



From “Chemical-sounding” to “Clean”: Consumer Perspectives on Food Ingredients

June 2021

Methodology

One thousand fifty-four interviews were conducted among adults ages 18+ from May 6 to May 10, 2021 and were weighted to ensure proportional results.

The Bayesian confidence level for 1,000 interviews is 3.5, which is roughly equivalent to a margin of error ± 3.1 at the 95% confidence level.

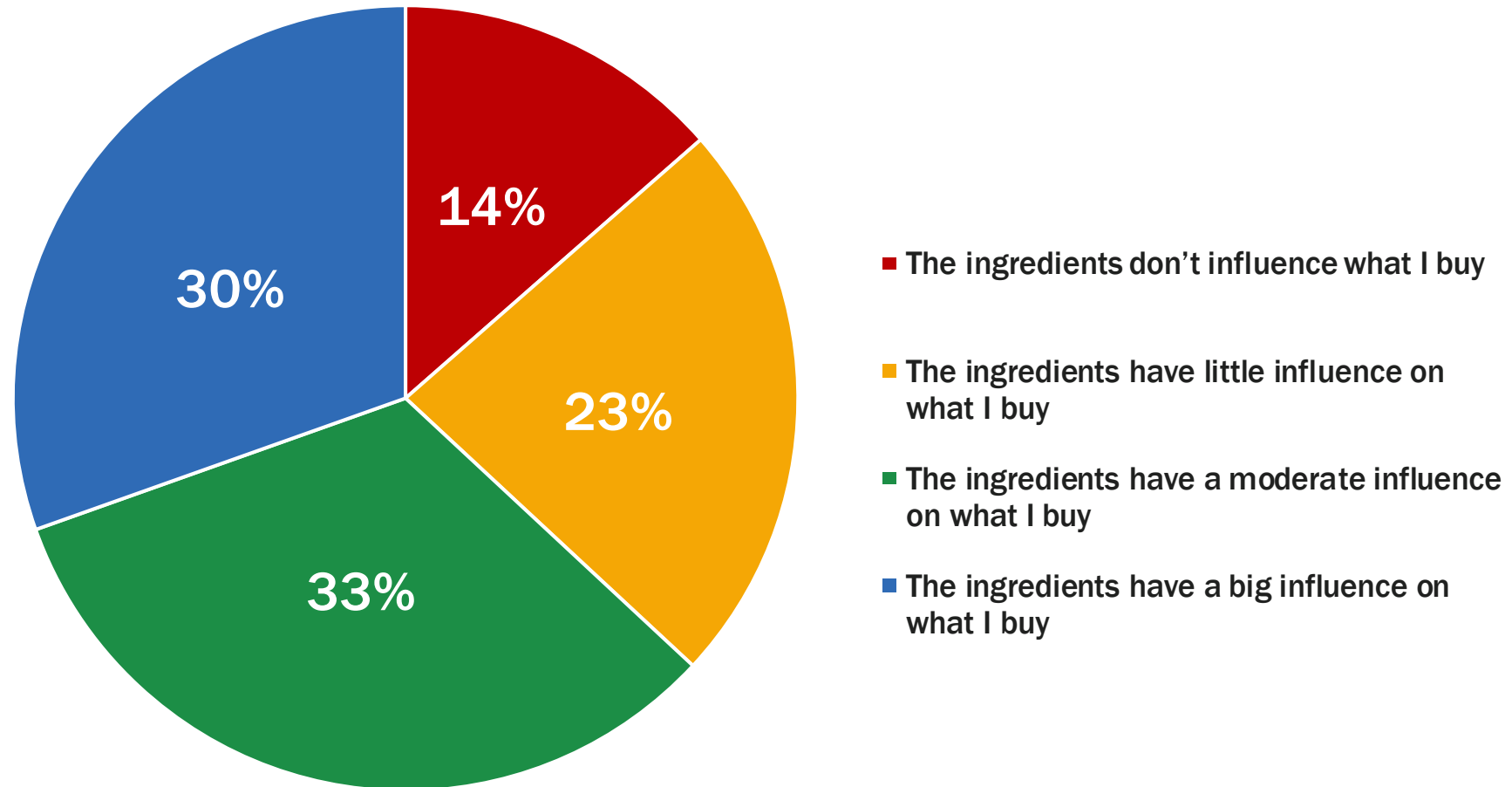
Statistical Significance

Something is statistically significant if the result cannot be attributed to random chance. Statistical significance in this presentation should be compared within each demographic (e.g. age, race, gender, etc.).

For example, if the responses from female respondents is considered to be significant, it is in relation to male respondents and not necessarily other demographic groups.

