

# 2017 AARP Brain Health and Nutrition Survey

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AARP Research

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## **About AARP**

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With nearly 38 million members and offices in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families with a focus on health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. AARP also works for individuals in the marketplace by sparking new solutions and allowing carefully chosen, high-quality products and services to carry the AARP name. As a trusted source for news and information, AARP produces the nation's largest circulation publications, AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. To learn more, visit [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org) or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.

The views expressed herein are for information, debate, and discussion, and do not necessarily represent official policies of AARP.

## **Acknowledgments**

GfK conducted this survey for AARP using its nationally representative online panel, Knowledge Panel. This report was prepared by Laura Mehegan, Chuck Rainville & Laura Skufca in AARP Research. For additional information about the survey, contact Laura Mehegan at [lmehegan@aarp.org](mailto:lmehegan@aarp.org). Media inquiries should be directed to Greg Phillips at [gphillips@aarp.org](mailto:gphillips@aarp.org).

# Objectives

- To characterize the eating habits of adults age 40 and older.
- To understand adults' willingness to eat a healthier diet and the barriers preventing them from healthy eating.
- To explore the relationship between mental well-being and brain health with eating habits.

# Methodology

- An online survey fielded October 25-November 8, 2017 among a nationally representative sample of 2,033 Americans age 40+.
- Additional interviews were conducted to achieve the following samples :
  - 351 Hispanic/Latinos age 40+ (conducted in both English and Spanish)
  - 350 African Americans age 40+
  - 200 Asian Americans age 40+.
- The data were weighted by age, gender, race, ethnicity, employment status and income.
- All estimates are for the general 40+ US population unless otherwise noted.
- The margin of error for the national sample of adults age 40+ is +/- 2.7 percentage points. The margin of error among subgroups (e.g., age cohorts, race/ethnicity oversamples) is higher.
- Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

# Key Findings

## MAJOR TAKEAWAYS

- Adults who eat at least the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables report better brain health and have higher average mental well-being scores. The more servings of fruits and vegetables consumed, the better the brain health and mental well-being scores.
- But most adults age 40 and older are not getting the proper nutrition. Virtually no one consumed the recommended number of servings in all five food groups and one-third did not consume the recommended amount in ANY food group.
- Four in 10 or more adults age 40 and older consumed the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-recommended amount of fruits (1.5-2 cups per day) and vegetables (2-3 cups per day) but very few consumed the recommended amount of dairy (3 cups per day), grain foods (5-7 servings per day), or protein (5-6 servings per day). A large majority of adults consumed too few servings in these three food groups.
- Nearly nine in 10 adults say they would eat a healthy diet if they were aware that it could reduce their risk off cognitive decline, heart disease, or diabetes.

# Key Findings

## MAJOR TAKEAWAYS

- AARP has the potential to help adults eat a more brain-healthy diet. More than 60 percent of adults age 40 and older said that they would eat more fish, less red meat, and lower their dairy fat intake if they knew it was good for their brain health.
- About 40 percent of adults said the barriers to eating a healthy diet were the difficulty and expense. This shows AARP has the potential to help by providing adults with practical tips to make it easier for them to eat a healthy diet for less money.
- Fewer barriers to healthy eating were noted by adults who eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables per day.
- Healthcare providers are missing an opportunity to discuss diet and nutrition with their patients. More than half of adults (51%) say they would be more likely to eat a healthier diet if their doctor recommended it but few report that their doctors (10%) are recommending they follow a special eating plan.

# Key Findings

## *Nutrition and Brain Health*

- Adults age 40 and older who eat healthy most of the time are twice as likely to report their brain health as “excellent” or “very good” compared to those who rarely do (77% vs. 39%) and have significantly higher average mental well-being scores.
- But more than six in 10 (63%) adults eat poorly saying they ate well only three or four days per week or less often. Significantly more adults age 65 and older said they ate nutritiously “most of the time” compared to adults age 40-54.
- Women eat better than men. Twice as many women than men eat the recommended amounts of both fruits and vegetables.
- Adults age 40 and older who eat fish/seafood in a typical week but not red meat report better brain health and higher average mental well-being scores compared to individuals who eat red meat but not fish/seafood in a typical week.
- Individuals who follow some of the eating patterns included in the Mediterranean diet report better brain health and higher mental well-being scores. This includes those who eat fish/seafood, raw nuts, and olive oil in a typical week.

# Key Findings

## *Willingness to Change Eating Habits*

- A majority of adults age 40 and older said they are confident they can eat a healthier diet and intend to do so. Those who show confidence and intent are more likely to report better brain health, better overall health, and higher average mental well-being scores.
- Large majorities of adults say they would be likely to eat a healthy diet knowing it may reduce their risk of cognitive decline/dementia, diabetes, and heart disease. Interestingly, adults with heart disease are slightly but significantly less likely to change their diet to benefit their heart.
- Most adults say they are likely to change their diet in specific ways knowing it is good for their brain (eat more fish/seafood, limit red meat, limit whole-fat dairy):
  - Those who already eat brain-healthy fish/seafood in a typical week are more likely to say they will eat even more fish/seafood and less red meat compared to red-meat-eaters
  - Those who already eat low-fat dairy options are significantly more likely to say they will limit the whole-fat dairy in their diets compared to those who eat all whole-fat dairy.



# Key Findings

## *Barriers to Healthy Eating and Food Insecurity*

- The difficulty in doing so, the cost, personal identity as not a “healthy foods” type of person, and taste were key road blocks noted for healthy eating. Additionally, a majority mentioned that a recommendation from their doctor would make adults age 40 and older more likely to eat healthy.
- Adults who have a body mass index (BMI) in the obese range are more likely to cite barriers to healthy eating compared to those who have a lower BMI. These particular individuals are especially likely to say eating healthy would be too expensive, too difficult, and that they are not a “healthy foods” type of person.
- Adults age 40-54 were significantly more likely to cite barriers to healthy eating compare to adults age 65 and older.

Many adults age 40 and older consume the foods that are thought to be good for brain health.

Berries:  
33%

Green  
and/or black  
tea: 20%

All/mostly  
low-fat  
dairy: 51%

Recommended  
servings of  
vegetables per  
day: 40%

Raw nuts:  
36%

Fish/seafood:  
52%

Red wine:  
16%

Dark  
chocolate:  
27%

Beans/legumes:  
51%

Olive  
oil: 50%

Coffee:  
65%

Moderate to light  
drinkers (among  
drinkers): Men:  
82%, Women: 85%

Recommended  
servings of fruit  
per day: 46%

# Dietary Recommendations, Brain Health, and Mental Well-Being\*

\*Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) © NHS Health Scotland, University of Warwick and University of Edinburgh, 2006, all rights reserved. Scale consists of 14-items and ranges from 14-70.

Adults age 40+, on average, are more likely to consume enough fruits and vegetables but not enough dairy, protein, or grains.

What should people eat?\*



1.5-2 cups per day



2-3 cups per day



3 cups per day



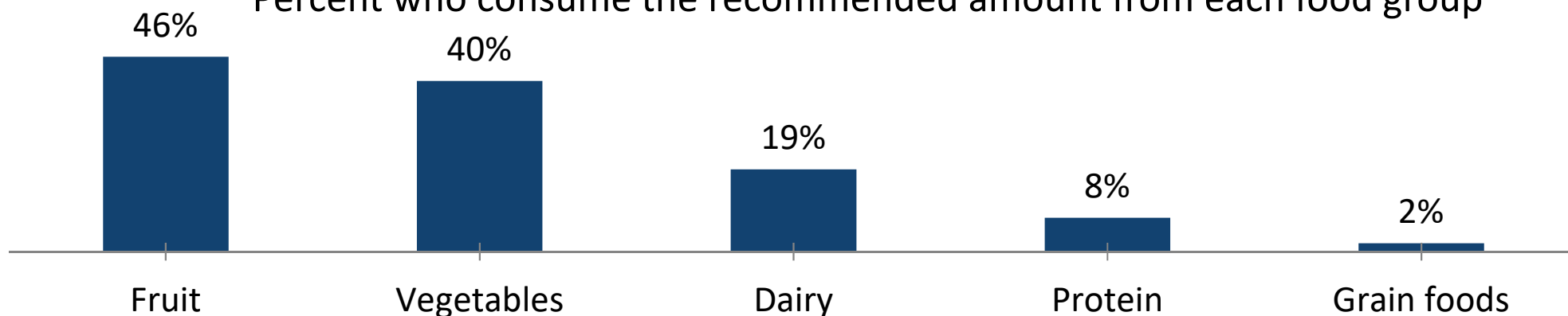
5-6 servings day



5-7 servings per day

\* From: <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/> (Amount varies by age and gender)

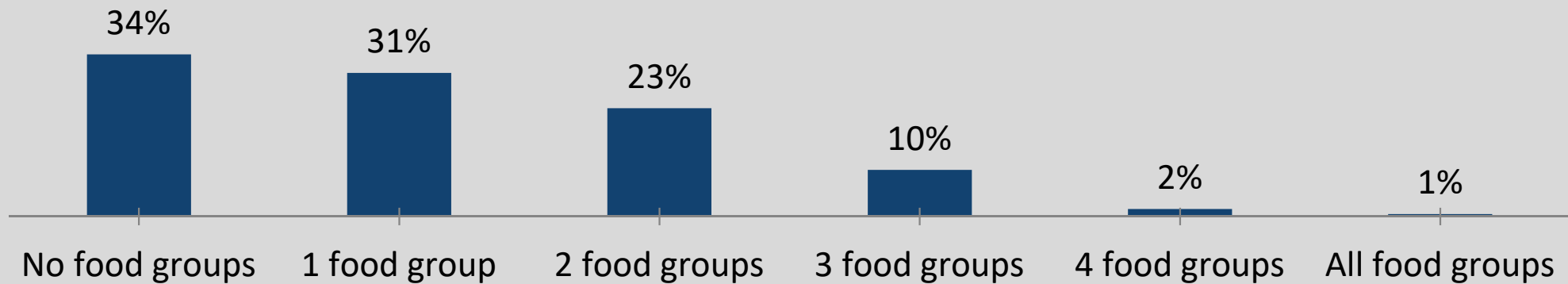
Percent who consume the recommended amount from each food group\*



\*A recently released report from the CDC (Lee-Kwan, Moore, Blanck, Harris, & Galuska, 2017) concluded that many fewer adults eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables compared to the 2017 AARP Brain Health and Nutrition Survey. The difference in the results of the two studies is due to several factors including different survey methods (data collection mode and instrument) with different stated objectives.

Virtually no one consumes the dietary recommendations in all five food groups and one-third (34%) of adults age 40 and older do not meet the dietary recommendations in any of the food groups.

