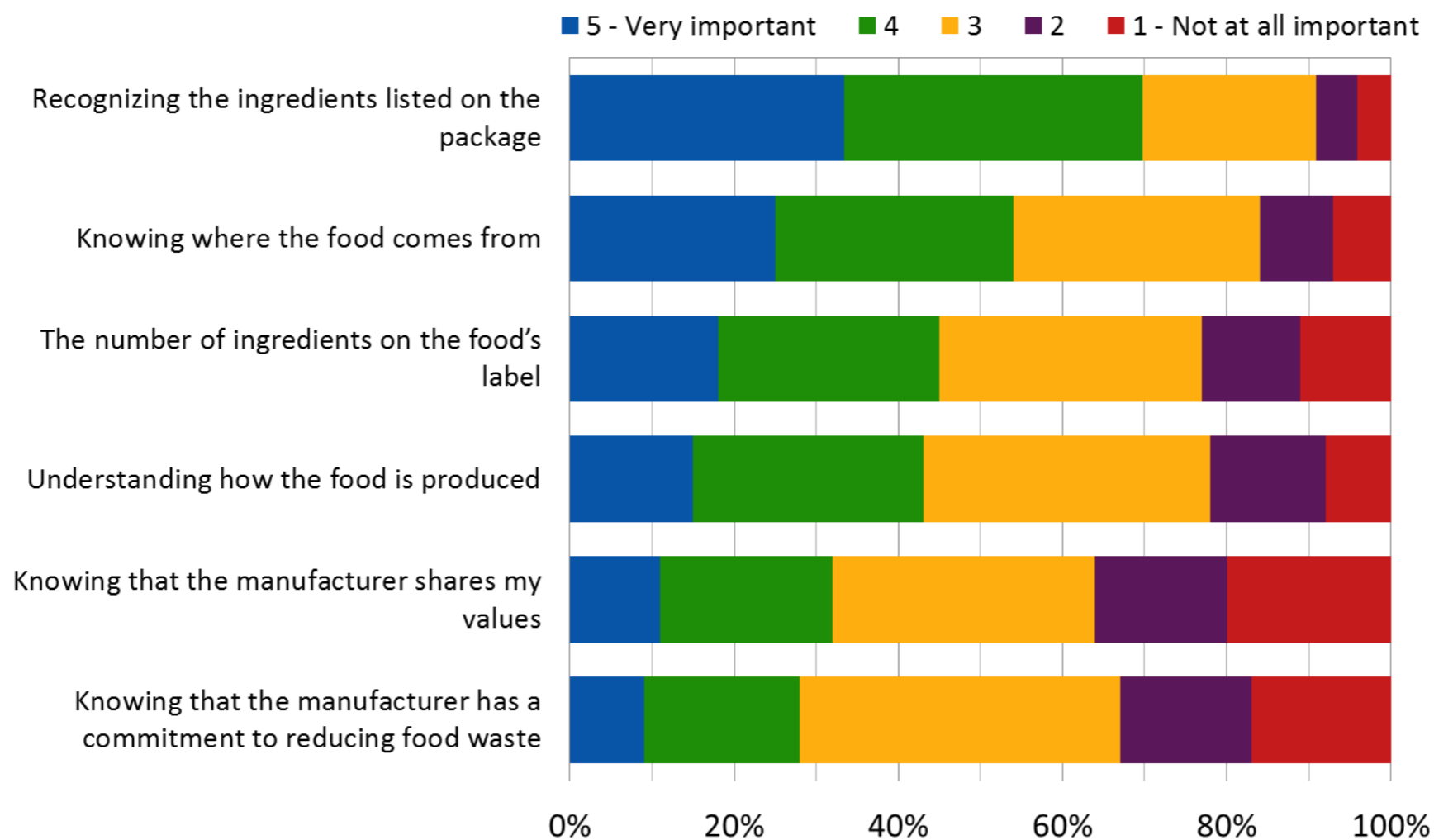
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Importance of food production, values

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

Production-Related Purchase Factors



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.