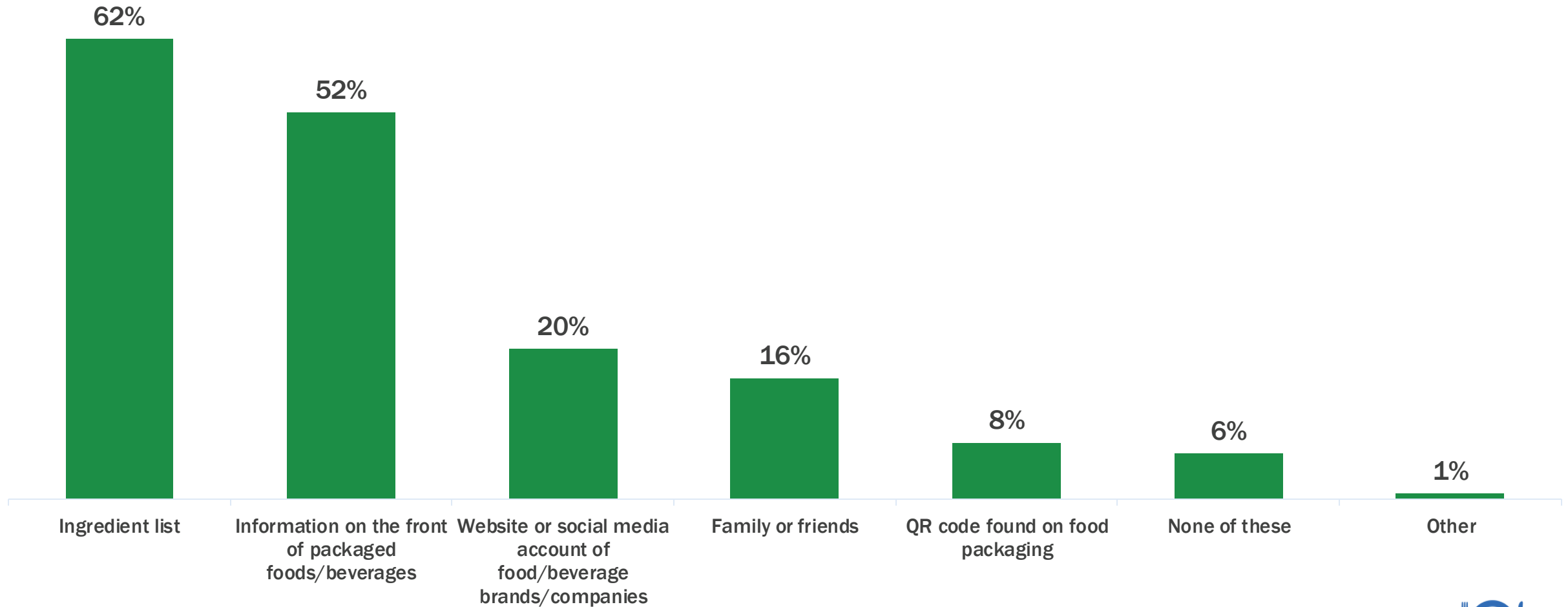


Nearly 2 in 3 say that ingredients have at least a moderate influence on their food and beverage purchases



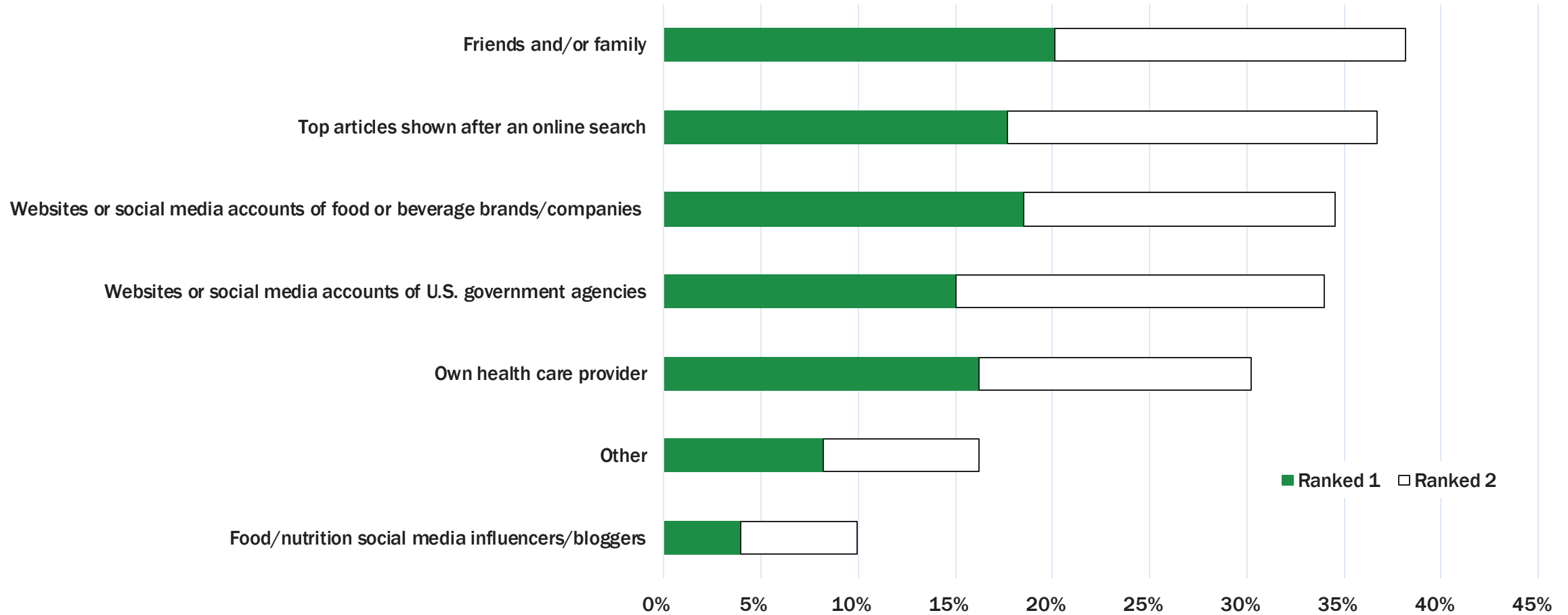
How much do the ingredients in a food or beverage influence which foods you buy? n=1054

When shopping, on-package ingredient info sources are far more popular than online sources and personal contacts



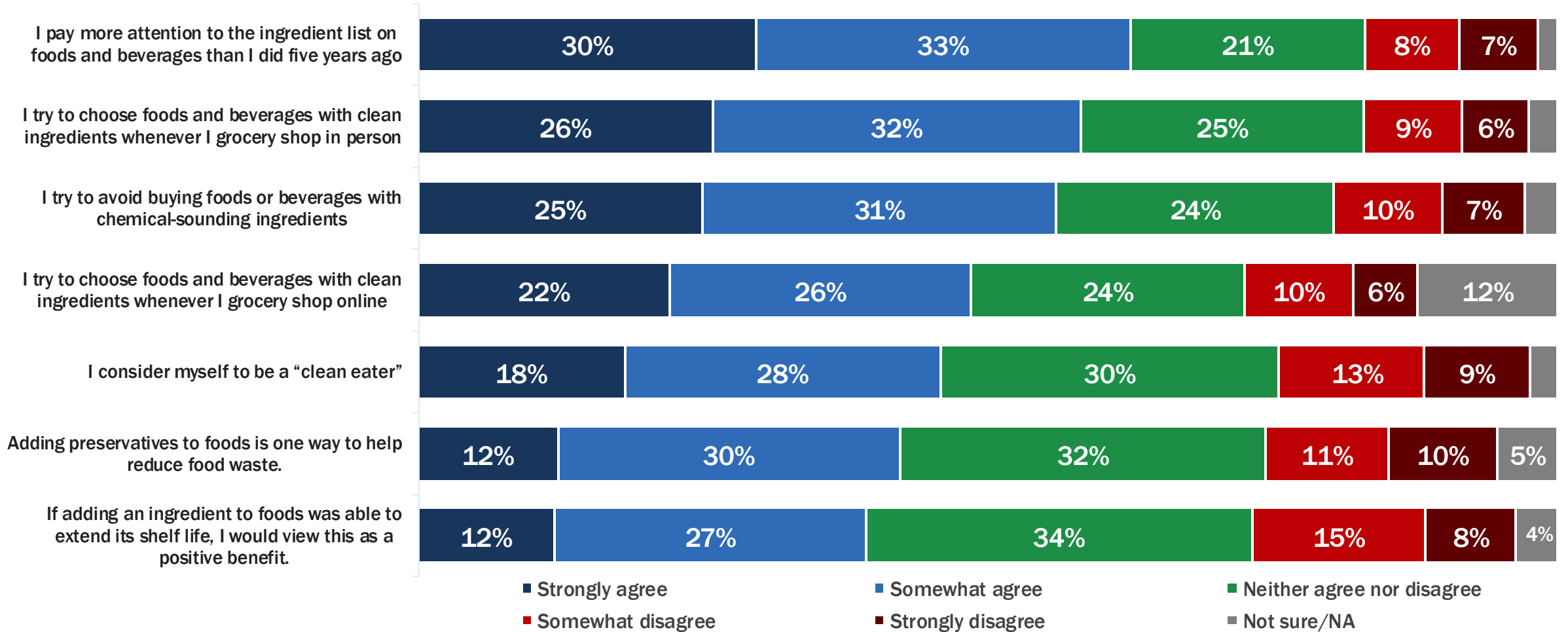
[If B/C/D to Q1] When shopping for foods or beverages (online or in-person), where do you seek out information on their ingredients? Select all that apply. n=909