Out of five food groups, the percentage of adults who consumed the recommended number of servings in each

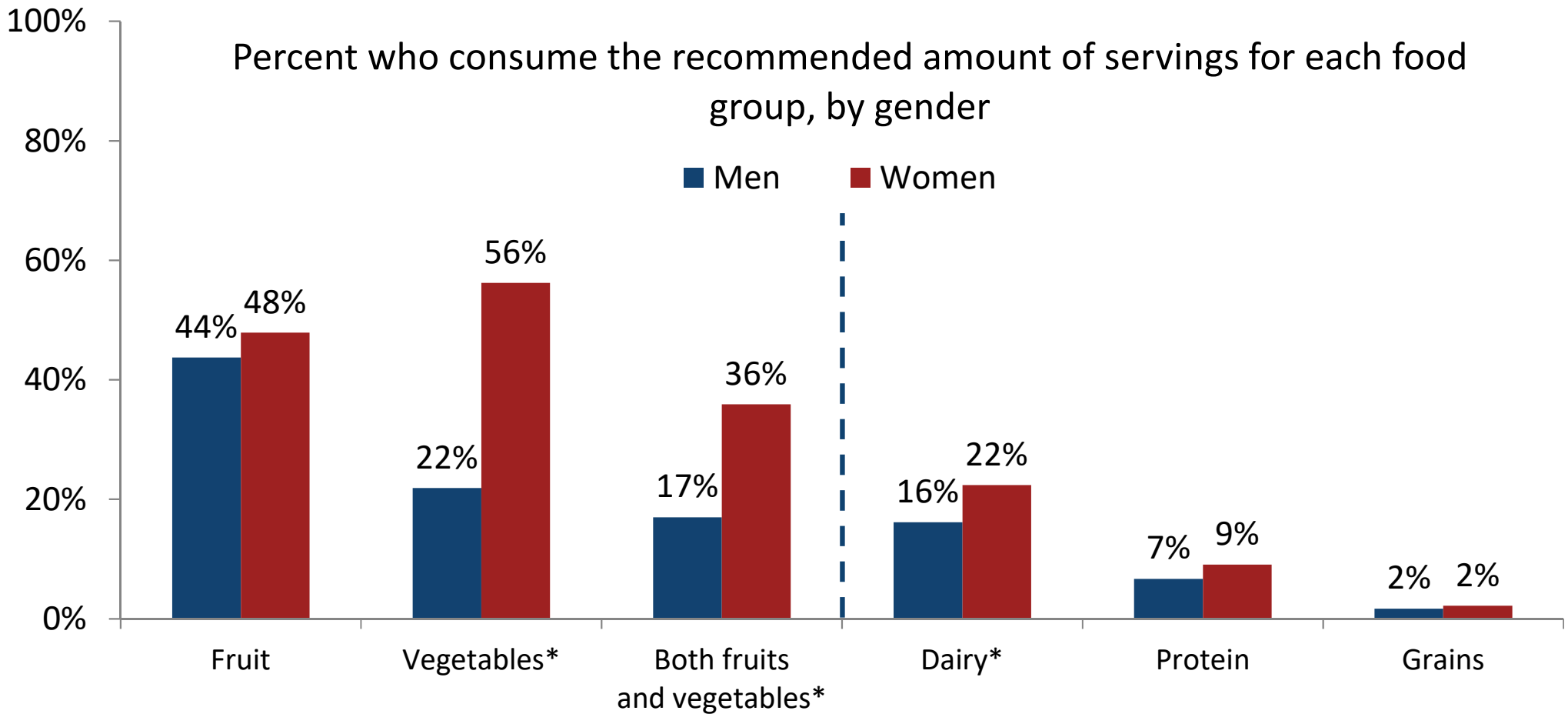


Food group	Percent who consumed no servings to six or more servings per day, by food group						
	None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six or more
Fruits	14%	40%	27%	13%	4%	1%	1%
Vegetables	7%	32%	35%	17%	5%	2%	2%
Grain foods	8%	33%	31%	18%	6%	2%	2%
Protein	1%	20%	34%	24%	10%	5%	6%
Dairy	10%	40%	30%	13%	3%	2%	2%

Q6 to Q10 About how many servings of [fruits, vegetables, grain foods, protein, dairy] do you eat in a typical day?

Note: Examples of servings were provided for each food group

More than twice as many women than men consume the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables combined and vegetables alone. Women are also more likely to consume the recommended amount of dairy foods.



\*Statistically significant difference.

The more servings of fruits/vegetables consumed in a typical day, the better the brain health, overall health, and mental well-being.

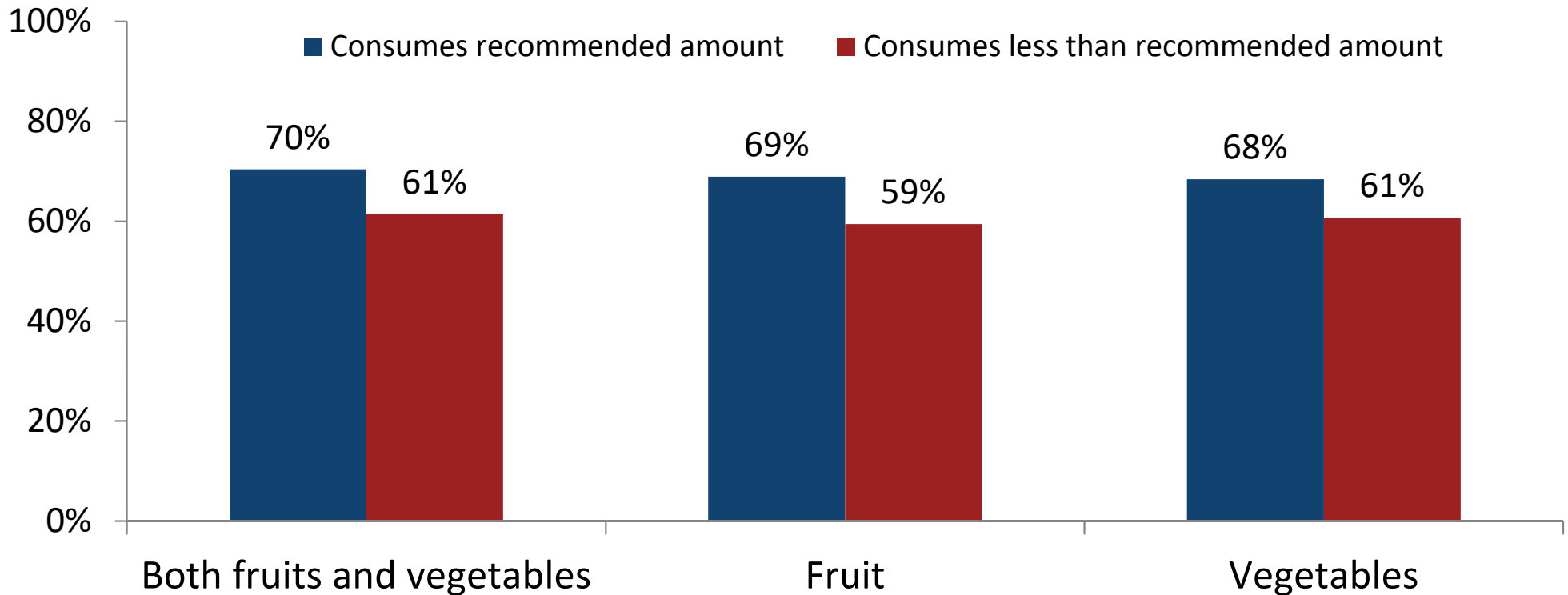
Number of servings in a typical day	Percent who rate their brain health “excellent” or “very good”		Percent who rate their overall health “excellent” or “very good”		Average mental well-being score	
	Fruit	Vegetables	Fruit	Vegetables	Fruit	Vegetables
None	56%	45%	37%	30%	49.6	47.2
One	60%	58%	43%	41%	52.0	50.8
Two	65%	68%	49%	51%	53.5	53.5
Three	72%	69%	55%	54%	54.4	54.6
Four or more	80%	73%	66%	56%	55.7	55.7
Overall	64%		47%		52.6	

Results are statistically significant.

Q6/Q7 About how many servings of (fruits/vegetables) do you eat in a typical day? (None, One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six or more)

Adults age 40 and older who eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables report better brain health.

### Percent who rate their brain health as “excellent” or “very good,” by the consumption of recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables



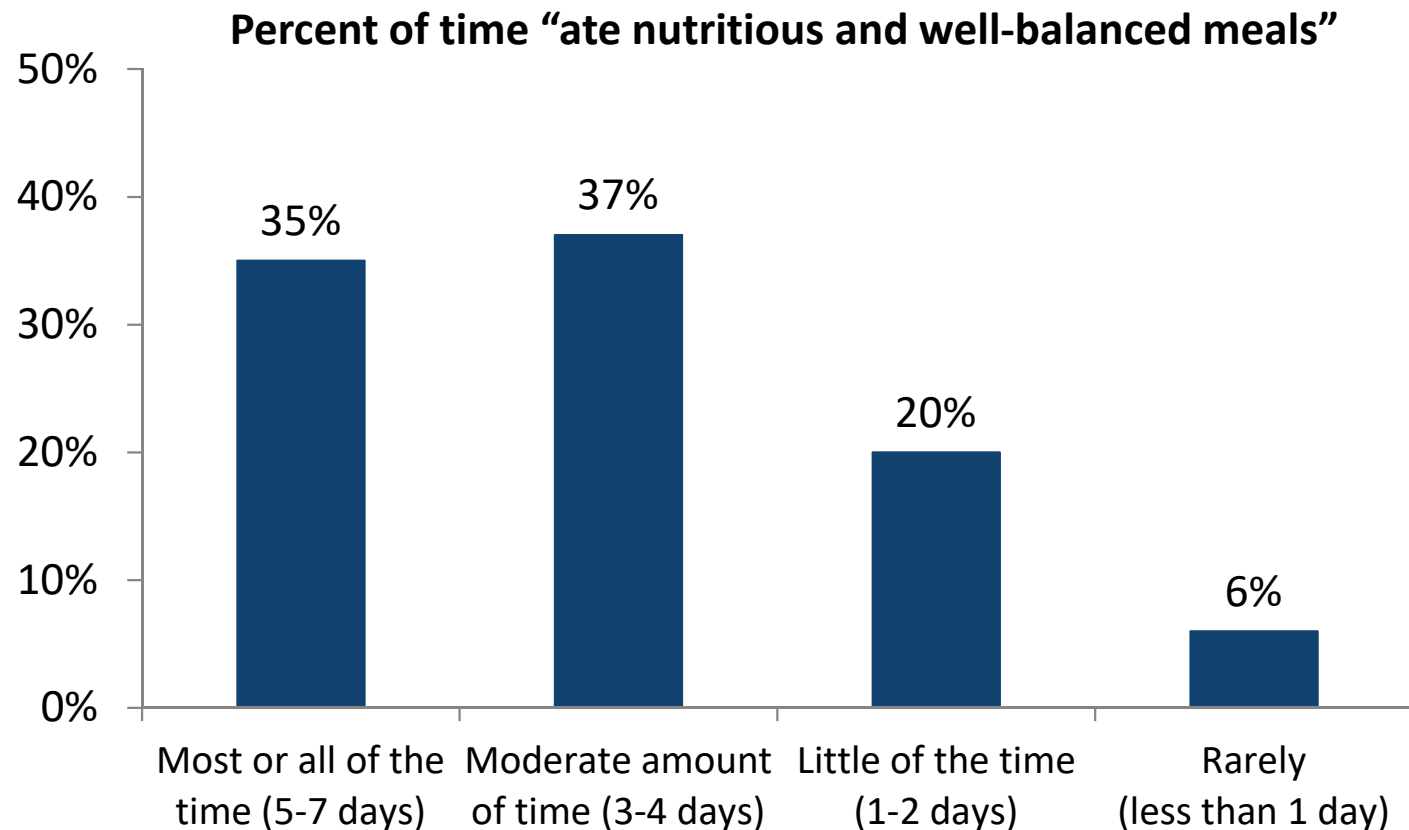
Q6/Q7 About how many servings of (fruits/vegetables) do you eat in a typical day? (None, One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six or more)

Results are statistically significant.



More than six in 10 (63%) adults age 40 and older eat poorly saying that they “ate nutritious and well-balanced meals” three or four days per week or less often. While about one-third (35%) ate nutritiously “most or all of the time,” significantly more adults age 65+ ate well.

Significantly more adults age 65 and older said they ate nutritiously 5-7 days per week compared to adults age 40-54 (44% vs. 28%).