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



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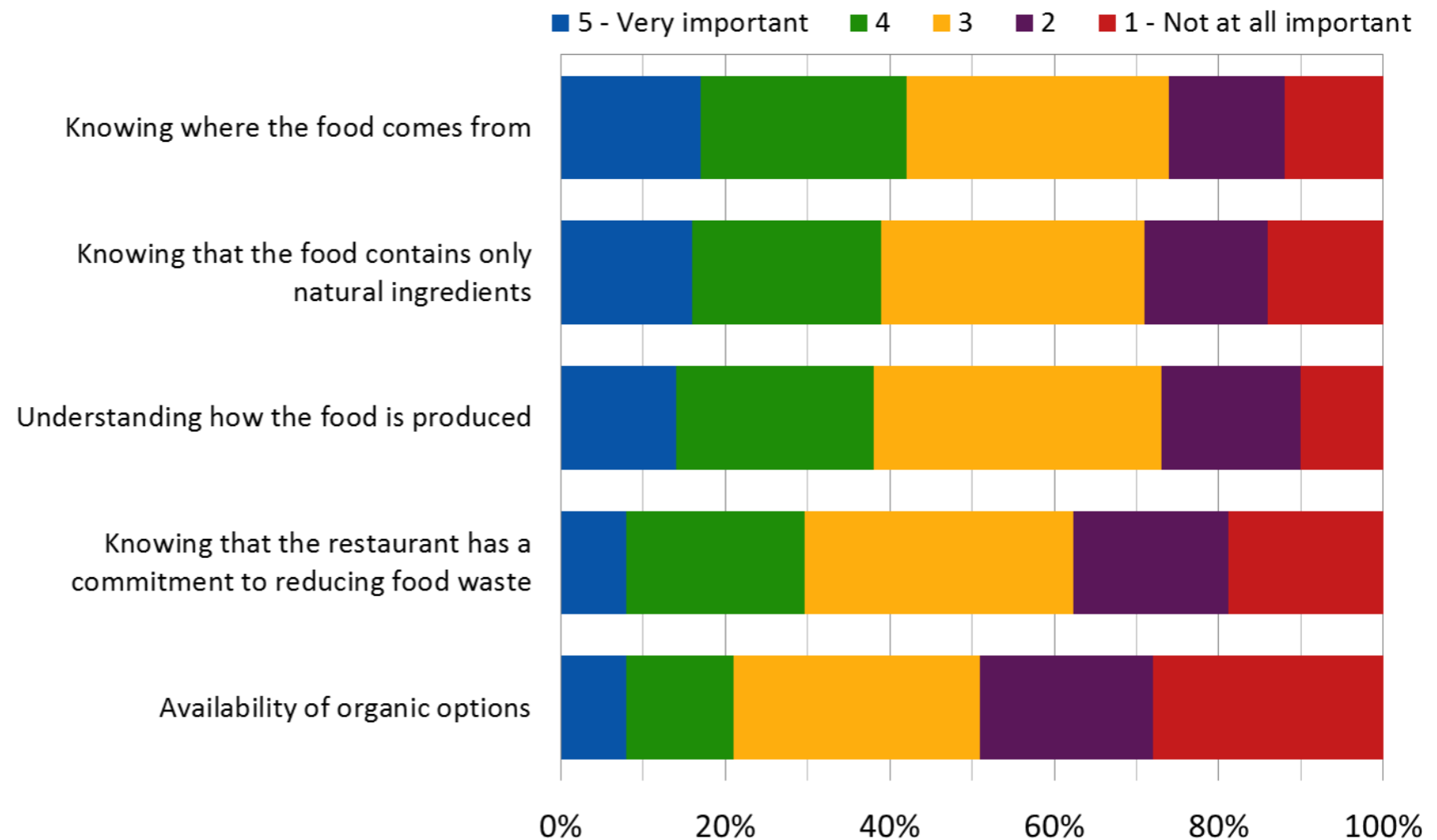
Restaurant choice goes beyond taste

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)