When looking for information about specific food ingredients, friends/family and online searches are most likely sources



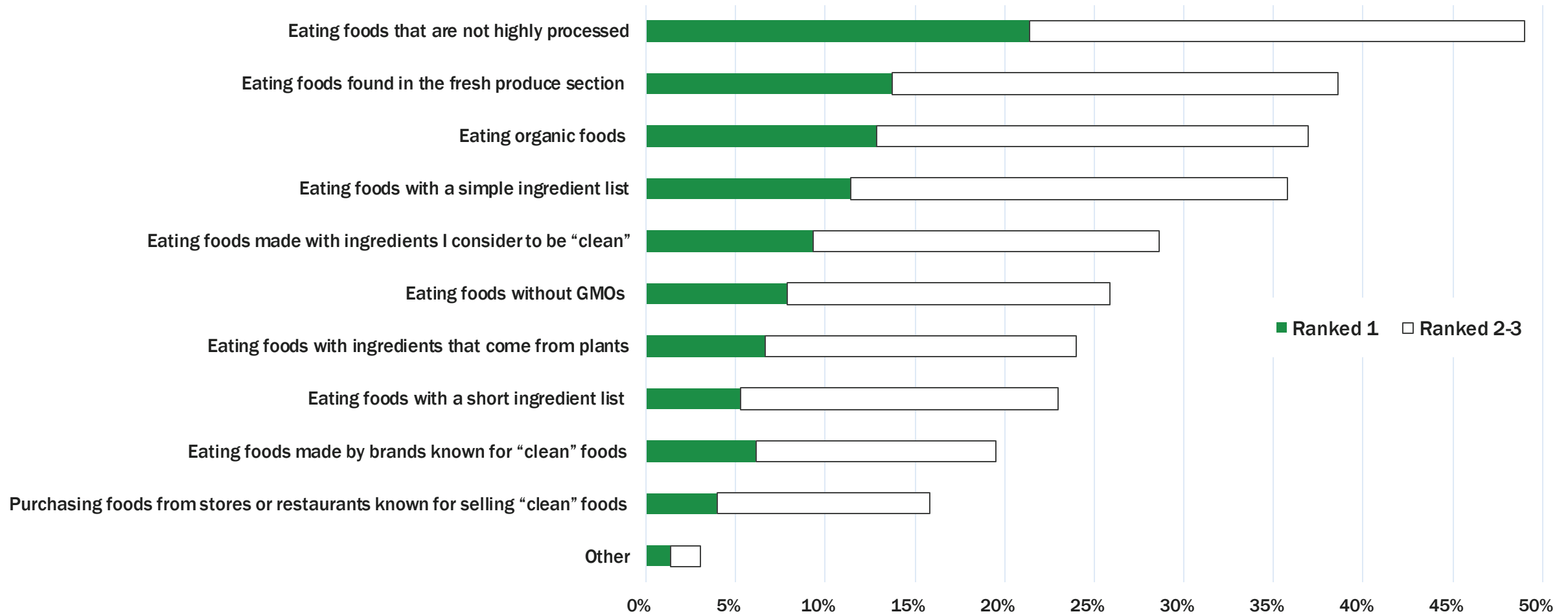
Generally, if you were looking for information about specific ingredients found in foods or beverages, which of these would you be most likely to use as an information source? Rank your top two.
n=1054

Most people say they're paying more attention to ingredient lists, choosing clean ingredients and avoiding chemical-sounding ingredients