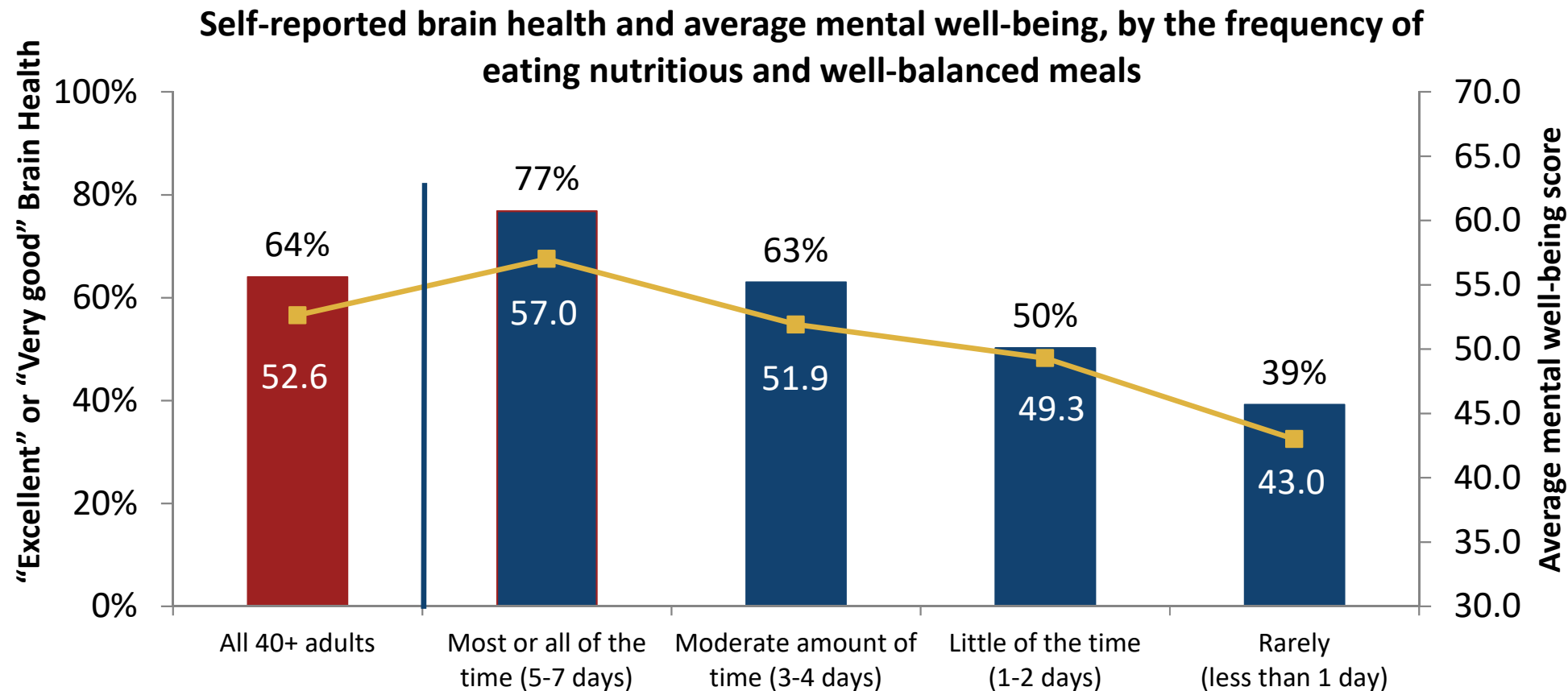


Q5 Below is a list of the ways you might have felt or behaved. How often did you do the following during the past week? I ate nutritious and well-balanced meals [Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day); Some or little of the time (1-2 days); Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days); Most or all of the time (5-7 days)]

Adults age 40-54 are less likely to report that they eat nutritious meals compared to adults age 65 and older. Relatedly, these younger adults are more likely to specify certain barriers to healthy eating. Interestingly, it is those who are age 65 and older who are more likely to think changing their diet will not make a difference.

Barriers to Healthy Eating	Percent who agree, by age		
	Age 40-54	Age 55-64	Age 65+
Eating healthy would be too expensive	44%	38%	27%
Family may not like the taste of healthy foods	35%	24%	23%
It's hard to eat a healthy diet	45%	34%	36%
I want to eat a healthy diet but there are no stores nearby that sell healthy foods	12%	9%	6%
Changing my diet will not make that much of a difference	14%	16%	22%

Adults age 40 and older who eat healthy most of the time are twice as likely to report their brain health as “excellent” or “very good” compared to those who rarely do (77% vs. 39%) and have significantly higher average mental well-being scores.



Q5 Below is a list of the ways you might have felt or behaved. How often did you do the following during the past week? I ate nutritious and well-balanced meals; I managed the stress in my life effectively; I exercised; I socialized with family, friends or others; I felt well-rested [Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day); Some or little of the time (1-2 days); Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days); Most or all of the time (5-7 days)]

# Selected Foods, Brain Health, and Mental Well-Being

Adults consume more red meat than the healthier option of fish/seafood in a typical week.

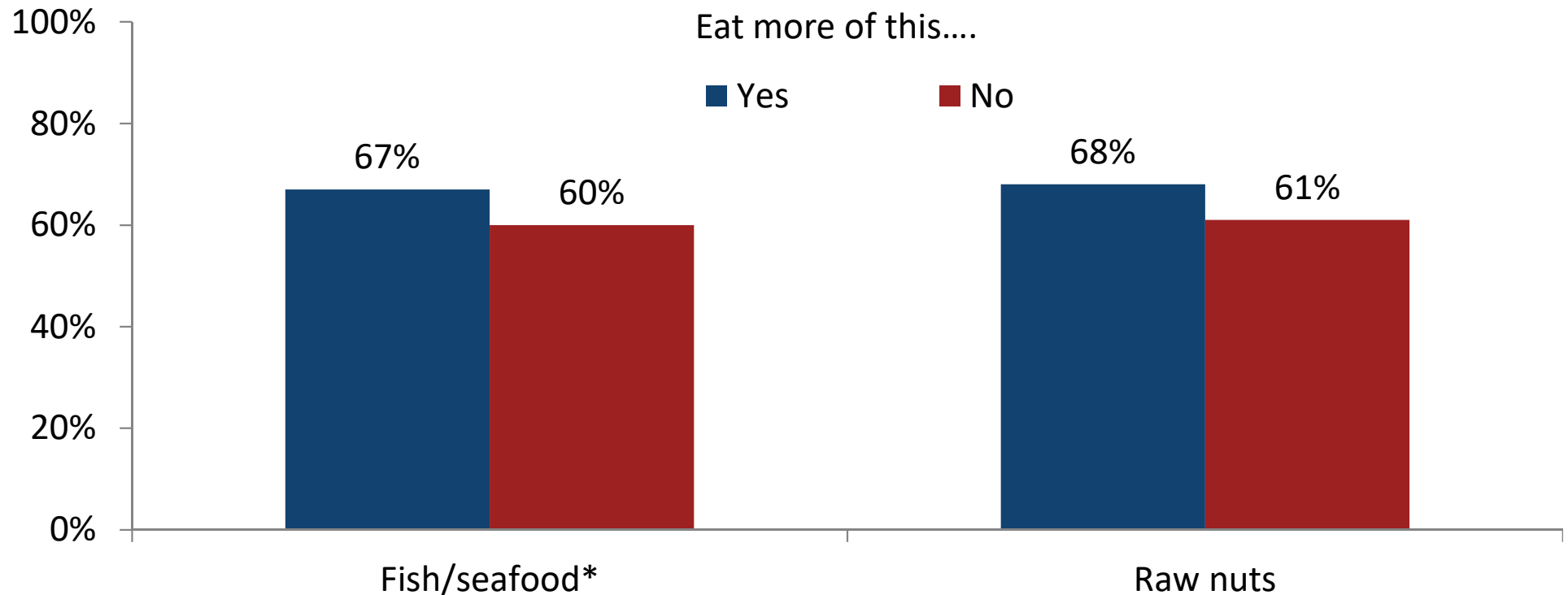
Type of food	% who consume in a typical week	% who consume 3+ days per week
<u>Healthy Foods</u>		
Any type of fish/seafood	52%	13%
Beans and legumes	51%	25%
Olive oil	50%	33%
Raw nuts	38%	23%
Berries	33%	20%
<u>Less Healthy Foods</u>		
Red meat	66%	33%
Desserts	50%	28%
Beverages with sugar	35%	22%
Prepared foods (e.g., frozen dinners, canned soups and stews, etc.)	32%	15%

Q13 In a typical week, do you consume any of the following?

Q13a How often do you consume each of the following in a typical week? Rarely (less than 1 day); Some or little of the time (1-2 days); Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days); Most or all of the time (5-7 days)

Adults age 40 and older who eat fish/seafood and raw nuts are significantly more likely to report better brain health.

**Percent who rate their brain health as “excellent” or “very good,” by the consumption of certain healthy foods in a typical week**

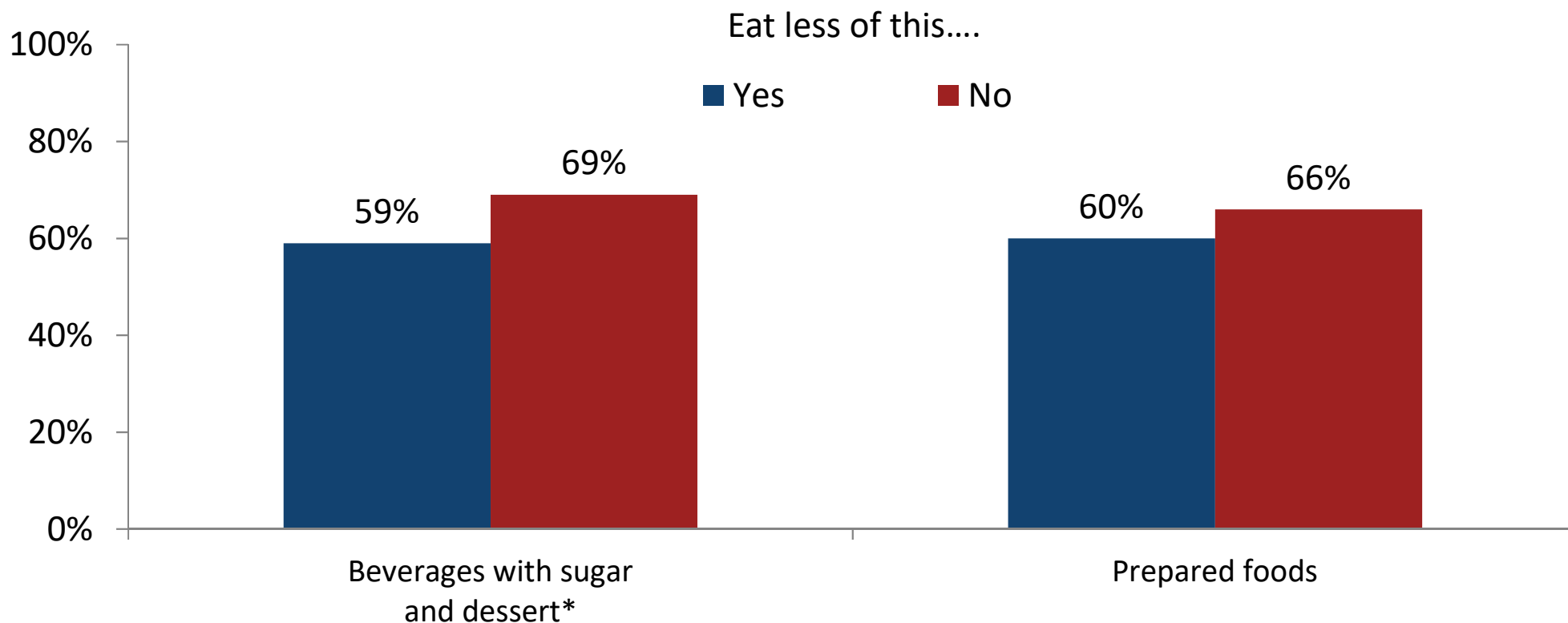


Q13 In a typical week, do you consume any of the following? (Shellfish; Dark-meat fish; Light-meat fish; Raw nuts)

\*Items were combined.

