



International  
**Food Information**  
Council

# IFIC Spotlight Survey: CAFFEINE

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**March 2024**



# IFIC Spotlight Survey: CAFFEINE

## METHODOLOGY

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*IFIC Spotlight Surveys* are conducted online among 1,000 U.S. adults ages 18-80 to measure beliefs, behaviors, and knowledge. This *IFIC Spotlight Survey: Caffeine* was conducted from January 12-16, 2024.

The Bayesian confidence level for the survey sample (n=1000) is 3.5, which is equivalent to a margin of error  $\pm 3.1$  at the 95% confidence level. Sums may not add up to 100% due to rounding. Results of statistical significance are only compared within each demographic group (e.g. age, race, gender, etc.).

## Most Americans consume caffeine daily.

Almost everyone consumes caffeine, with 88% of survey respondents reporting that they consume caffeine and 12% reporting they do not. Among those who consume caffeine, 8 in 10 say they consume it everyday; 47% say they consume it multiple times a day, and 36% say they consume it once a day. Another 14% report consuming caffeine at least once a week but not every day.

## Habit and energy are primary reasons for consuming caffeine.

Among those who consume caffeine, approximately one-half (51%) cited “it’s part of my routine” (30%) or “I enjoy the taste of the products that contain caffeine” (21%) as their top consumption driver. Nearly one-third of survey respondents 30% look to caffeine for energy, citing that “it gives me a quick boost of energy” (17%) and “it makes me feel awake/alert for longer periods of time” (13%). Other reasons for consuming caffeine include “it’s in the products I like” (11%) and “it’s calming” (6%).

## Coffee and soft drinks are the primary sources of caffeine.

For those who consume caffeine, beverages (including coffee, soft drinks, energy drinks, and tea) were the primary sources of caffeine reported. The top caffeine vehicle was coffee (all varieties), topping the list at 54%. Coffee was followed by soft drinks (17%), energy drinks (7%), and tea (7%). Other primary sources of caffeine included desserts and candies (10% combined), as well as energy shots, pills, dietary supplements, and medications (2% combined).

## Eight in ten Americans agree that caffeine is safe to consume.

All participants were asked to “agree” or disagree” with the following statement, “Caffeine is safe to consume.” with 78% agreeing with the statement. Among those in agreement that caffeine is safe to consume, 21% “strongly agree”, 30% “moderately agree”, and 27% “slightly agree”. Conversely, 18% disagree that caffeine is safe to consume. Among those who disagree that caffeine is safe to consume, 4% “strongly disagree”, 6% “moderately disagree”, and 8% “slightly disagree.” Five percent of survey respondents were “unsure” about whether caffeine is safe to consume.

## **One in three Americans recognize the federal government's role in approving the safe use of caffeine as an ingredient.**

When asked, “Who do you believe is responsible for approving the safe use of caffeine that is added as an ingredient to foods and beverages in the U.S.?”, only 35% of respondents correctly selected “the U.S. government.” Several other entities were selected by respondents as being responsible for approving caffeine’s safe use, including “the company that produces caffeine for use as an ingredient” (12%) and “the company that sells products that contain caffeine” (11%). “Your local health department” (9%), “the state where a caffeine-containing product is are sold or manufactured” (5%), and “independent scientists” (4%) were also cited. It is important to note that approximately 22% of Americans are either “not sure” (16%) or feel there is “no U.S. authority responsible” (6%).

## **Americans trust government and industry for the most for accurate information about caffeine safety.**

When asked “If you were looking for accurate information about the safety of consuming caffeine, which of the following would you trust the most?”, 26% report trusting government agencies followed by 21% trusting food and beverage companies. In comparison, 14% report trusting NGOs/consumer organizations followed by colleges and universities (12%). Eighteen percent are “not sure” who they would trust most to provide accurate information about the safety of consuming caffeine.

**Source: 2024 IFIC Spotlight Survey: Caffeine**

## Knowledge of the amount of caffeine in certain products is limited.

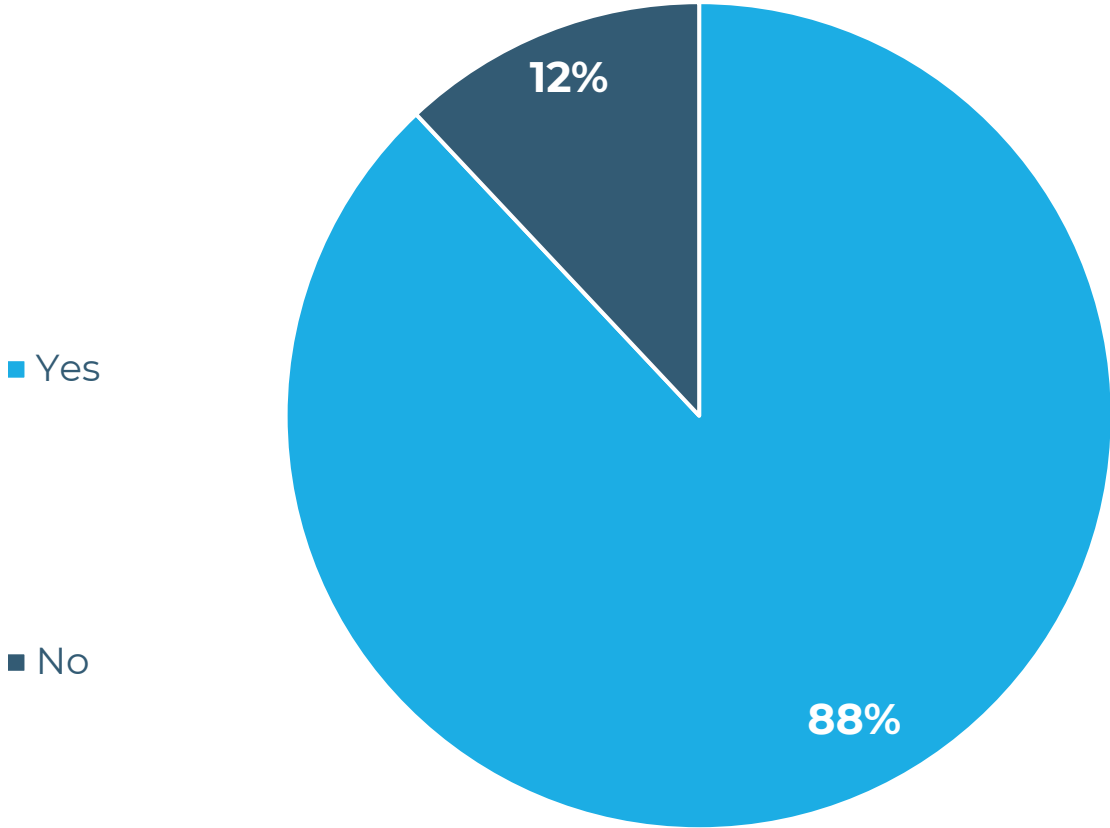
When asked, “How much do you know about the amount of caffeine found in the following products?”, most respondents report knowing “a lot” or a “fair amount” about the amount of caffeine found in commonly consumed beverages such as brewed coffee (66%), soft drinks (67%), instant coffee (52%), energy drinks (52%), and black/green tea (50%). Conversely, most consumers reported knowing less about caffeine amounts in chocolate, desserts, energy shots as well as caffeine pills and supplements.