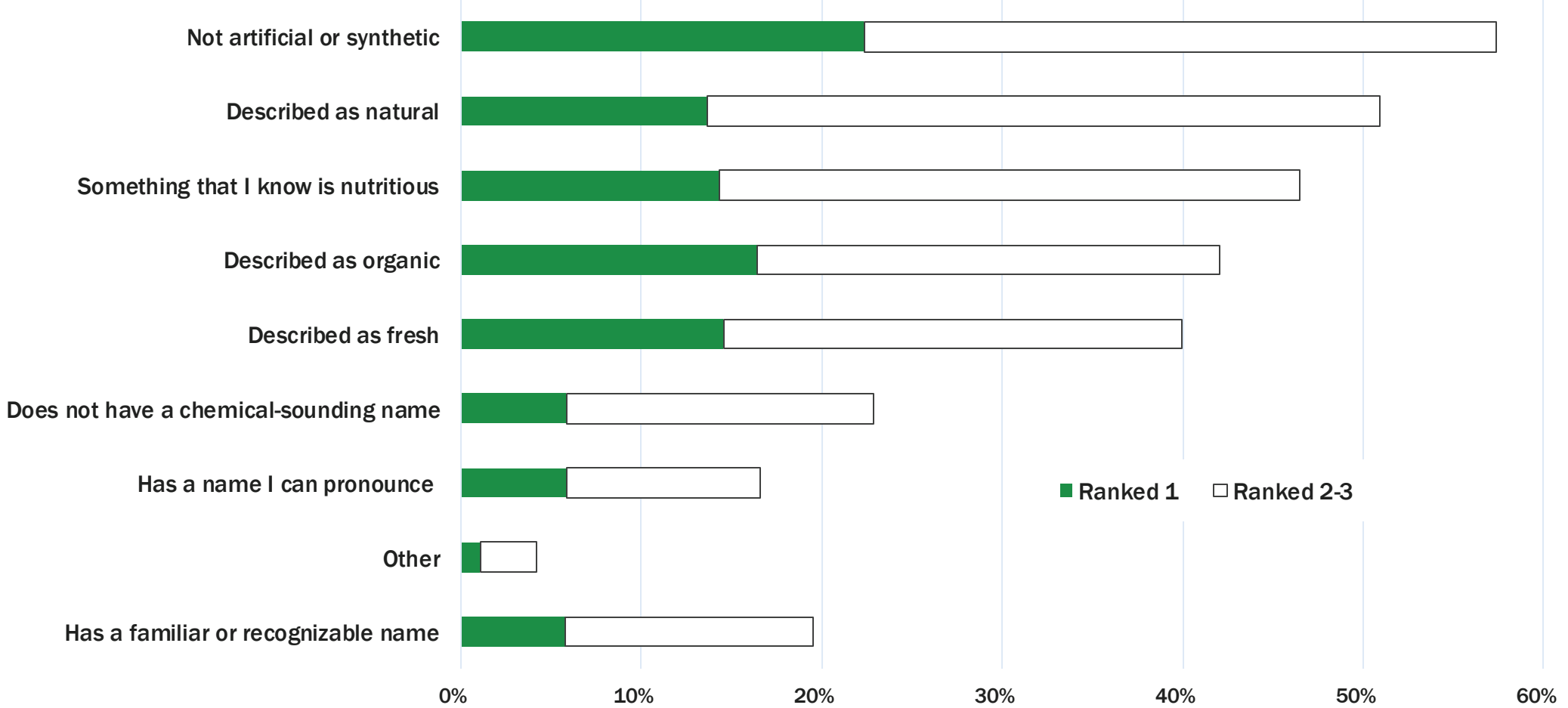
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? n=1054

Nearly half of “clean eaters” define the term as eating foods that are not highly processed; fresh produce, organic, simple ingredient lists also rank high



[If somewhat/strongly agree to 4B] You mentioned that you consider yourself to be a “clean eater”. What does being a “clean eater” mean to you? Rank your top three responses. n=453

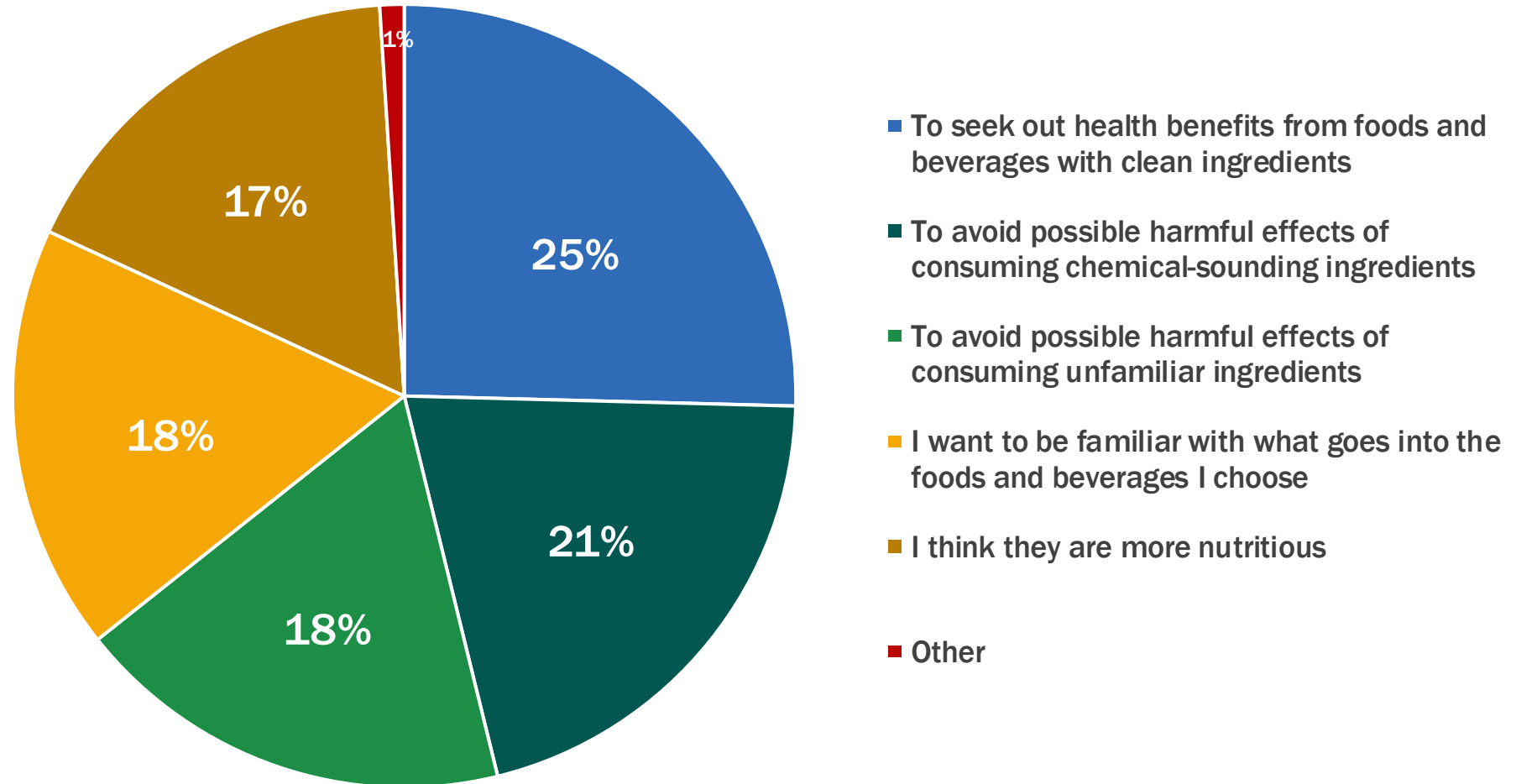
Of those who seek out foods and beverages with “clean” ingredients, the most highly ranked definition for this term is, “not artificial or synthetic”



[If somewhat/strongly agree to 4D and/or 4E and/or select 5J] You mentioned that you try to choose foods and beverages with clean ingredients. How would you define a “clean” ingredient? Rank your top three. n=670. Sample size includes those who try to choose foods and beverages with clean ingredients when shopping in-person and online (slide 6) and those who eat foods made with ingredients they consider to be “clean” (slide 7).