Adults age 40 and older who eat sugary drinks/desserts and prepared foods are significantly less likely to report that their brain health is “excellent” or “very good.”

### Percent who rate their brain health as “excellent” or “very good,” by the consumption of less-healthy foods in a typical week

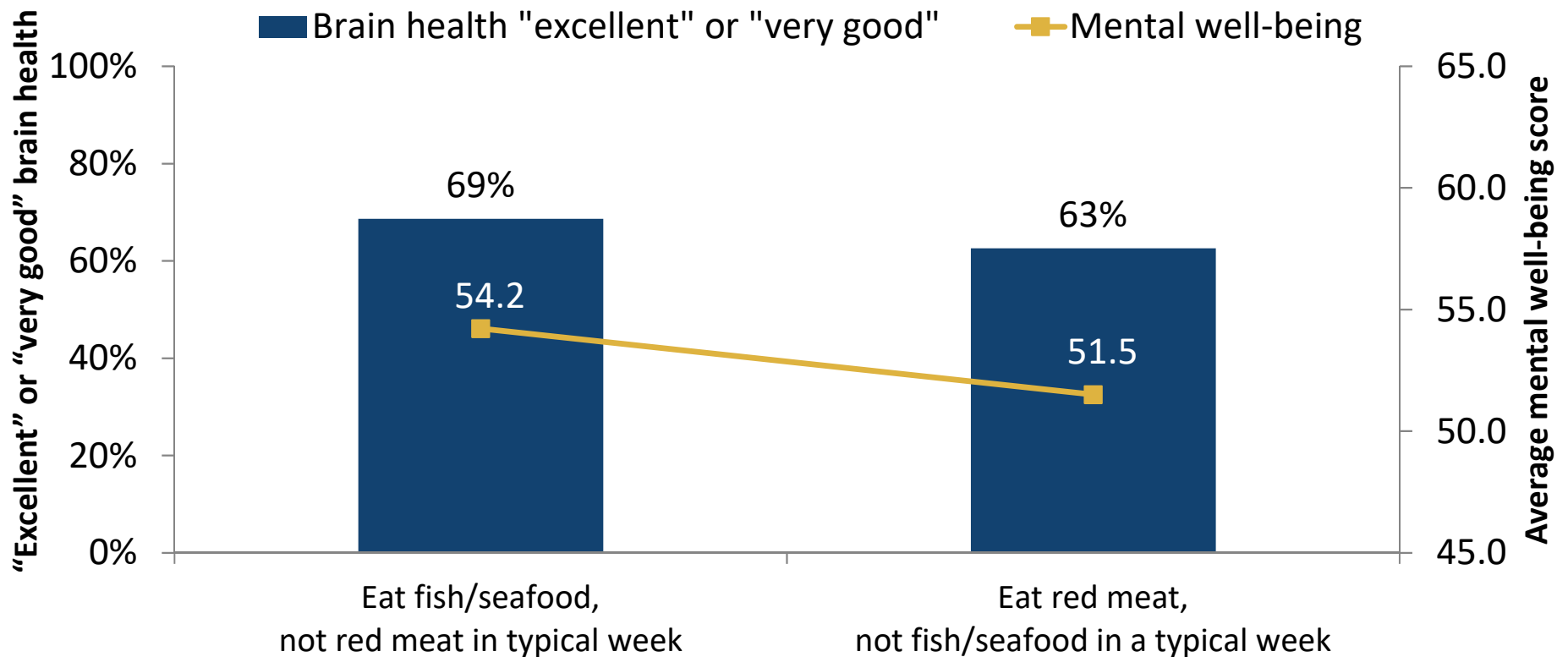


Q13 In a typical week, do you consume any of the following? (Beverages containing sugar; Desserts such as cakes, pies, cookies, pastries, or other sweets)

\*Items were combined.

Adults age 40 and older who eat fish/seafood in a typical week but not red meat report better brain health and higher average mental well-being scores compared to individuals who eat red meat but not fish/seafood in a typical week.

### Self-reported brain health and average mental well-being, by consumption of fish/seafood OR red meat in a typical week

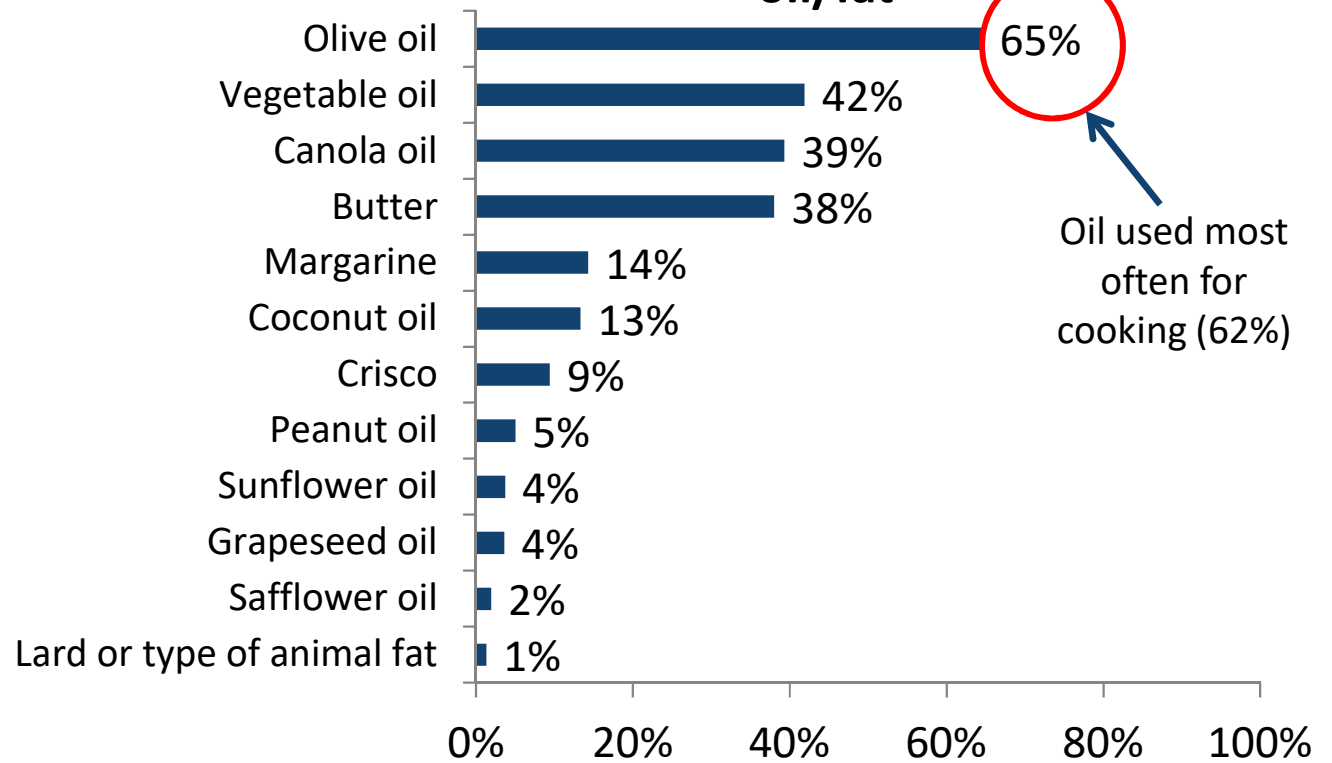




Olive oil, a healthy option, is used for cooking by nearly two-thirds (65%) of adults age 40+ and a majority use it most for cooking. Adults with higher annual incomes are more likely to use olive oil for cooking compared to those with lower incomes.

Three-quarters of adults with an annual income of \$75,000 or more use olive oil for cooking compared to half of those with an annual income of less than \$40,000 and six in 10 (62%) with an income between \$40,000 and \$74,999.

Percent who cook with each common type of oil/fat

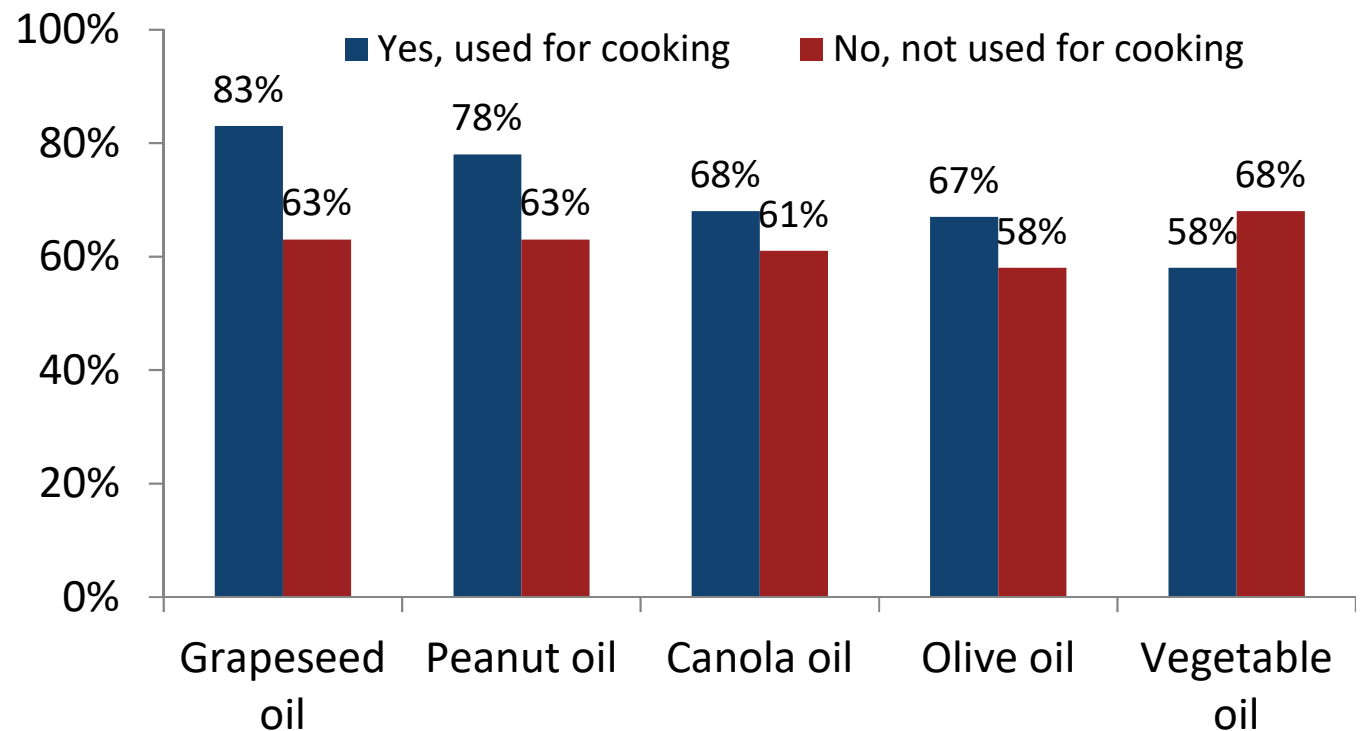


Q12 Which of the following types of oils do you use for cooking?