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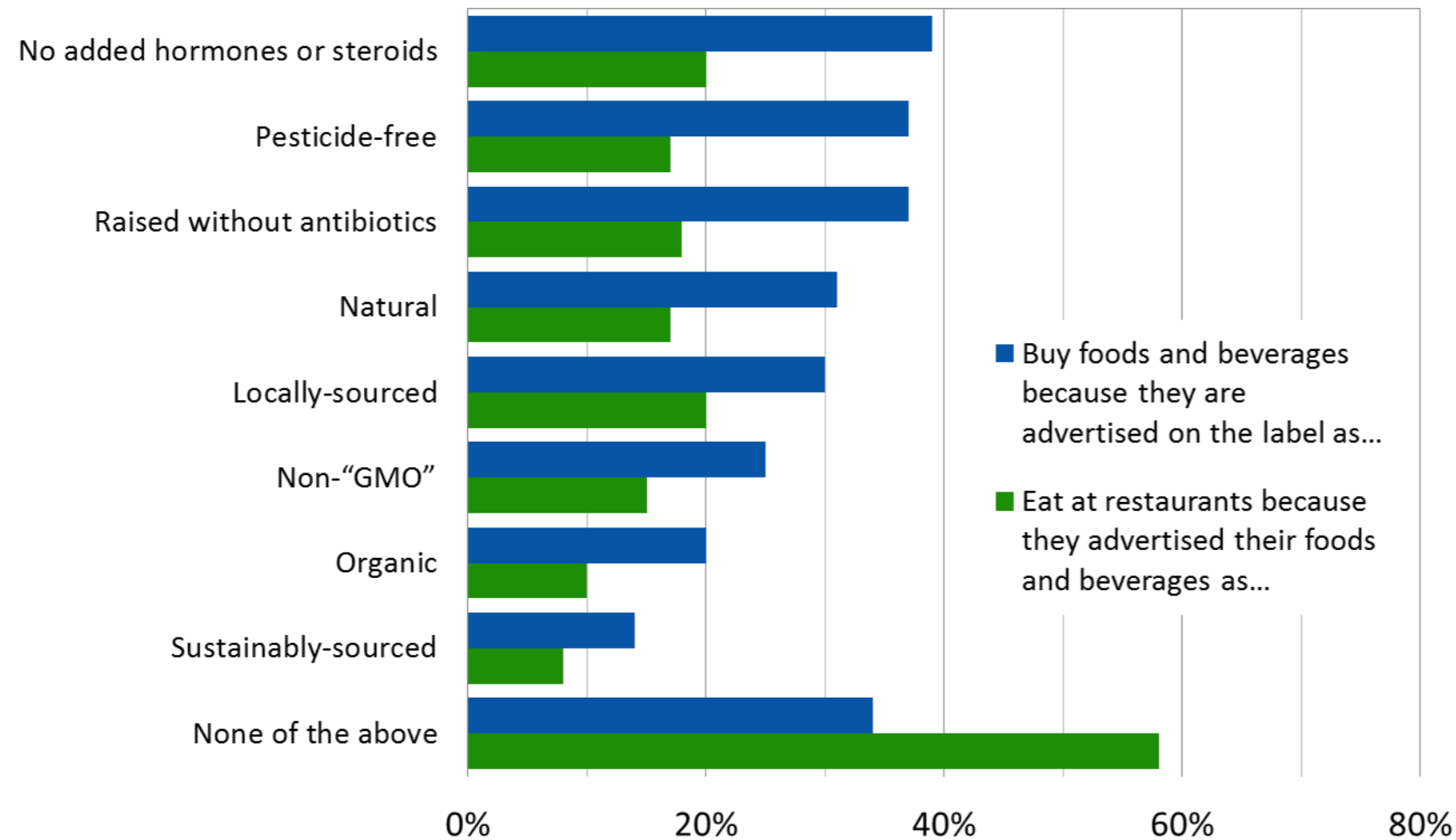
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Labels have bigger impact on products

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

Labels Consumers Regularly Seek on Packages/at Restaurants



 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.

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... (Split sample, n=503); Eat at restaurants because they advertised their foods and beverages as... (Split sample, n=499)



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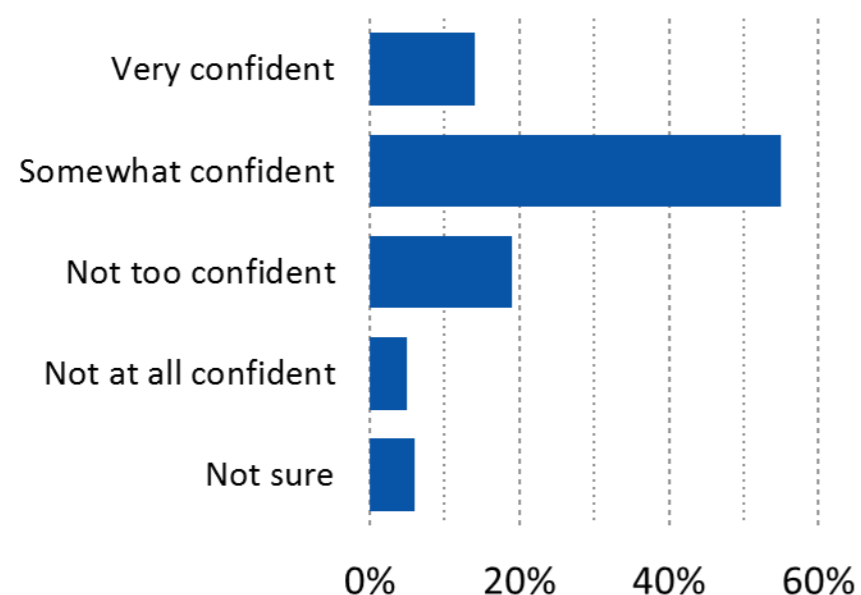
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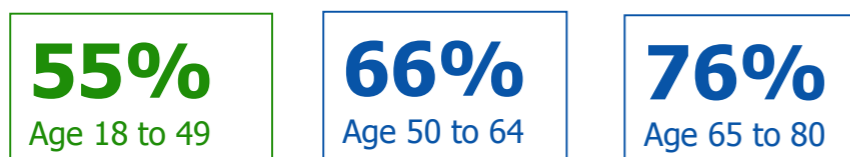
Older adults more confident in food supply