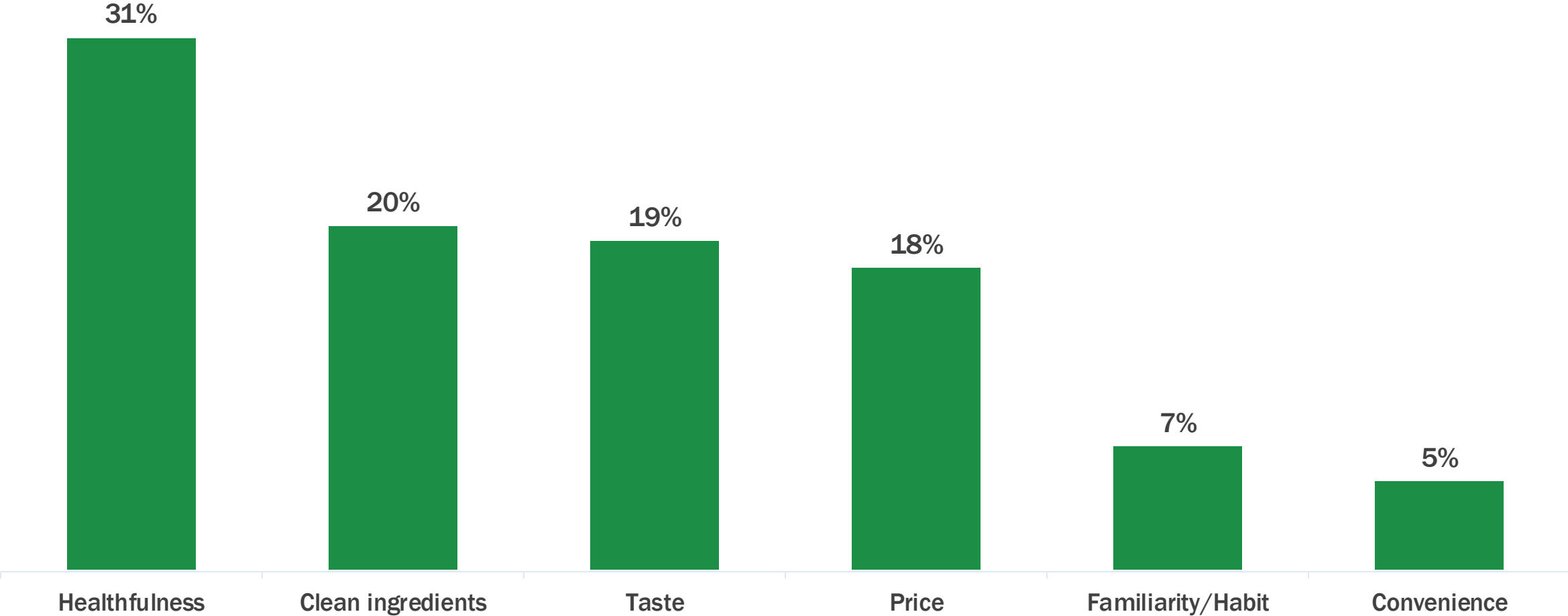


Seeking out health benefits is top motivator for choosing foods and beverages with clean ingredients



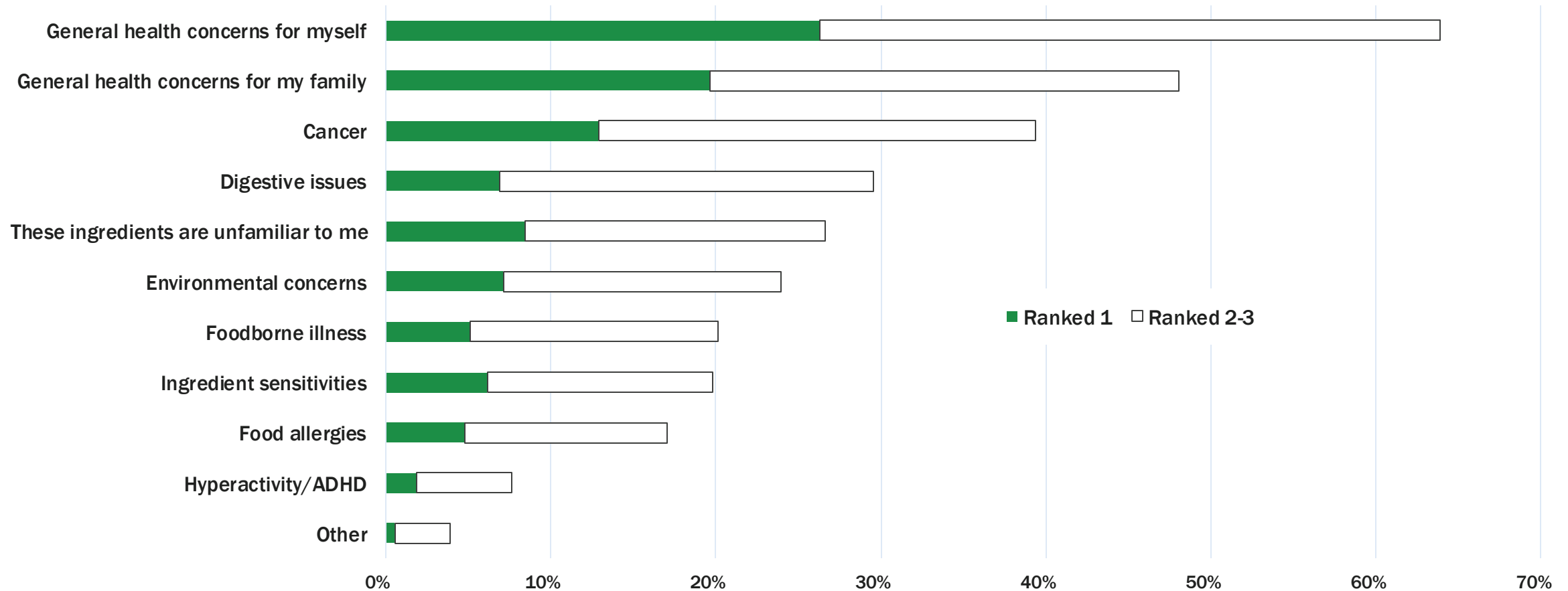
[If somewhat/strongly agree to 4D and/or 4E and/or select 5] Why do you try to choose foods and beverages with clean ingredients? Select your top response. n=670