Q12a Of the types of oils you use for cooking, which do you use the most?

Those who use olive, grapeseed, peanut, or canola oil for cooking report better brain health. Those cooking with vegetable oil show the opposite with fewer reporting “excellent” or “very good” brain health.

Percent who rate their brain health as “excellent” or “very good,” by the type of oil used for cooking



Olive oil use:

- Two-thirds (65%) cook with it.
- Over six in 10 (62%) use it the most for cooking.
- Half (50%) consume it in a typical week.

Q12 Which of the following types of oils do you use for cooking?

Results are statistically significant.

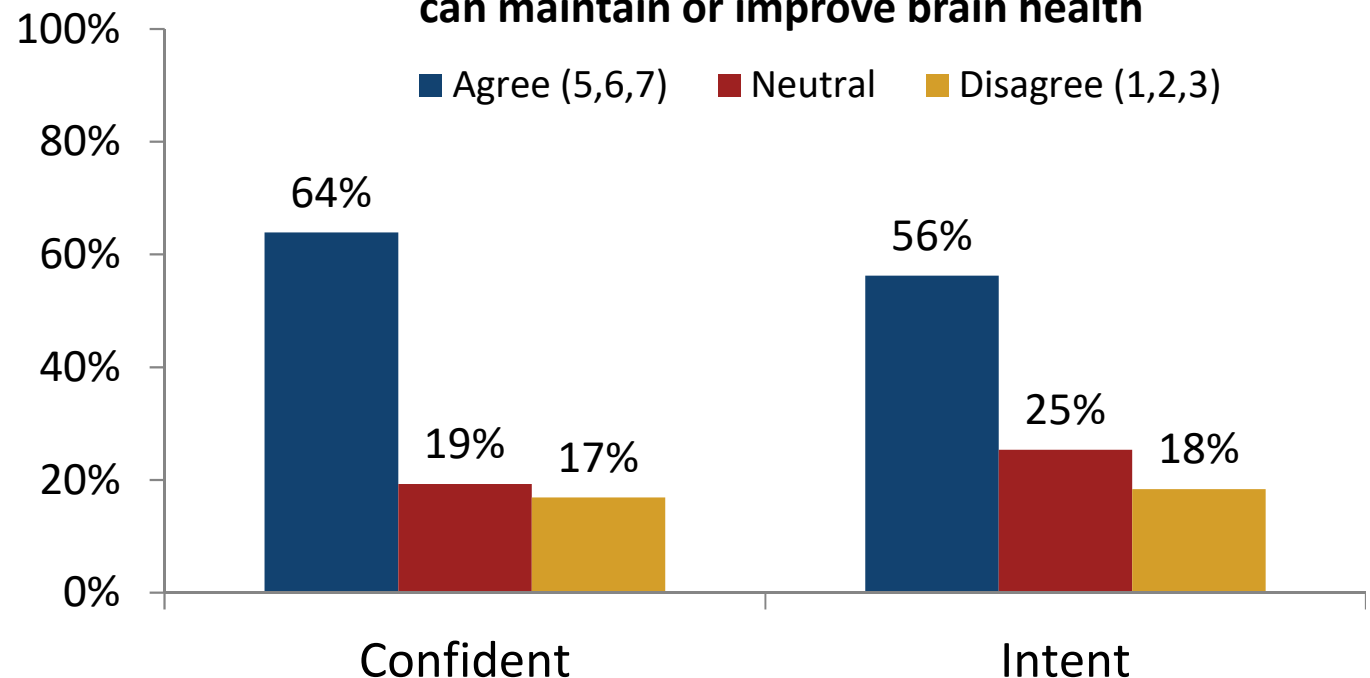
# Willingness to Change Eating Habits

A majority of adults age 40 and older are confident they can eat a healthier diet and intend to. Significantly more women than men agree.

Significant differences were noted by gender and race/ethnicity:

- Women (67%) were more confident than men (60%) they can eat a healthy diet and more women intend to do so (61% vs. 51%).
- More Hispanic/Latino adults agreed they intend to make healthy eating part of their regular routine compared to the general population (66% vs. 56%).

Percent who are confident they can eat a healthier diet and intend to do so based on knowledge that it can maintain or improve brain health



Q21/25 Suppose you found out that eating a healthy, well-balanced diet could help you maintain or improve your brain health. Knowing this, please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements: (a) I am confident I can eat a healthier, well-balanced diet. (b) I intend to make eating a healthy, well-balanced diet part of my regular routine. (7-point scale where 1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Adults age 40 and older who are confident they can eat a healthy diet and intend to do so are significantly more likely to report their brain health and overall health as “excellent” or “very good” and they also have higher average mental well-being scores.

### Confidence

Individuals who are confident they can eat a healthy diet compared to those who are not confident are more likely to report:

- “Excellent” or “very good” brain health (68% vs. 57%)
- “Excellent” or “very good” overall health (54% vs. 38%)
- Higher average mental well-being scores (54.1 vs. 50.1)

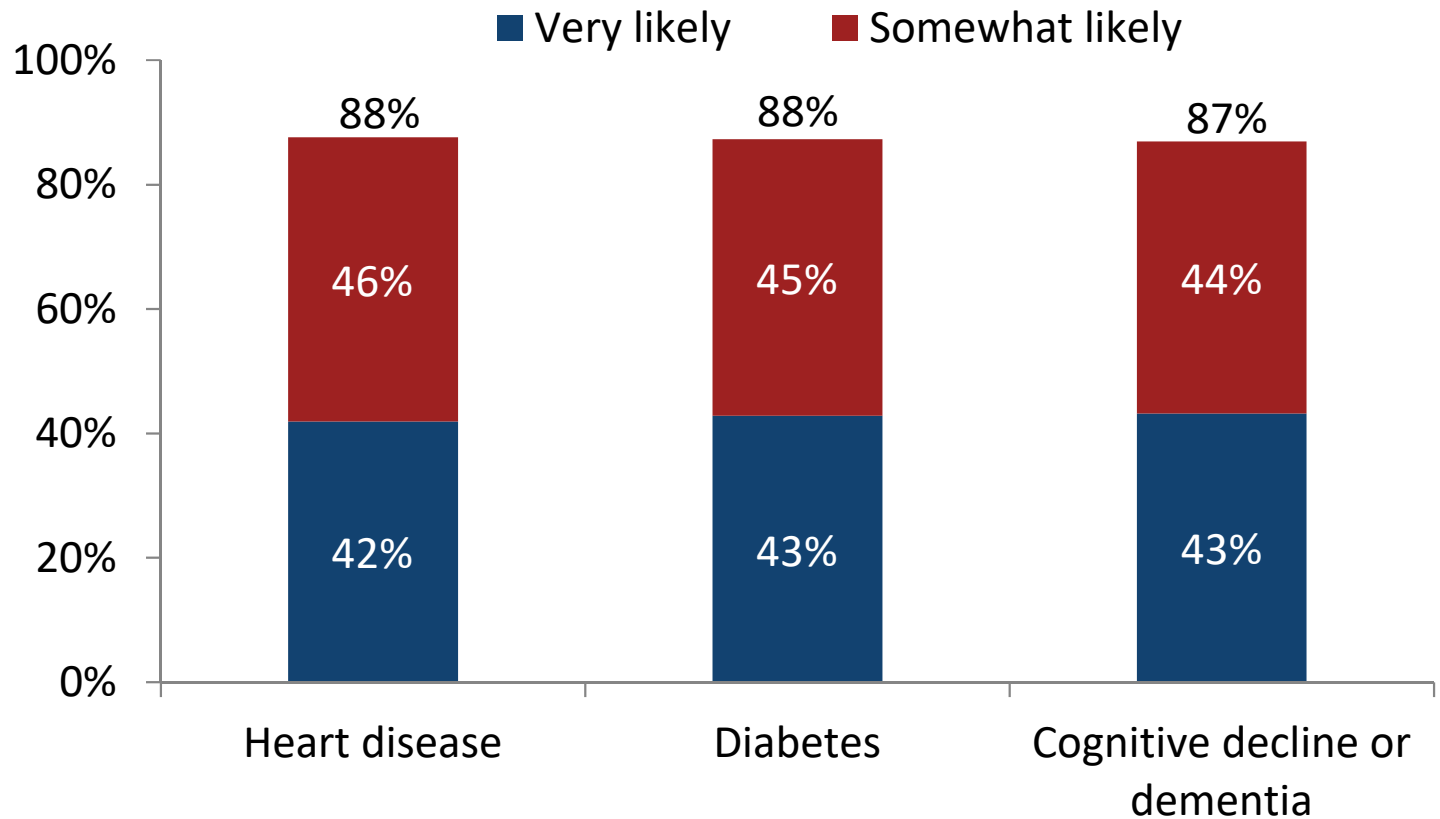
### Intent

Individuals who intend to eat a healthy diet compared to those who do not are more likely to report:

- “Excellent” or “very good” brain health (70% vs. 58%)
- “Excellent” or “very good” overall health (54% vs. 39%)
- Higher average mental well-being scores (54.5 vs. 49.5)

Nearly nine in 10 adults age 40+ said they would eat a healthier diet if they were aware it would reduce their risk of heart disease, diabetes, and cognitive decline/dementia. Interestingly, fewer adults who have heart disease say they are likely to change their diet.

**Percent who say they are likely to alter their diet to reduce their risk of...**

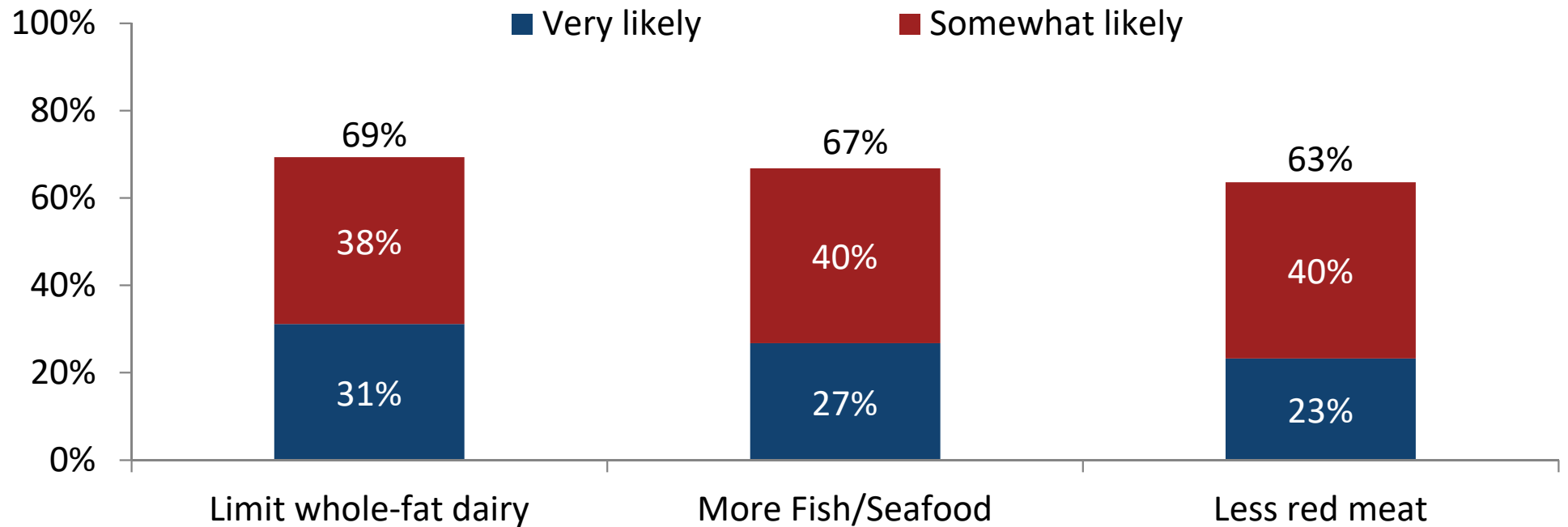


A small but significant difference was seen in adults with heart disease: Fewer said they are likely to change their diet (83% vs. 89%).