## The majority of Americans are unaware of caffeine intake recommendations.

When provided the question, “According to global health authorities, including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, how much caffeine is considered safe for healthy (non-pregnant) adults to consume each day?”, only 6% of Americans selected the correct 400 milligram option. Perhaps more importantly, almost one half of consumers (46%) are “not sure” how much caffeine is considered safe for healthy adults to consume each day.

Similarly asked, “For the following question, consider that an 8-ounce cup of caffeinated home brewed coffee contains about 100 milligrams of caffeine. With that in mind, how much caffeinated coffee do you believe can be safely consumed by a healthy (non-pregnant) adult each day?” Only 8% of Americans correctly selected “up to 4 cups of coffee.”

# Most Americans consume caffeine.

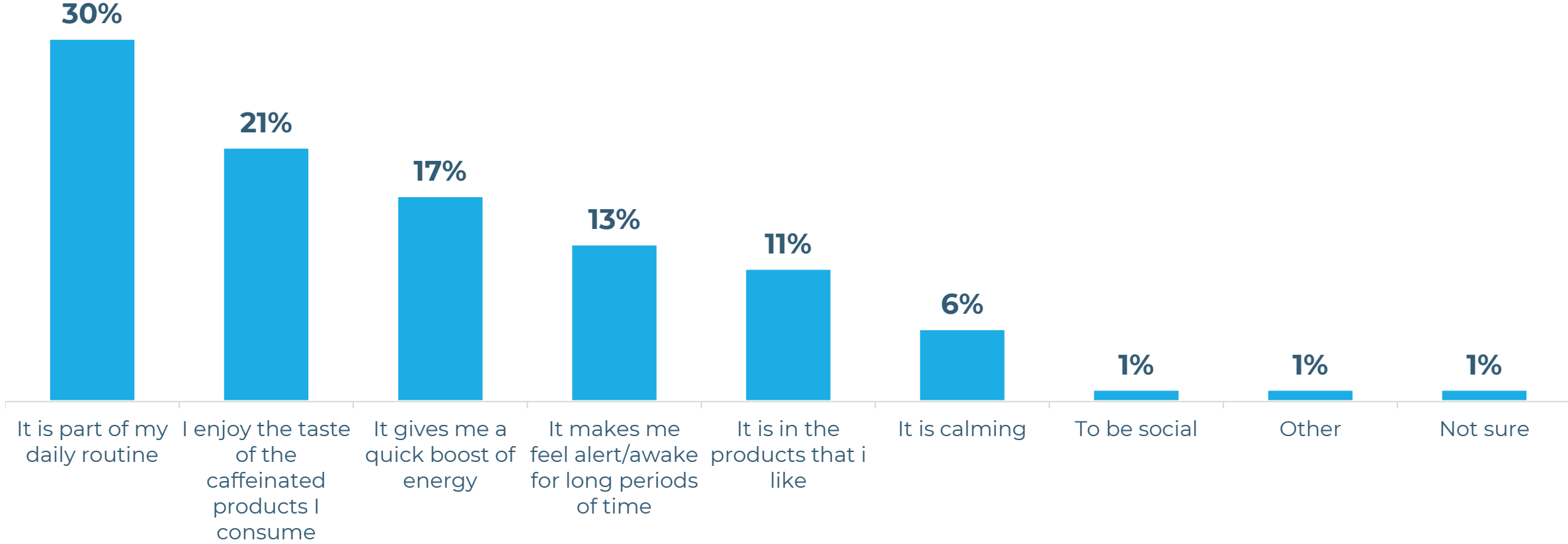


Q1: Do you consume caffeine?

Source: 2024 IFIC Spotlight Survey: Caffeine

# Habit and energy are the primary reasons for consuming caffeine.

Nearly one third of Americans consume caffeine because of its perceived energy and alertness benefits.