Of those who seek out clean ingredients, 1 in 3 say that general healthfulness is most influential when shopping for foods and beverages



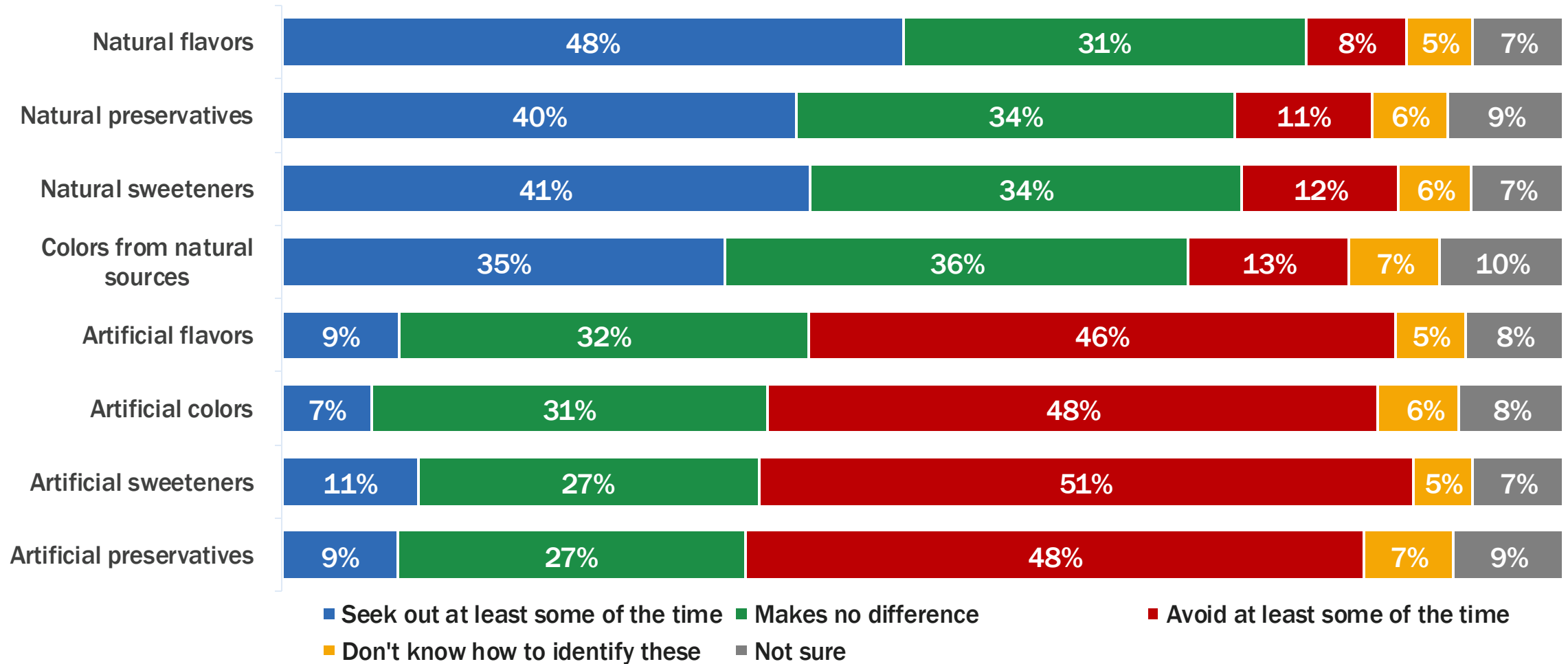
[If somewhat/strongly agree to 4D and/or 4E] How much of an influence do the following have on your decision to buy foods and beverages while grocery shopping (in-person or online)? Rank these options from 1 to 6, with 1=Most influence and 6=Least influence. (% Ranked 1) n=659

Top reasons for avoiding chemical-sounding ingredients are general health concerns for self and family



[If somewhat/strongly agree to 4F] You mentioned that you try to avoid buying foods or beverages with chemical-sounding ingredients. What, specifically, concerns you about these ingredients? Rank your top three concerns. n=590

Natural flavors, preservatives, sweeteners and colors are far preferred over artificial sources



Which of the following statements best describes your feelings towards eating foods that contain the following ingredients? n=1054

Appendix

How much do the ingredients in a food or beverage influence which foods you buy?

	The ingredients don't influence what I buy	The ingredients have little influence on what I buy	The ingredients have a moderate influence on what I buy	The ingredients have a big influence on what I buy
Total	14%	23%	33%	30%
Men	14%	27%	30%	29%
Women	13%	21%	35%	32%
Less than \$40K	16%	24%	30%	30%
\$40K-\$79K	11%	26%	35%	28%
\$80K+	11%	21%	37%	32%
White	14%	21%	35%	31%
African American	14%	22%	29%	36%
Hispanic/ Latinx	15%	37%	26%	22%
Under 45	16%	28% ↑	31%	25% ↓
45-64	12%	17% ↓	37%	33%
65+	11%	23%	27%	39%
Non-college	17% ↑	27%	32%	24% ↓
College	10% ↓	20%	33%	37% ↑

[If B/C/D to Q1] When shopping for foods or beverages (online or in-person), where do you seek out information on their ingredients?
Select all that apply.