Q17-Q19 If you were aware that eating a healthy diet may reduce your risk of [cognitive decline/dementia, heart disease, diabetes], how likely would you be to do it? Very likely, Somewhat likely, Not very likely, Not at all likely

A majority of adults age 40+ said they would be likely to make specific dietary changes because it is good for their brain health.

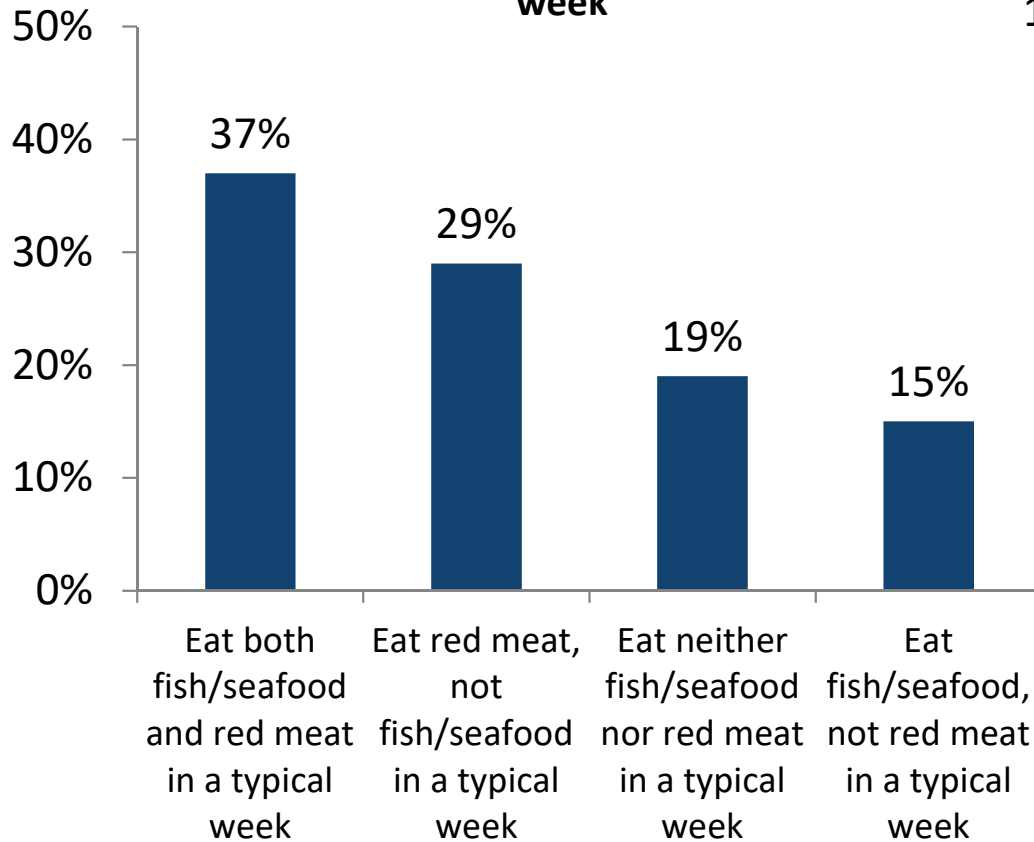
**Percent who say they are likely to alter their diets in specific ways because it's better for their brain health**



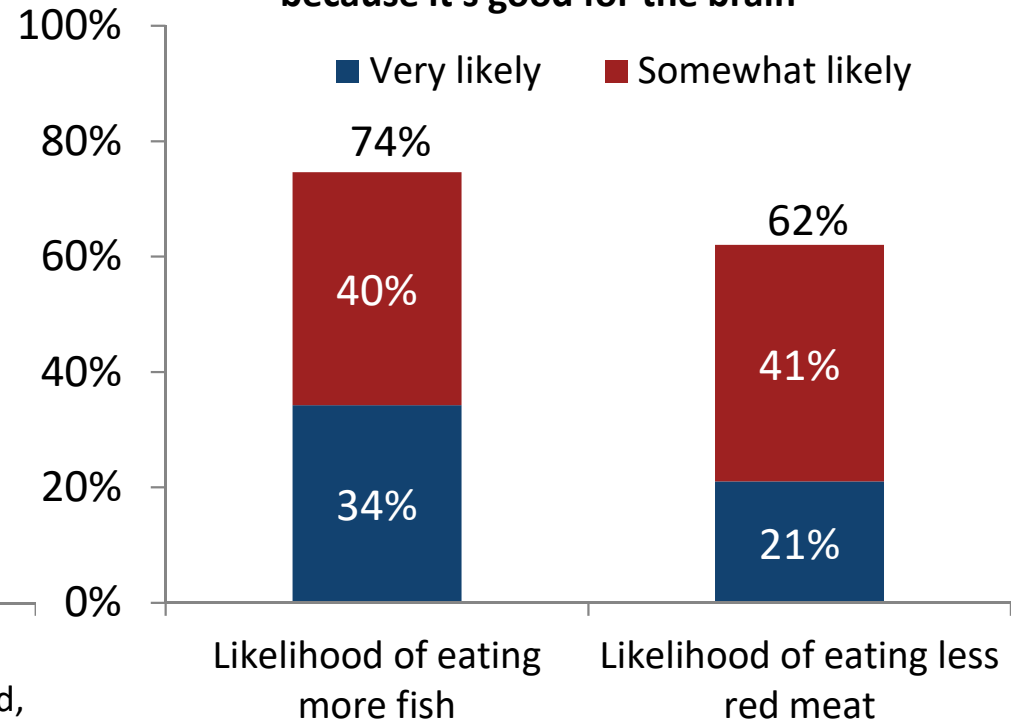
Q14 If you were aware that eating fish/seafood is good for your brain health, how likely would you be to increase the amount of fish/seafood in your diet? Q15 If you were aware eating less red meat is better for your brain health, how likely would be to limit the amount of red meat in your diet? Q16 If you were aware eating low-fat dairy is better for your brain health than whole-fat dairy, how likely would you be to limit the amount of whole-fat dairy in your diet?

When it comes to eating red meat and fish/seafood, nearly four in 10 (37%) adults age 40 and older eat both, which represents the largest share of adults. A majority of these individuals said they are likely to modify their consumption of fish/seafood and red meat because it's good for the brain.

**Percent who eat fish/seafood and/or red meat in a typical week or eat neither in a typical week**



**For adults who eat BOTH fish/seafood and red meat, likelihood of changing behavior because it's good for the brain\***

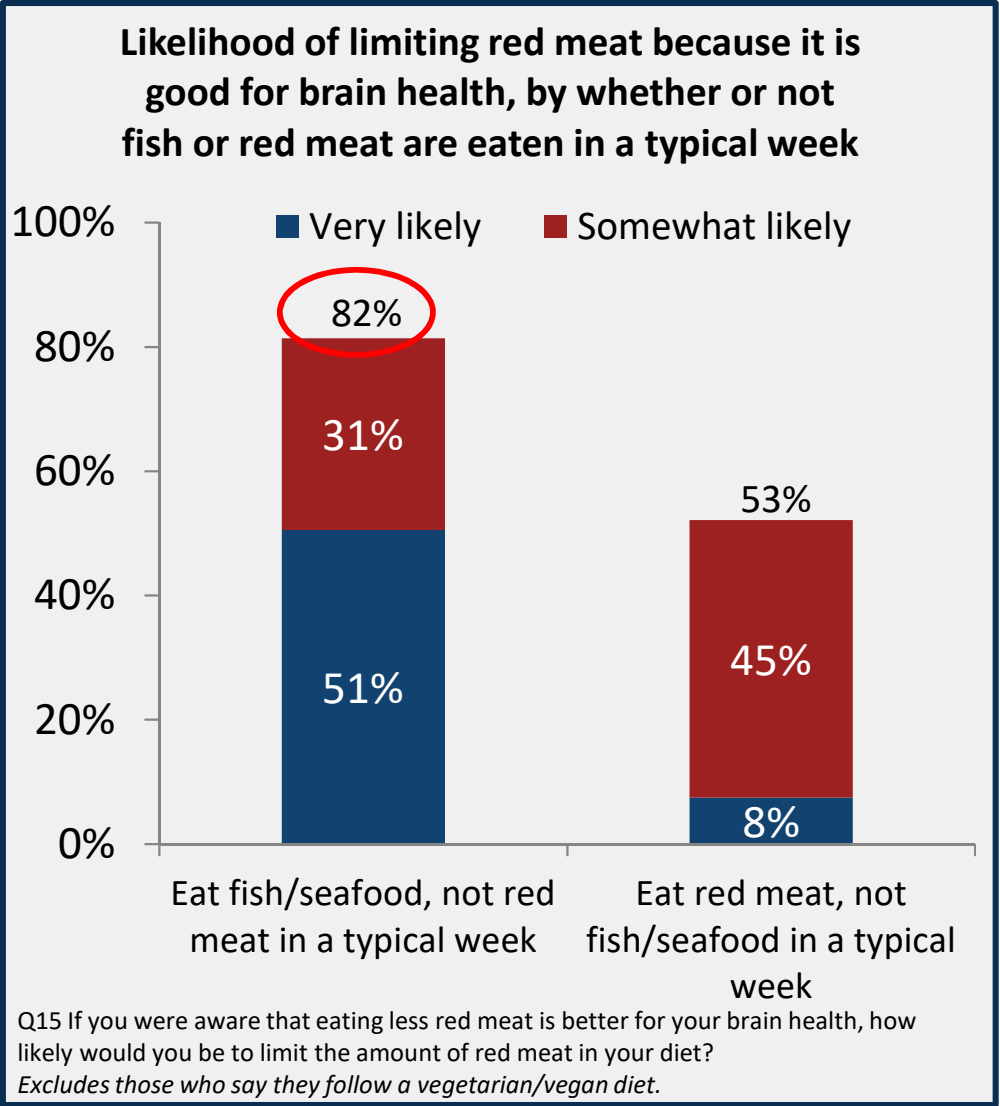
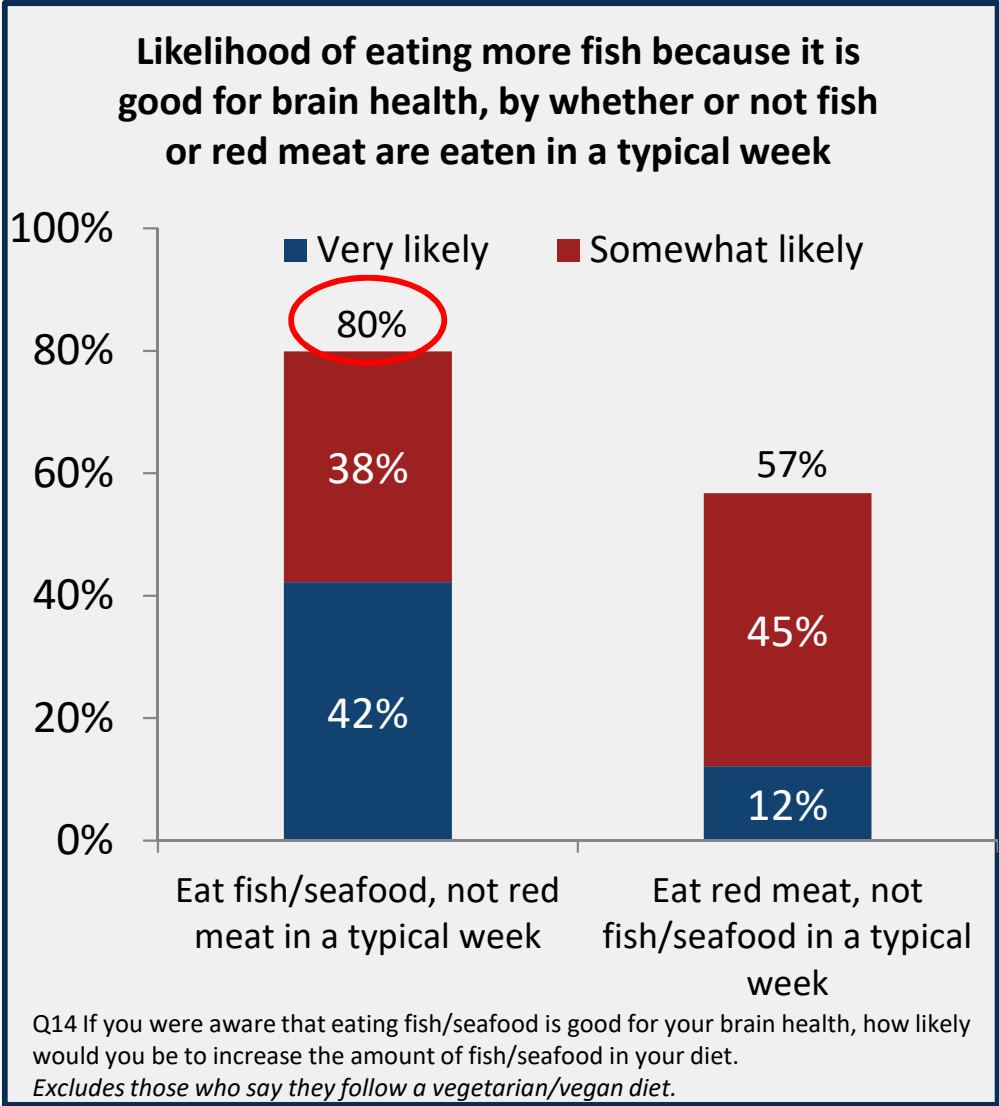