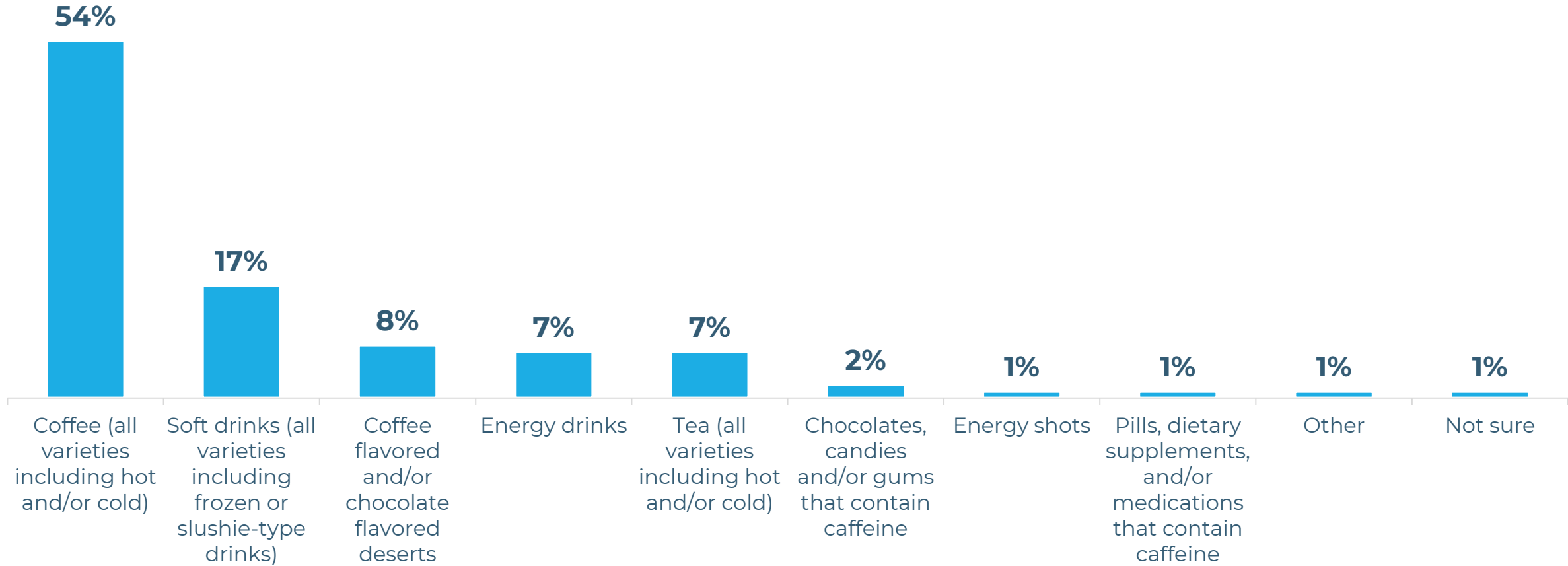
Q2: [IF YES IN Q1] Why do you consume caffeine? Select only one

Source: 2024 IFIC Spotlight Survey: Caffeine



# Beverages are the primary sources of caffeine.

Coffee is the number one source of caffeine followed by soft drinks, energy drinks, and teas.



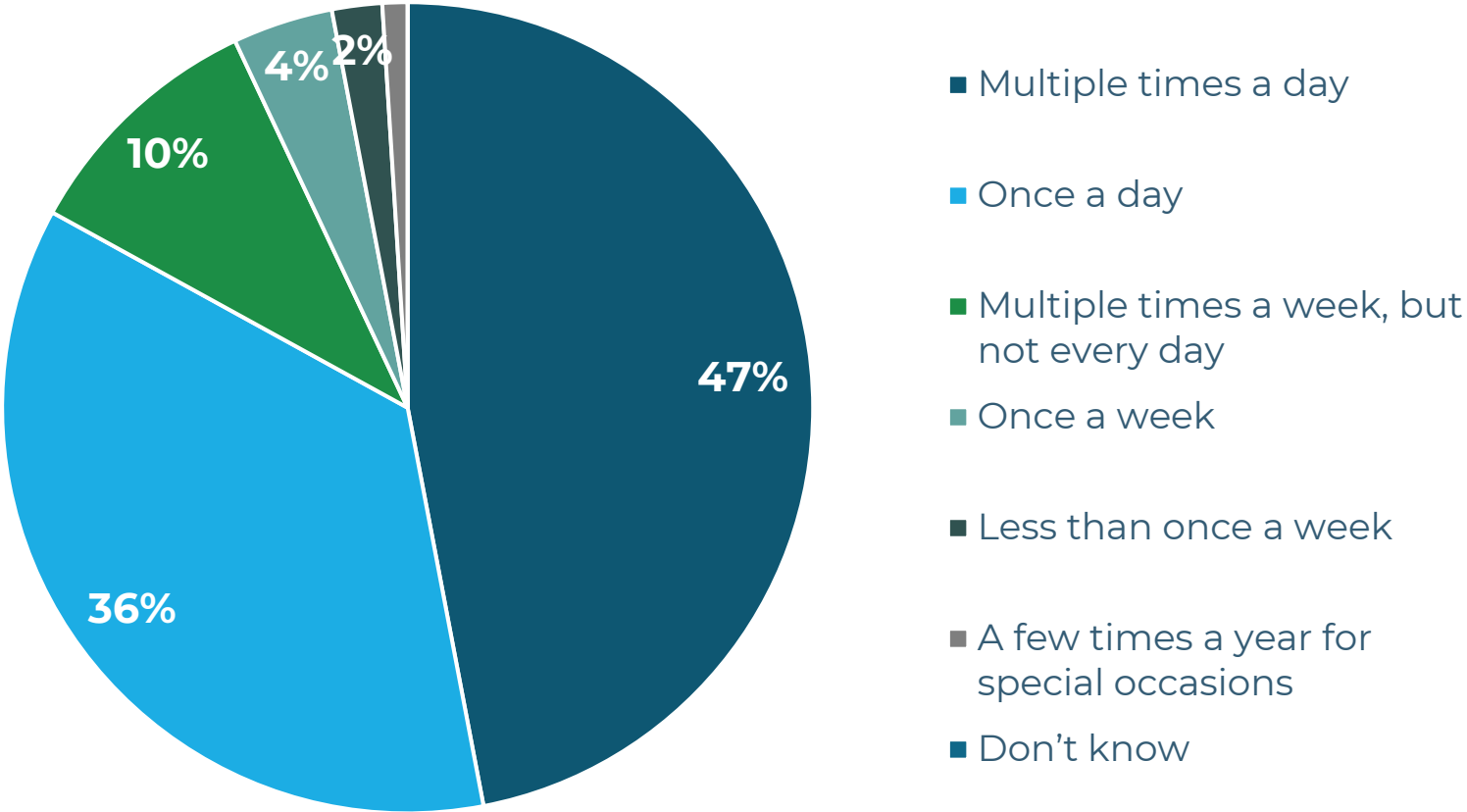
Q3: [IF YES IN Q1] What is your primary source of caffeine? Select only one