	Ingredient list	Information on front of packaged food/beverages	Website/Social media account of food and beverage companies	Family or friends	QR code found on food packaging	Other	None of these
Total	62%	52%	20%	16%	8%	1%	6%
Men	60%	50%	24%	19%	10%	1%	6%
Women	64%	54%	17%	15%	6%	1%	6%
Less than \$40K	60%	52%	16%	15%	6%	2%	7%
\$40K-\$79K	61%	48%	17%	18%	5%	1%	7%
\$80K+	64%	56%	31% ↑	18%	14% ↑	0%	4%
White	64%	52%	19%	15%	8%	1%	7%
African American	62%	53%	21%	16%	7%	1%	5%
Hispanic/ Latinx	48%	49%	28%	19%	9%	2%	9%
Under 45	57%	53%	29% ↑	24% ↑	10%	1%	5%
45-64	65%	53%	16%	12%	6%	1%	7%
65+	68%	48%	7% ↓	5% ↓	5%	3%	10%
Non-college	60%	48%	15% ↓	19%	8%	0%	8%
College	64%	56%	26% ↑	14%	8%	2%	4%

Generally, if you were looking for information about specific ingredients found in foods or beverages, which of these would you be most likely to use as an information source? Rank your top two. % *Ranked 1*

	Friends and/or family	Websites/social media accounts of food or beverage brands/companies	Top articles shown after an online search	Your own health care provider	Websites or social media accounts of U.S. government agencies	Social media influencers or bloggers who discuss food or nutrition	Other
Total	20%	19%	18%	16%	15%	4%	8%
Men	21%	15%	20%	16%	14%	4%	10%
Women	19%	21%	16%	17%	16%	4%	7%
Less than \$40K	22%	15%	18%	15%	16%	2%	12%
\$40K-\$79K	20%	23%	15%	19%	13%	4%	7%
\$80K+	18%	18%	20%	18%	16%	6%	4%
White	20%	19%	17%	17%	15%	4%	9%
African American	21%	18%	18%	17%	16%	5%	6%
Hispanic/ Latinx	20%	16%	24%	12%	19%	3%	6%
Under 45	23%	19%	16%	15%	14%	7% ↑	6%
45-64	18%	21%	18%	17%	17%	2%	8%
65+	18%	13%	21%	17%	15%	1%	14%
Non-college	21%	19%	16%	15%	14%	4%	10%
College	19%	18%	19%	18%	16%	4%	6%

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? % *Strongly agree*

	I pay more attention to the ingredient list on foods and beverages than I did five years ago	I try to choose foods and beverages with clean ingredients whenever I grocery shop in person	I try to avoid buying foods or beverages with chemical-sounding ingredients	I try to choose foods and beverages with clean ingredients whenever I grocery shop online	I consider myself to be a “clean eater”	Adding preservatives to foods is one way to help reduce food waste.	If adding an ingredient to foods was able to extend its shelf life, I would view this as a positive benefit.
Total	30%	26%	25%	22%	18%	12%	12%
Men	31%	30%	25%	26%	24% ↑	17% ↑	16% ↑
Women	28%	22%	24%	19%	12% ↓	8% ↓	8% ↓
Less than \$40K	28%	24%	25%	20%	14%	11%	11%
\$40K-\$79K	26%	23%	23%	18%	15%	10%	10%
\$80K+	39%	32%	31%	31% ↑	28% ↑	18%	18%
White	29%	27%	26%	21%	18%	13%	12%
African American	31%	21%	23%	22%	16%	6%	13%
Hispanic/ Latinx	33%	25%	18%	23%	20%	18%	14%
Under 45	33%	27%	24%	25%	24% ↑	16%	17% ↑
45-64	26%	23%	26%	19%	11% ↓	11%	9%
65+	30%	28%	25%	20%	17%	6%	5%
Non-college	24% ↓	20% ↓	22%	17% ↓	13% ↓	10%	11%
College	35% ↑	33% ↑	27%	28% ↑	24% ↑	14%	14%

[If somewhat/strongly agree to 4B] You mentioned that you consider yourself to be a “clean eater”. What does being a “clean eater” mean to you? Rank your top three responses. % Ranked 1

	Eating foods that are not highly processed	Eating foods found in the fresh produce section	Eating organic foods	Eating foods with a simple ingredient list	Eating foods made with ingredients I consider to be “clean”
Total	21%	14%	13%	11%	9%
Men	22%	14%	11%	10%	12%
Women	20%	13%	16%	13%	6%
Less than \$40K	18%	14%	13%	14%	8%
\$40K-\$79K	30%	12%	10%	8%	3%
\$80K+	19%	15%	12%	12%	12%
White	23%	15%	11%	13%	11%
African American	14%	12%	16%	11%	5%
Hispanic/ Latinx	23%	12%	10%	8%	9%
Under 45	14% ↓	12%	9%	13%	8%
45-64	28%	17%	18%	12%	6%
65+	30%	12%	15%	5%	20%
Non-college	18%	16%	12%	14%	6%
College	24%	12%	13%	10%	12%

[If somewhat/strongly agree to 4B] You mentioned that you consider yourself to be a “clean eater”. What does being a “clean eater” mean to you? Rank your top three responses. % Ranked 1

	Eating foods without GMOs	Eating foods with ingredients that come from plants	Eating foods made by brands known for “clean” foods	Eating foods with a short ingredient list	Purchasing foods from stores or restaurants known for selling “clean” foods	Other
Total	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	1%
Men	7%	6%	8%	4%	6%	2%
Women	9%	8%	4%	7%	2%	1%
Less than \$40K	11%	5%	5%	9%	3%	1%
\$40K-\$79K	8%	7%	8%	9%	4%	3%
\$80K+	6%	10%	7%	0% ↓	6%	0%
White	8%	7%	4%	4%	4%	2%
African American	8%	12%	7%	10%	6%	1%
Hispanic/ Latinx	3%	3%	19%	11%	3%	0%
Under 45	8%	10%	11% ↑	6%	5%	3%
45-64	8%	4%	1%	5%	2%	0%
65+	6%	3%	3%	2%	4%	0%
Non-college	11%	5%	6%	5%	4%	3%
College	6%	8%	7%	5%	4%	1%

[If somewhat/strongly agree to 4D and/or 4E and/or select 5J] You mentioned that you try to choose foods and beverages with clean ingredients. How would you define a “clean” ingredient? Rank your top three. % *Ranked 1*

	Not artificial or synthetic	Described as organic	Described as fresh	Something that I know is nutritious	Described as natural	Does not have a chemical-sounding name	Has a name I can pronounce	Has a familiar or recognizable name	Other
Total	22%	16%	15%	14%	14%	6%	6%	6%	1%
Men	18%	17%	16%	15%	17%	6%	6%	4%	1%
Women	27%	16%	13%	14%	10%	6%	6%	8%	1%
Less than \$40K	27%	16%	15%	17%	9%	5%	5%	6%	0%
\$40K-\$79K	15%	16%	12%	13%	18%	6%	12% ↑	6%	3%
\$80K+	22%	18%	17%	12%	17%	6%	3%	5%	0%
White	24%	15%	14%	15%	15%	6%	6%	5%	1%
African American	18%	16%	14%	14%	16%	6%	9%	7%	0%
Hispanic/ Latinx	23%	15%	19%	12%	10%	6%	4%	7%	3%
Under 45	17% ↓	16%	18%	15%	13%	6%	6%	8%	2%
45-64	27%	17%	10%	12%	16%	5%	8%	5%	0%
65+	30%	15%	13%	17%	12%	9%	1%	2%	1%
Non-college	22%	15%	14%	15%	14%	6%	6%	8%	1%
College	23%	18%	15%	14%	14%	5%	5%	4%	1%

[If somewhat/strongly agree to 4D and/or 4E and/or select 5J] Why do you try to choose foods and beverages with clean ingredients?