Q14 If you were aware that eating fish/seafood is good for your brain health, how likely would you be to increase the amount of fish/seafood in your diet.  
 Q15 If you were aware that eating less red meat is better for your brain health, how likely would you be to limit the amount of red meat in your diet?  
 \*Excludes those who say they follow a vegetarian/vegan diet.

Q13 In a typical week, do you consume any of the following?

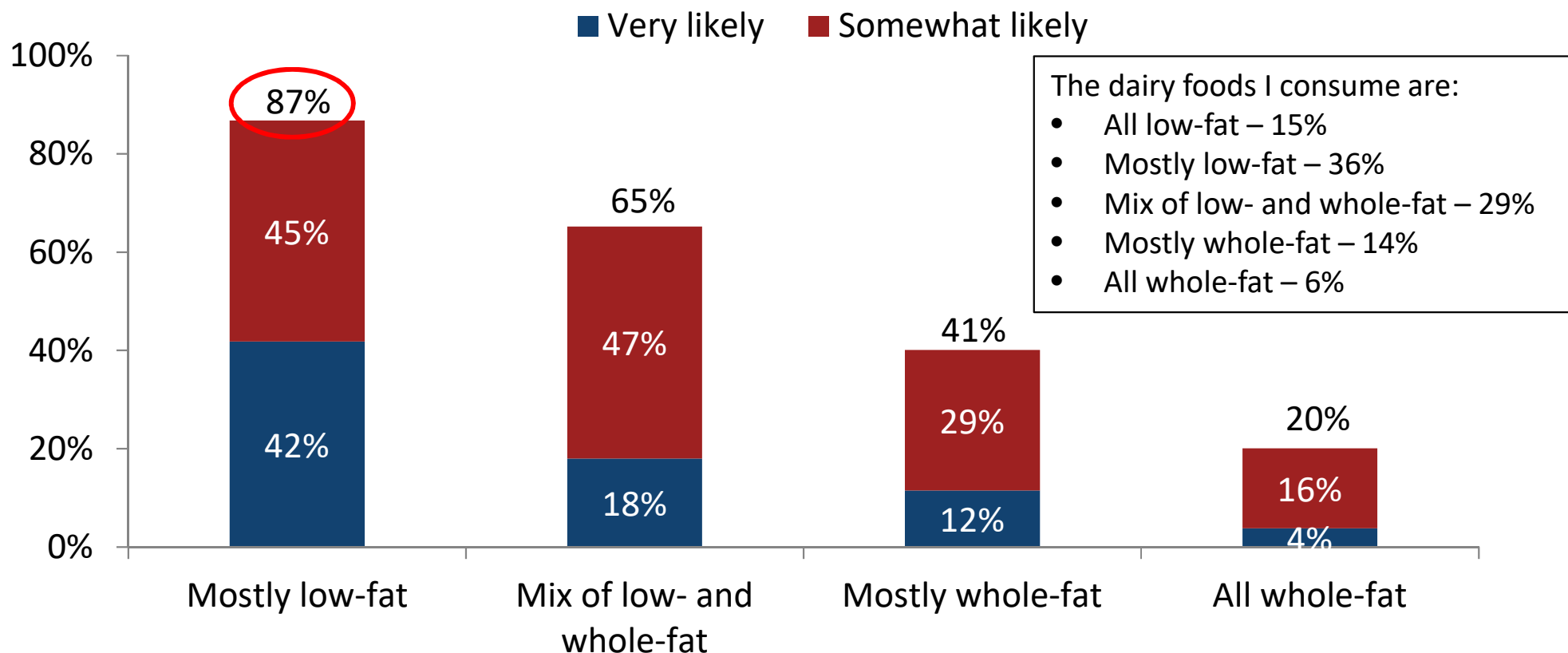


Individuals who already consume the healthier option of fish/seafood and exclude red meat (15% of adults age 40 and older) are significantly more likely to opt for dietary changes that are better for brain health compared to those who eat only red meat and not fish/seafood (29% of adults).



Adults age 40 and older who are already choosing healthier, low-fat dairy options are much more likely to say they would be willing to limit the amount of whole-fat dairy in their diets even further.

**Likelihood of limiting whole-fat dairy because it is good for brain health, by the proportion of low- and whole-fat dairy consumed in a typical day\***



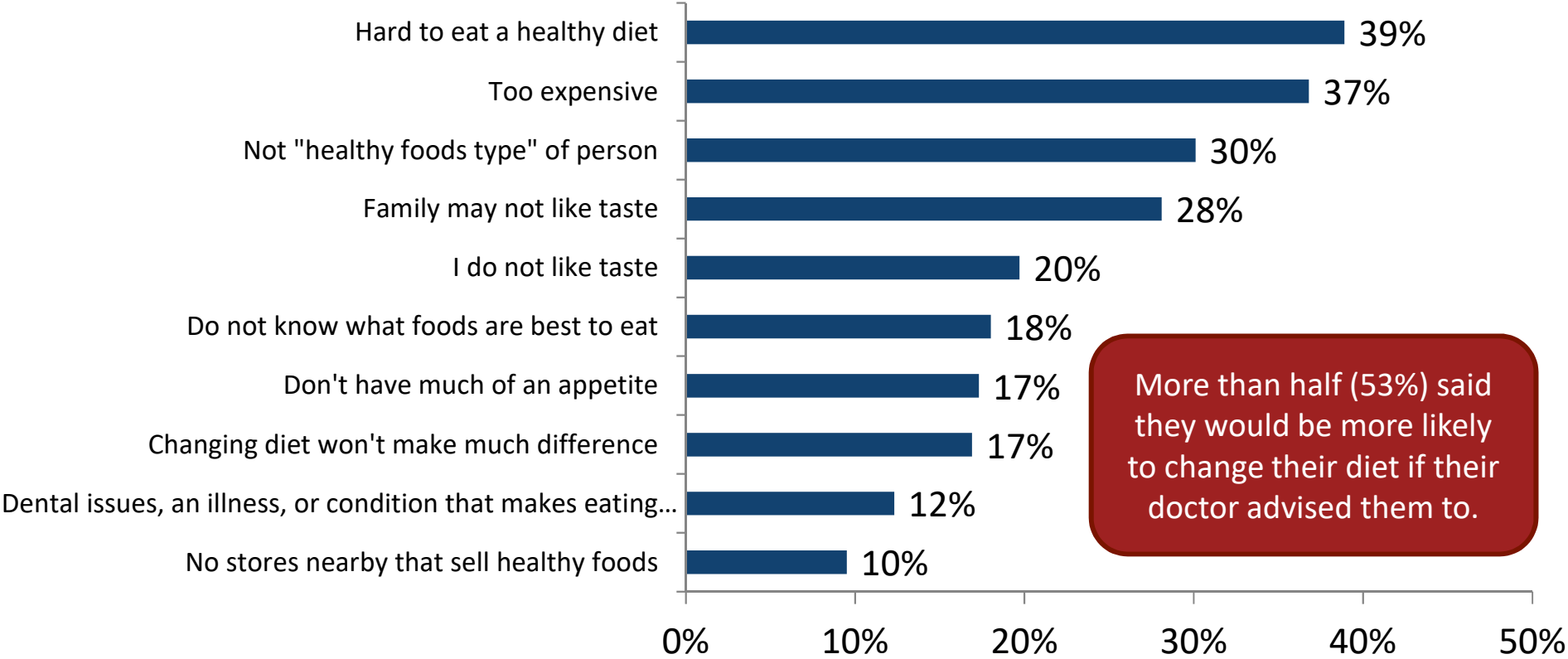
Q16 If you were aware that eating low-fat dairy is better for your brain health than whole-fat dairy, how likely would you be to limit the amount of whole-fat dairy in your diet?

\*Excluding those who do not eat dairy in a typical day.

# Barriers to Healthy Eating

The top barriers to eating a healthy diet are: the difficulty, the expense, individual identity (not a “healthy foods type” of person), and the taste. A majority said they would change their diet if their doctor made a recommendation.

**Percent who agree with each of the following barriers to eating a healthy diet**



More than half (53%) said they would be more likely to change their diet if their doctor advised them to.

Q23 Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. (7-point scale: 1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Adults age 40 and older who do not consume the recommended daily amount of fruits and vegetables are significantly more likely to agree with barriers to healthy eating. There is an especially large difference for those who say they are not a “healthy foods” type of person.

Barriers	Percent who agree with selected barriers to healthy eating by whether or not they consume the recommended amount of fruits and vegetable servings in a typical day			
	Fruit		Vegetables	
	% who eat too little	% who eat the recommended amount	% who eat too little	% who eat the recommended amount
Hard to eat healthy	44%	33%	44%	31%
Eating healthy would be too expensive	40%	32%	40%	32%
Not a “healthy foods” type of person	38%	20%	39%	17%
Family will not like the taste	30%*	26%*	31%	24%
Do not like the taste	24%	15%	25%	13%
Do not know what to eat	23%	13%	21%	13%

\*Not statistically significant.

Differences were noted by selected demographic characteristics for the barriers to healthy eating; in particular Hispanic/Latino adults were more likely to cite certain barriers.