Source: 2024 IFIC Spotlight Survey: Caffeine



# Eight in ten consume caffeine daily.

*Almost half of Americans consume caffeine multiple times per day.*

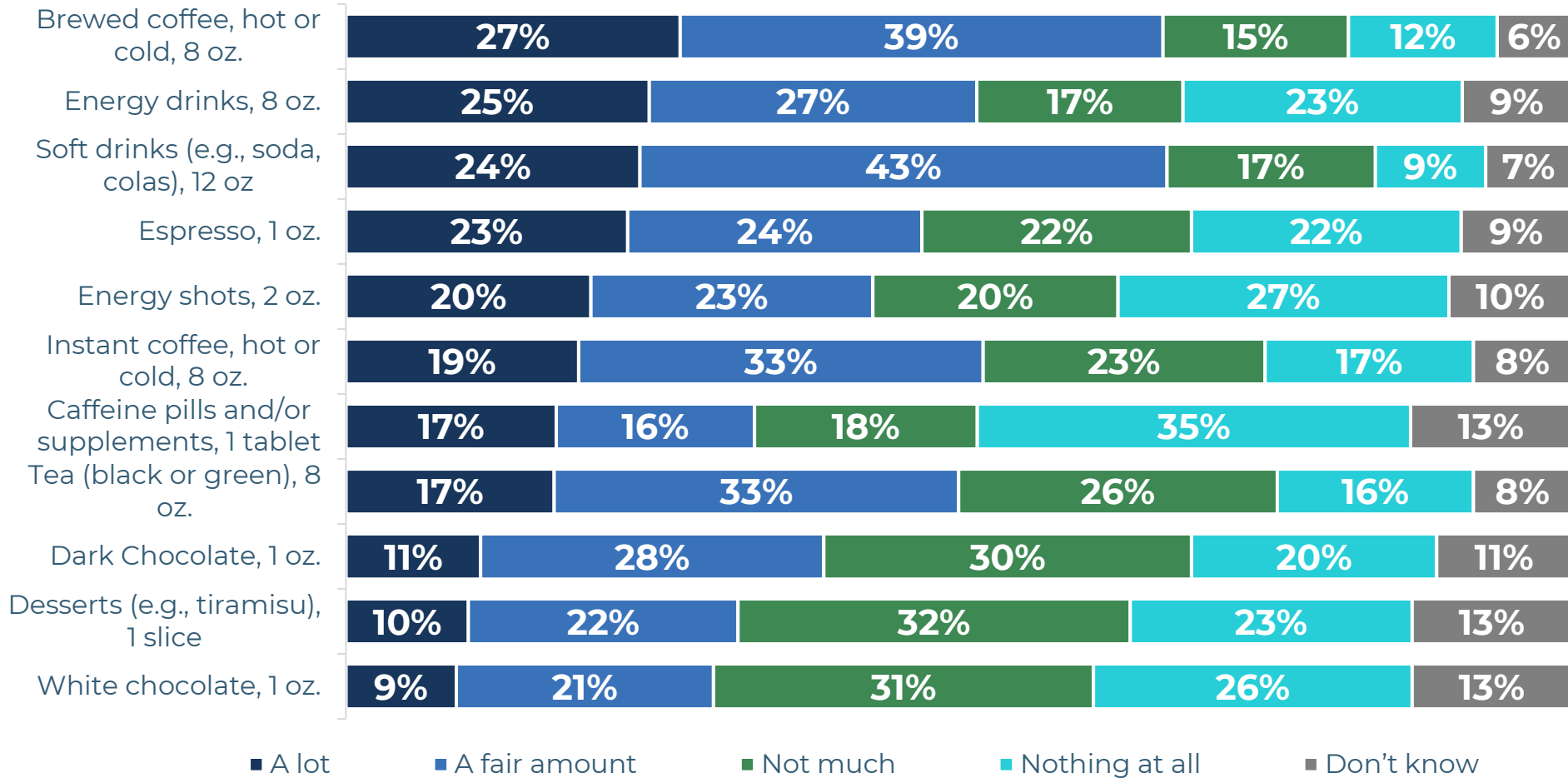


**Q4:** How often do you consume your primary source of caffeine? Select only one

**Source:** 2024 IFIC Spotlight Survey: Caffeine

# Americans generally know the caffeine amount in commonly consumed products (beverages).

*Less is known about the amount of caffeine in foods and supplements (chocolates, deserts, pills/supplements).*