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

Confidence in Safety of U.S. Food Supply

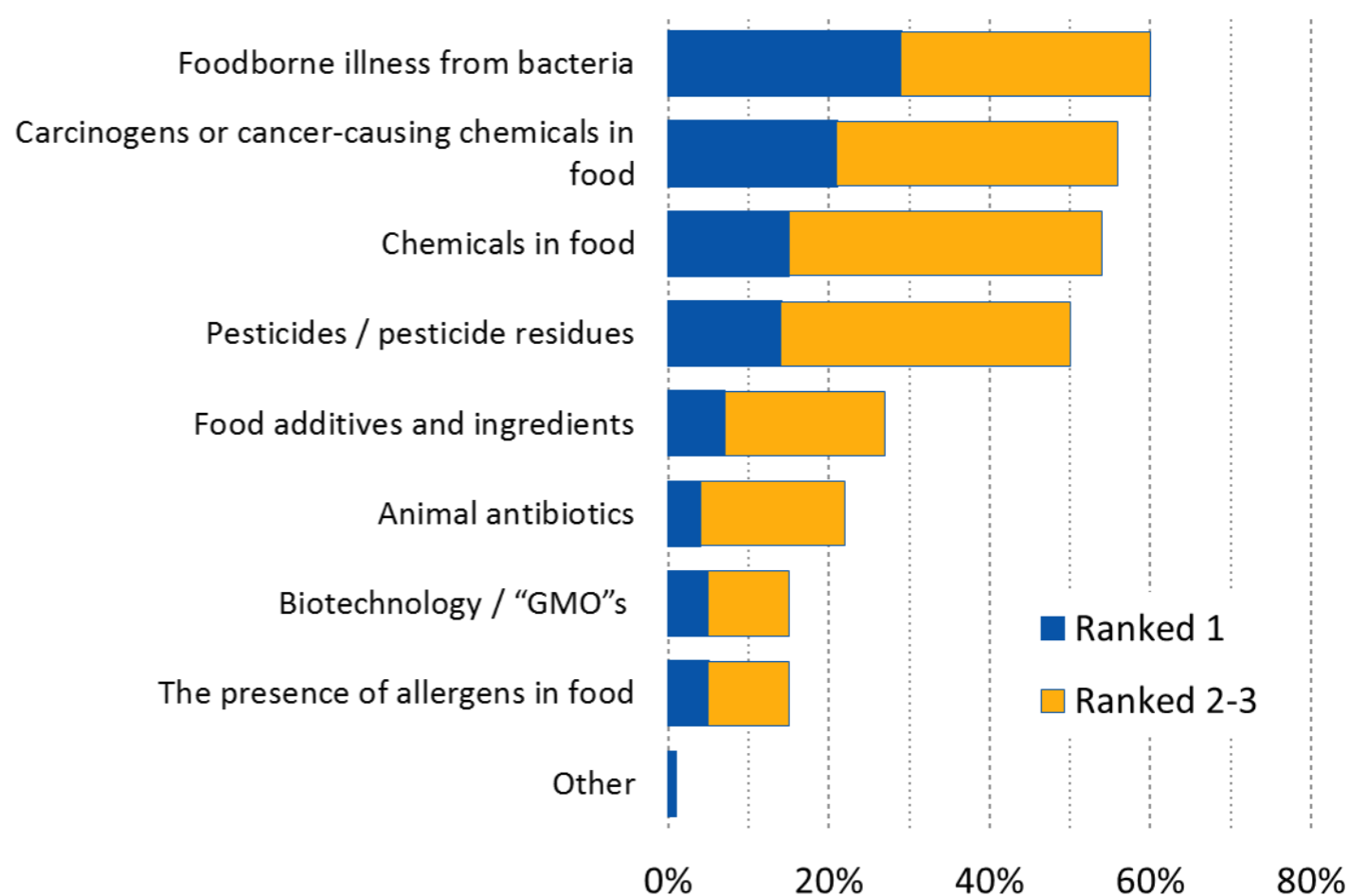


Confidence among Age Groups



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)

Most Important Food Safety Issues Today



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Americans Ages 50-80 Report

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



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