Select your top response.

	To avoid possible harmful effects of consuming unfamiliar ingredients	To avoid possible harmful effects of consuming chemical-sounding ingredients	To seek out health benefits from foods and beverages with clean ingredients	I want to be familiar with what goes into the foods and beverages I choose	I think they are more nutritious	Other
Total	18%	21%	25%	18%	17%	1%
Men	17%	20%	25%	19%	19%	1%
Women	19%	22%	26%	16%	16%	1%
Less than \$40K	14%	19%	30%	21%	14%	1%
\$40K-\$79K	21%	20%	21%	17%	20%	0%
\$80K+	21%	24%	24%	13%	17%	1%
White	17%	22%	26%	17%	17%	1%
African American	17%	21%	25%	15%	20%	1%
Hispanic/ Latinx	26%	16%	19%	25%	14%	0%
Under 45	19%	22%	21%	17%	20%	0%
45-64	17%	21%	28%	18%	15%	1%
65+	16%	16%	35%	17%	12%	2%
Non-college	18%	24%	25%	18%	15%	1%
College	18%	18%	26%	17%	19%	1%

[If somewhat/strongly agree to 4D and/or 4E] How much of an influence do the following have on your decision to buy foods and beverages while grocery shopping (in-person or online)? Rank these options from 1 to 6, with 1=Most influence and 6=Least influence.

% Ranked 1

	Healthfulness	Clean ingredients	Taste	Price	Familiarity/Habit	Convenience
Total	31%	20%	19%	18%	7%	5%
Men	33%	18%	21%	16%	8%	5%
Women	29%	22%	18%	19%	7%	6%
Less than \$40K	25%	22%	19%	23%	6%	5%
\$40K-\$79K	28%	21%	18%	19%	7%	7%
\$80K+	35%	18%	21%	11%	9%	5%
White	30%	19%	21%	19%	7%	4%
African American	26%	21%	16%	17%	9%	11%
Hispanic/ Latinx	36%	25%	20%	14%	2%	3%
Under 45	23% ↓	21%	21%	20%	8%	7%
45-64	34%	21%	21%	16%	6%	3%
65+	47% ↑	16%	10%	13%	9%	4%
Non-college	27%	20%	22%	21%	6%	5%
College	35%	20%	17%	15%	8%	5%

[If somewhat/strongly agree to 4F] You mentioned that you try to avoid buying foods or beverages with chemical-sounding ingredients.

What, specifically, concerns you about these ingredients? Rank your top three concerns. % Ranked 1

	General health concerns for myself	General health concerns for my family	Concerns related to cancer	These ingredients are unfamiliar to me	Environmental concerns
Total	26%	20%	13%	8%	7%
Men	30%	18%	10%	8%	7%
Women	24%	21%	15%	9%	7%
Less than \$40K	31%	12% ↓	14%	11%	6%
\$40K-\$79K	24%	23%	12%	6%	7%
\$80K+	22%	24%	13%	7%	9%
White	29%	20%	13%	8%	7%
African American	27%	15%	18%	10%	6%
Hispanic/ Latinx	22%	19%	5%	13%	10%
Under 45	23%	17%	12%	9%	9%
45-64	27%	24%	12%	10%	5%
65+	32%	17%	18%	3%	8%
Non-college	27%	19%	12%	11%	7%
College	26%	21%	14%	6%	7%

[If somewhat/strongly agree to 4F] You mentioned that you try to avoid buying foods or beverages with chemical-sounding ingredients. What, specifically, concerns you about these ingredients? Rank your top three concerns. % Ranked 1

	Concerns related to digestive issues	Concerns related to ingredient sensitivities	Concerns related to foodborne illness	Concerns related to food allergies	Concerns related to hyperactivity/ADHD	Other
Total	7%	6%	5%	5%	2%	1%
Men	8%	7%	7%	4%	1%	0%
Women	6%	5%	3%	5%	3%	1%
Less than \$40K	8%	6%	6%	3%	2%	0%
\$40K-\$79K	6%	5%	7%	6%	1%	1%
\$80K+	6%	7%	3%	7%	2%	0%
White	8%	5%	5%	4%	1%	0%
African American	8%	9%	1%	6%	1%	0%
Hispanic/ Latinx	5%	5%	6%	8%	5%	2%
Under 45	7%	6%	9% ↑	6%	2%	0%
45-64	8%	6%	2%	3%	1%	1%
65+	5%	8%	2%	6%	2%	0%
Non-college	7%	6%	5%	3%	3%	1%
College	7%	6%	5%	6%	1%	0%

Which of the following statements best describes your feelings towards eating foods that contain the following ingredients? % Avoid at least some of the time

	Artificial sweeteners	Artificial preservatives	Artificial colors	Artificial flavors	Colors from natural sources	Natural sweeteners	Natural preservatives	Natural flavors
Total	51%	48%	48%	46%	13%	12%	11%	8%
Men	49%	44%	43%	42%	15%	11%	13%	9%
Women	53%	52%	52%	49%	11%	13%	9%	7%
Less than \$40K	49%	45%	46%	44%	12%	15%	10%	6%
\$40K-\$79K	51%	50%	47%	46%	16%	12%	12%	9%
\$80K+	57%	53%	53%	50%	13%	11%	14%	10%
White	53%	49%	48%	47%	11%	12%	10%	7%
African American	46%	46%	44%	45%	17%	11%	9%	5%
Hispanic/ Latinx	48%	45%	44%	41%	11%	12%	13%	11%
Under 45	47%	44%	43%	40% ↓	14%	13%	13%	10%
45-64	55%	52%	52%	51%	11%	11%	9%	7%
65+	54%	53%	50%	51%	13%	12%	9%	2% ↓
Non-college	43% ↓	42% ↓	41% ↓	40% ↓	12%	10%	9%	6%
College	60% ↑	55% ↑	55% ↑	52% ↑	13%	15%	12%	10%



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International Food
Information Council