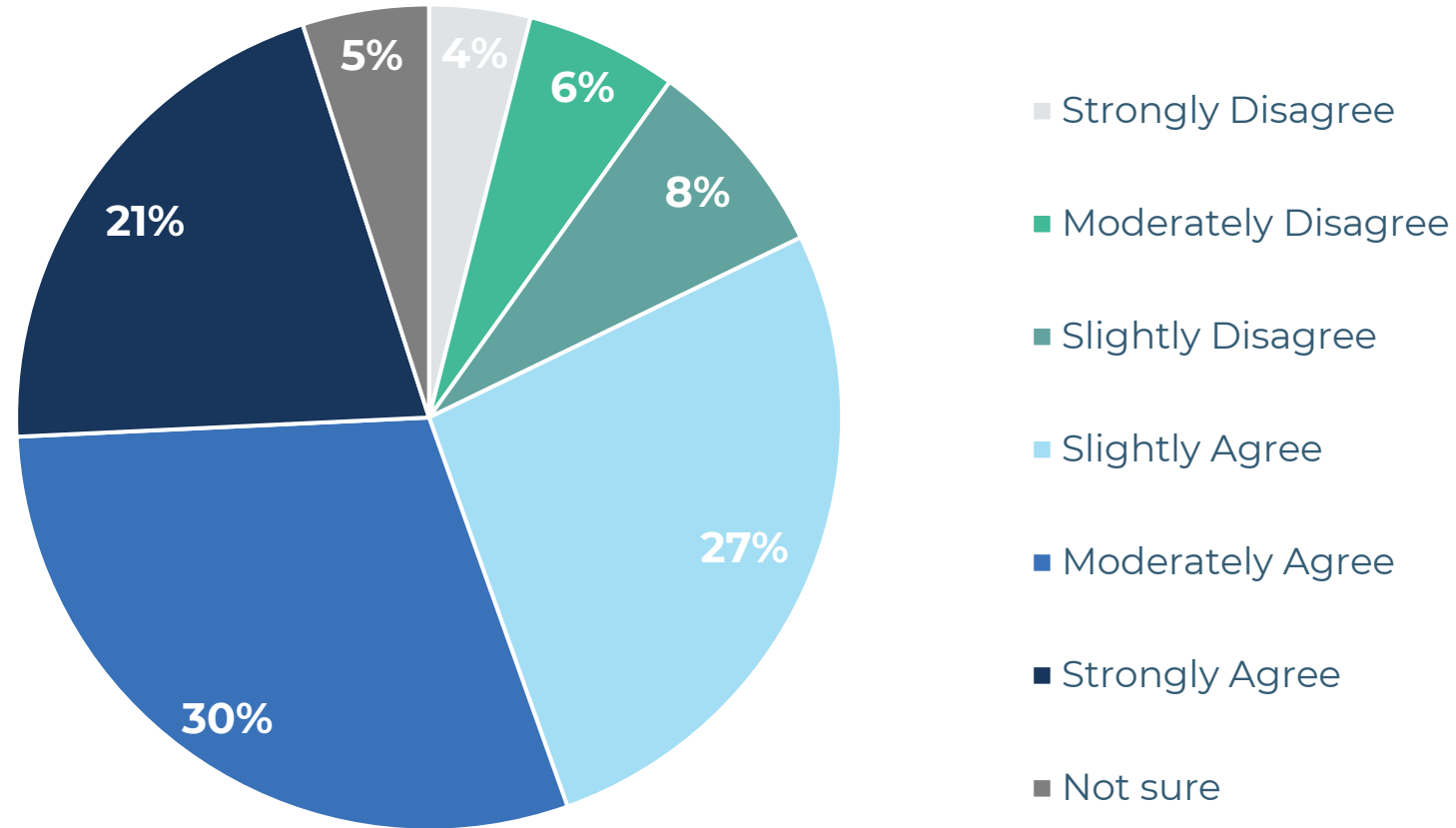


Q5: How much would you say you know about the relative amount of caffeine in the following products?

Source: 2024 IFIC Spotlight Survey: Caffeine

# The majority of Americans agree that caffeine is safe to consume.

*One in five Americans strongly agree that caffeine is safe to consume.*

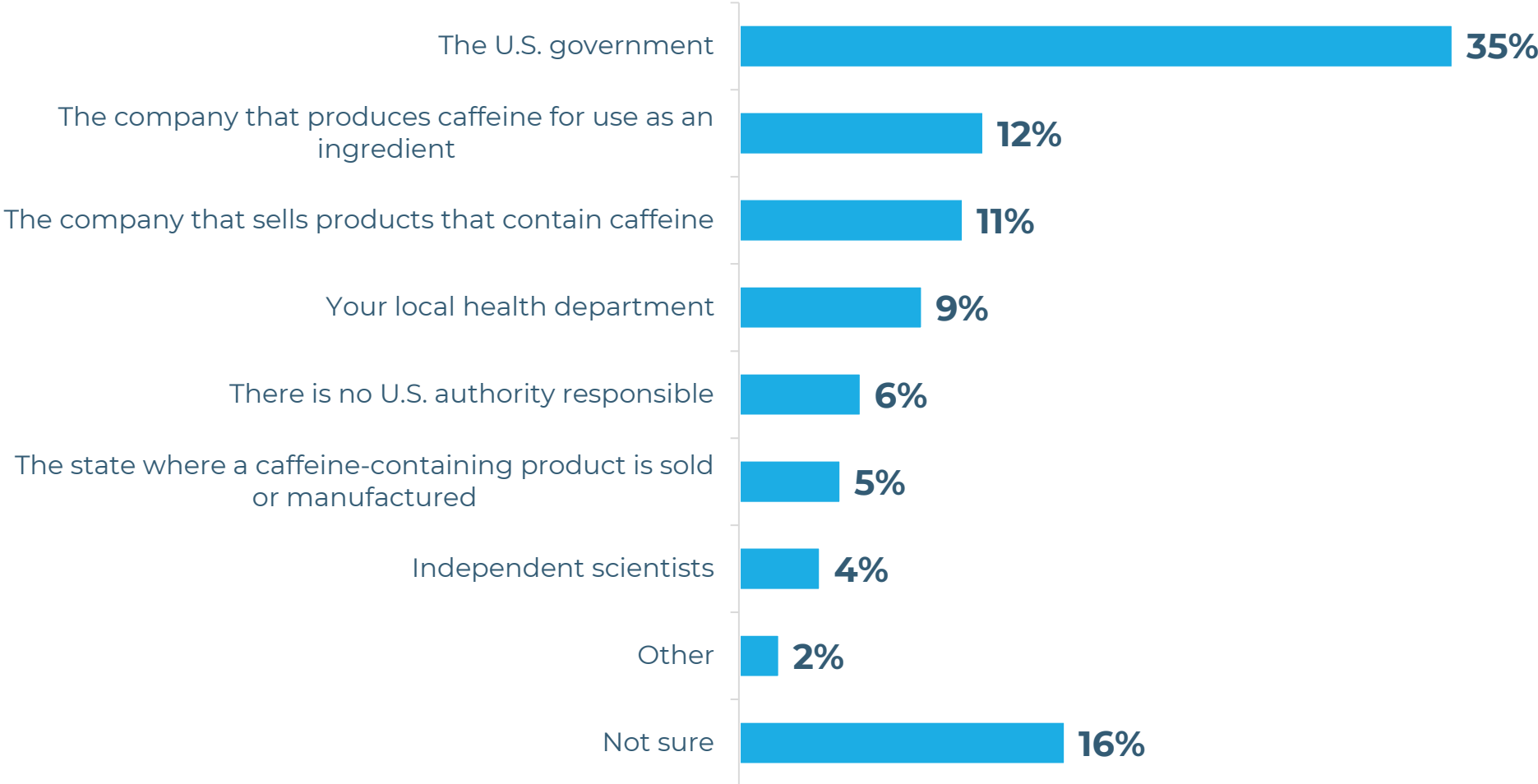


**Q6:** How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Caffeine is safe to consume.

**Source:** 2024 IFIC Spotlight Survey: Caffeine

# One third of Americans confirm FDA's responsibility for caffeine's safe use.

The majority of Americans are unsure or consider other entities as responsible for caffeine's safe use.

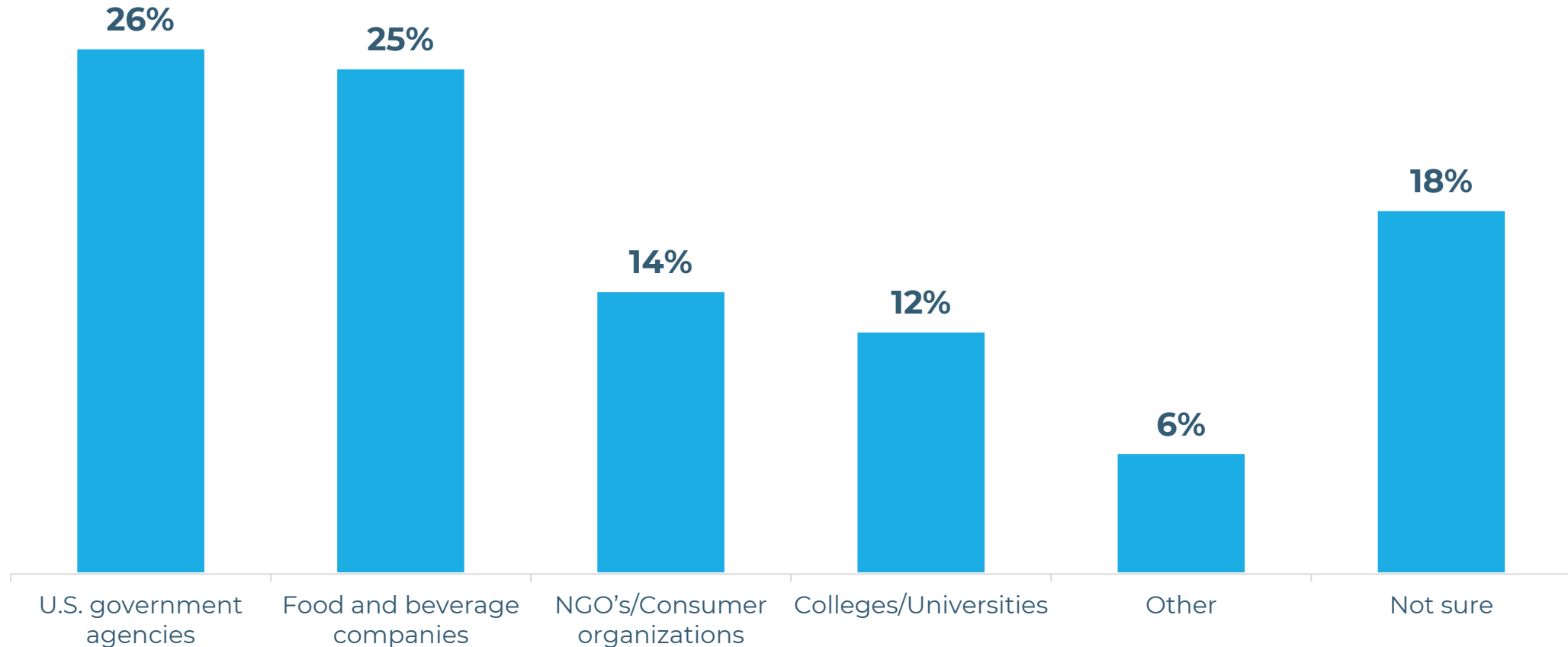


**Q7:** Caffeine is both naturally occurring in some foods and beverages and added as an ingredient to others. Who do you believe is responsible for approving the use of caffeine that is added as an ingredient to foods and beverages in the U.S.? Select only one.

Source: 2024 IFIC Spotlight Survey: Caffeine

# Americans trust government as well as food and beverage companies for accurate information about caffeine safety.

*Approximately one in five are not sure who to trust.*

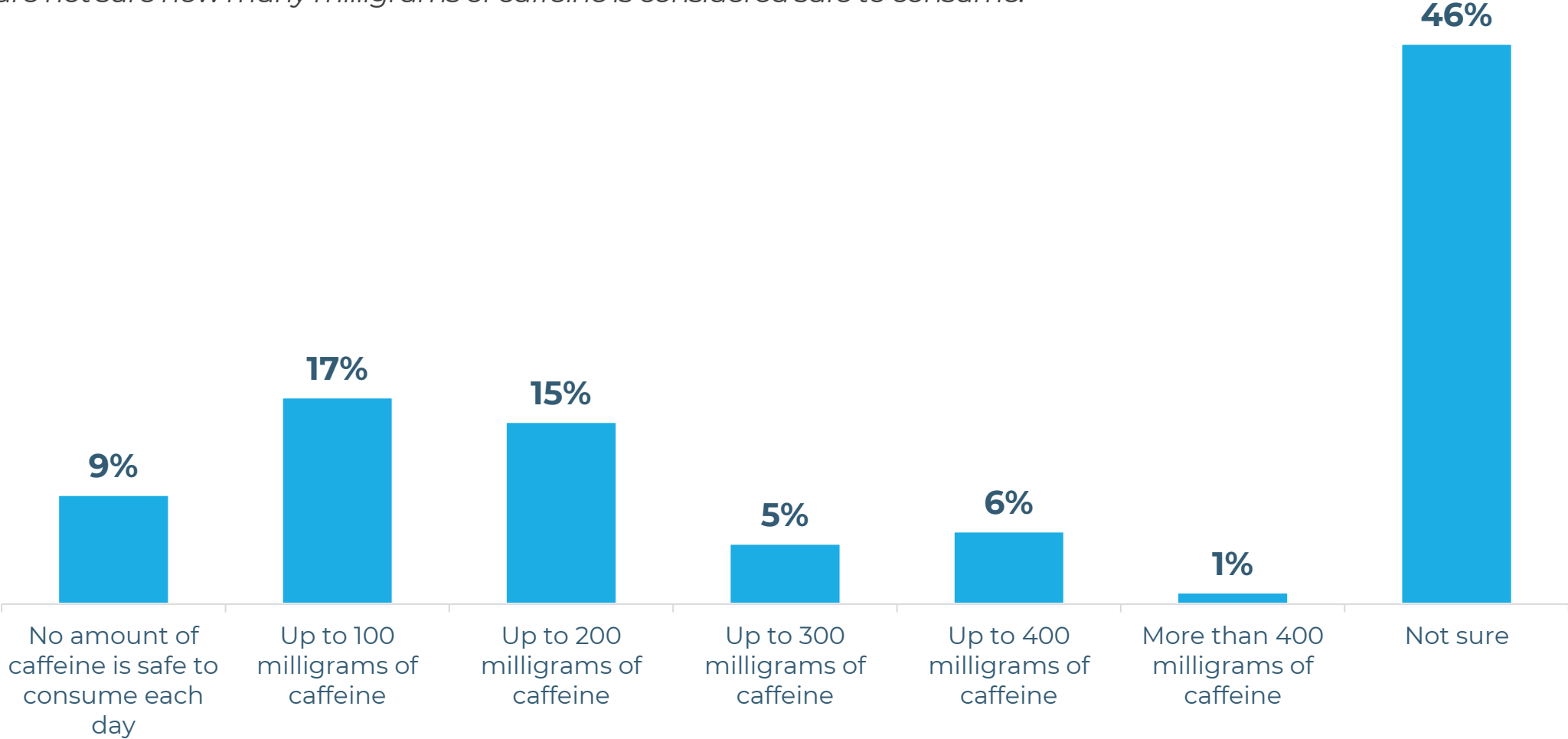


**Q8:** If you were looking for accurate information about the safety of consuming caffeine, which of the following would you trust the most? Select only one.

Source: 2024 IFIC Spotlight Survey: Caffeine

# Most Americans do not know how many milligrams of caffeine is considered safe for a healthy adult to consume.

*Almost half are not sure how many milligrams of caffeine is considered safe to consume.*

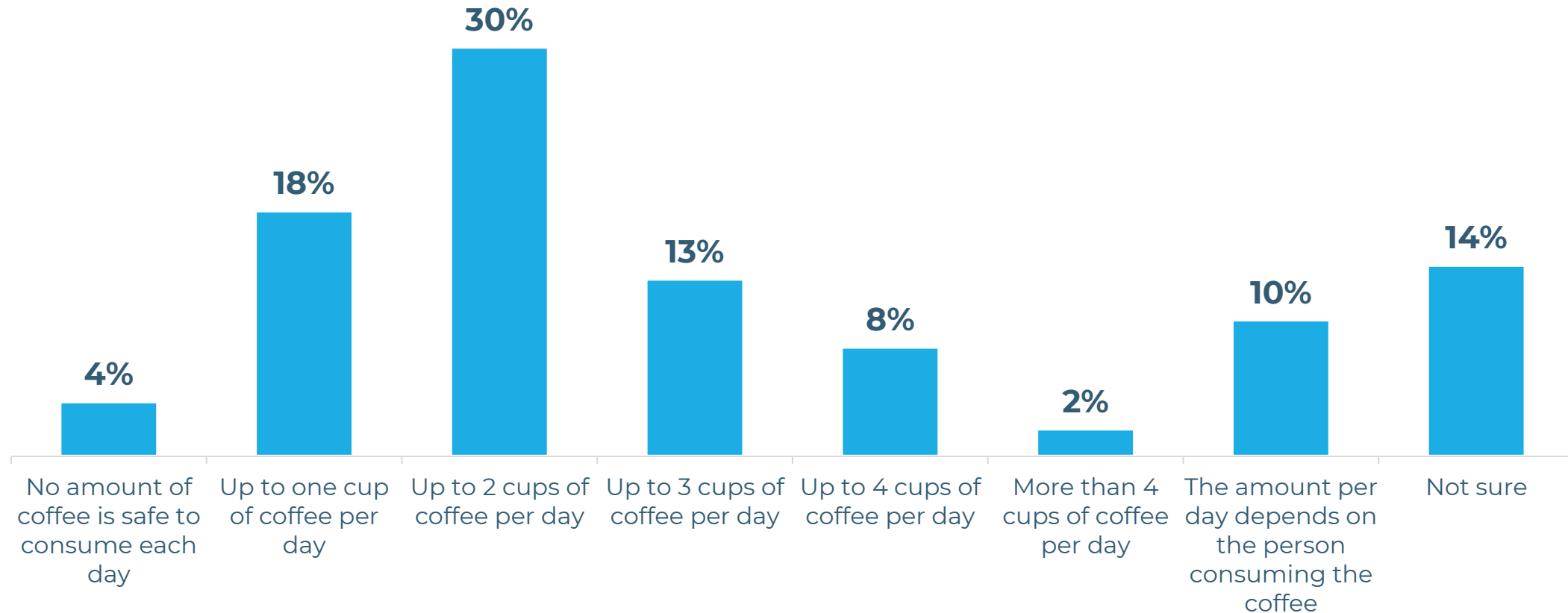


**Q9:** According to global health authorities, including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, how much caffeine is considered safe for healthy (non-pregnant) adults to consume each day? Select only one.

**Source: 2024 IFIC Spotlight Survey: Caffeine**

# Americans do not know how many cups of coffee is considered safe to consume.

Only 8% of Americans can accurately translate cups of coffee into safe amounts of caffeine to consume.

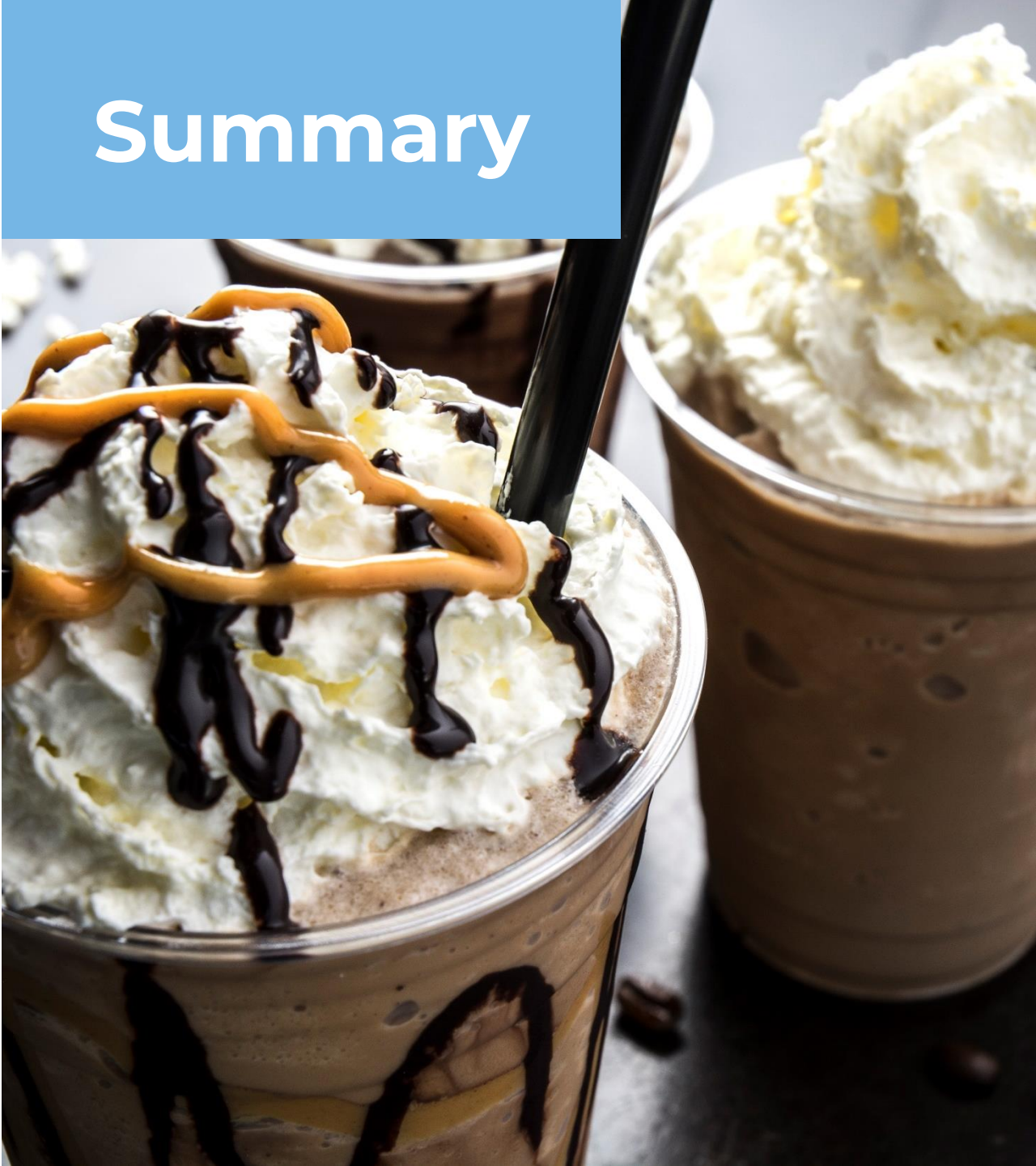


**Q10:** For the following question, consider that an 8-ounce cup of caffeinated home brewed coffee contains about 100 milligrams of caffeine. With that in mind, how much caffeinated coffee do you believe can be safely consumed by a healthy (non-pregnant) adult each day? Select only one.

Source: 2024 IFIC Spotlight Survey: Caffeine



# Summary



Most Americans consume caffeine daily and believe it is safe to do so, yet simultaneously report being unaware of how much is considered safe to consume.

Uncovering this knowledge gap makes enhanced education efforts about safe caffeine consumption paramount.

Consumers indicate that they look to multiple entities, including yet beyond the government, for confirmation of caffeine's safety.

To meet consumer expectations and demand, this critical responsibility should be coordinated and shared among various stakeholders including federal, state, and local government entities such as state-supported extension specialists; supply chain stakeholders, including retail and foodservice providers; as well as the public health and health professional community, including registered dietitians, many of whom communicate directly to the public.

Source: 2024 IFIC Spotlight Survey: Caffeine