Eating healthy would be too expensive (36%)

- ✓ Hispanic/Latino adults (44%), younger adults (43%) compared to older adults (27%), and lower-income adults (47%) compared to higher income adults (28%) cited cost as a barrier.

It's hard to eat a healthy diet: 38%

- ✓ Younger adults (44%) were more likely to cite the difficulty of eating healthy as a barrier compared to adults who are older (55-64: 33%, 65+: 35%).

I do not know what is best to eat: 18%

- ✓ Hispanic/Latino adults (29%) compared to the general population and lower income adults (24%) compared to higher income adults (13%) were more likely to cite lack of information as a barrier.

If my doctor told me to change my diet, I'd be more likely to do it: 51%

- ✓ Hispanic/Latino adults (61%) compared to the general population and older adults (56%) compared to younger adults (55-64: 51%; 40-54: 48%) were more likely to say their doctor would influence them.

I want to eat healthy but there are no stores nearby that sell healthy foods: 9%

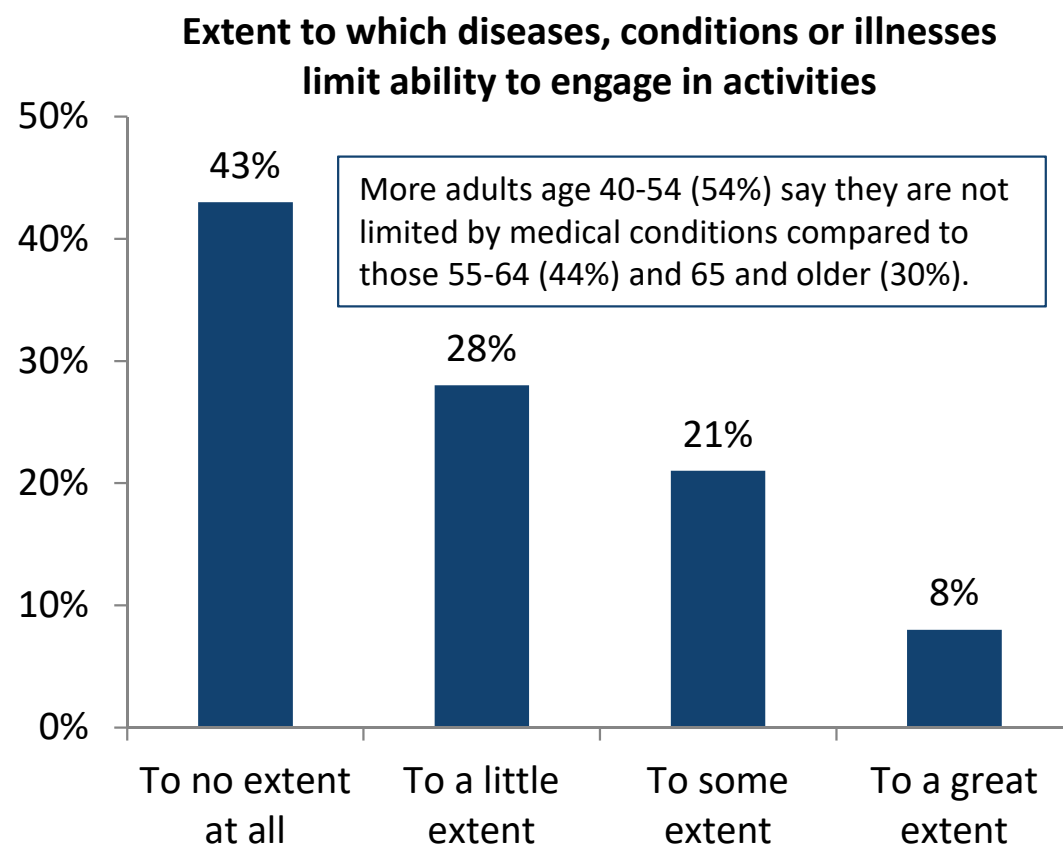
- ✓ Hispanic/Latino (18%) and African American/Black (14%) adults compared to the general population were more likely to cite location as a barrier as were lower-income compare to higher income adults (13% vs. 6%).

\*Age groups: 40-54, 55-64, & 65+. Income groups: Less than \$40,000, \$40,000-\$74,500, \$75,000+.

# Health Status

Four in 10 (43%) adults age 40 and older say their activities are not limited at all by diseases, conditions, or illnesses. Individuals with no limitations on their activities have significantly higher average mental well-being scores and are significantly more likely to say their brain health is “excellent” or “very good.”

Extent that diseases limit activity	Outcome measures	
	% who rate brain health “excellent” or “very good”	Average mental well-being score
To no extent at all	74%	55.0
To a little extent	61%	52.2
To some extent	51%	50.1
To a great extent	49%	47.5
Overall	64%	52.6

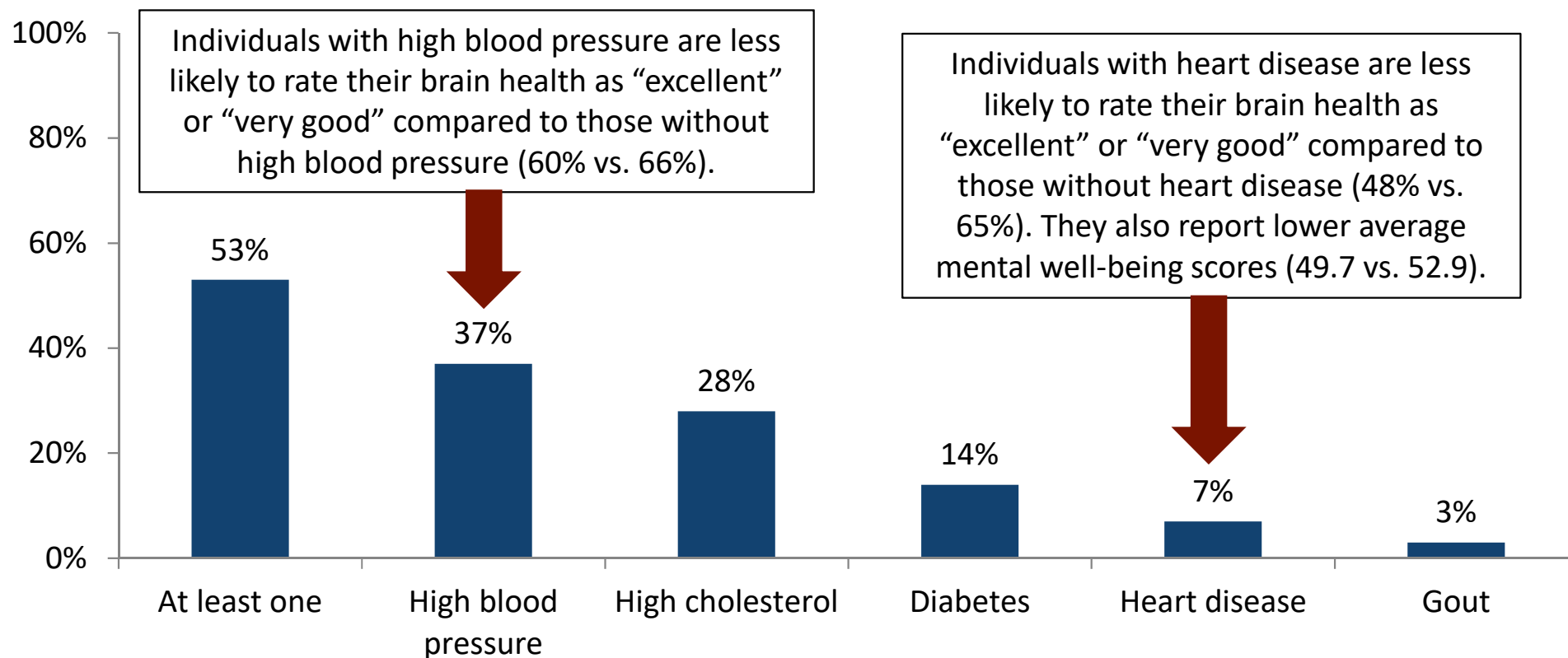


Q3 To what extent do diseases, conditions, or illnesses limit your ability to engage in activities you would like to do (i.e., physical activity, socializing, shopping, doing yard work, etc.)



A majority of adults (53%) age 40 and older suffer from at least one of the following conditions: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, or gout. Those with heart disease rate their brain health and mental well-being lower and those with high blood pressure rate their brain health lower.

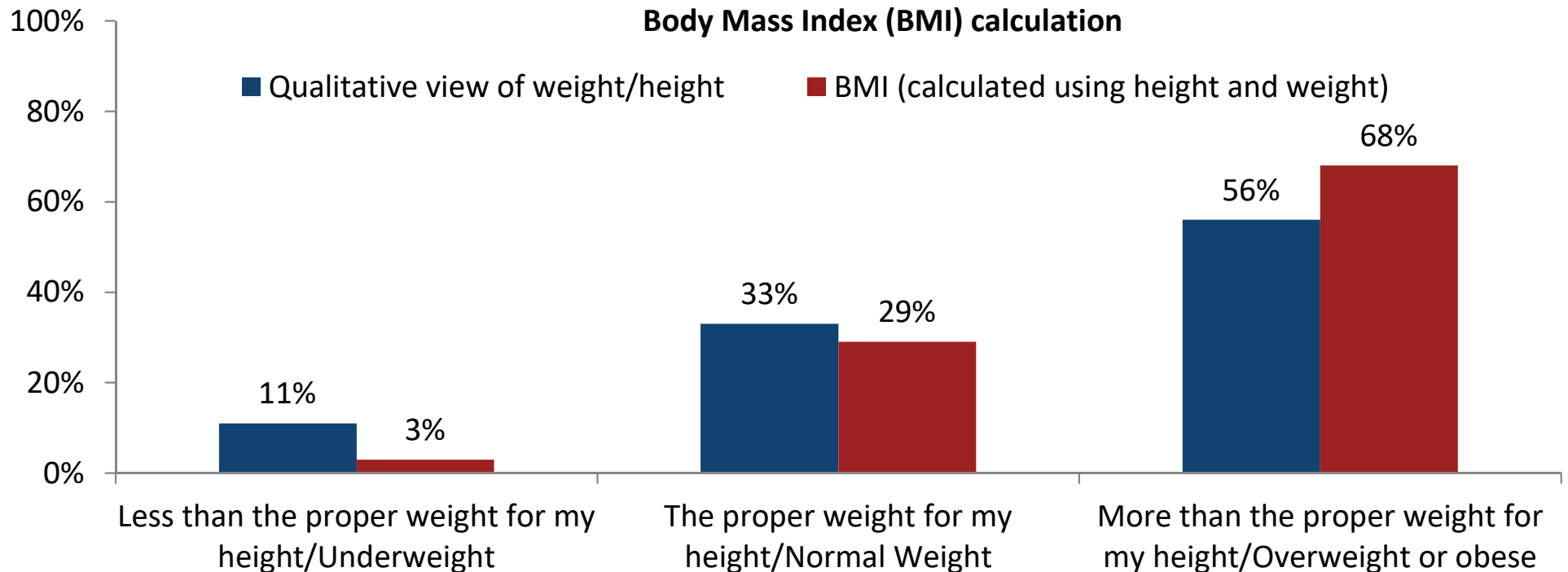
### Percent who report selected health conditions



Q4 Do you currently have any of the following conditions or illnesses?

A discrepancy exists between adults' subjective view of their weight and their objective weight based on their Body Mass Index (BMI). About half (55%) consider themselves to weigh more than they should but two-thirds (68%) are actually overweight or obese.

Comparison between self-assessment of weight relative to height and Body Mass Index (BMI) calculation



Q28 Which sounds most like your view of your weight relative to your height?

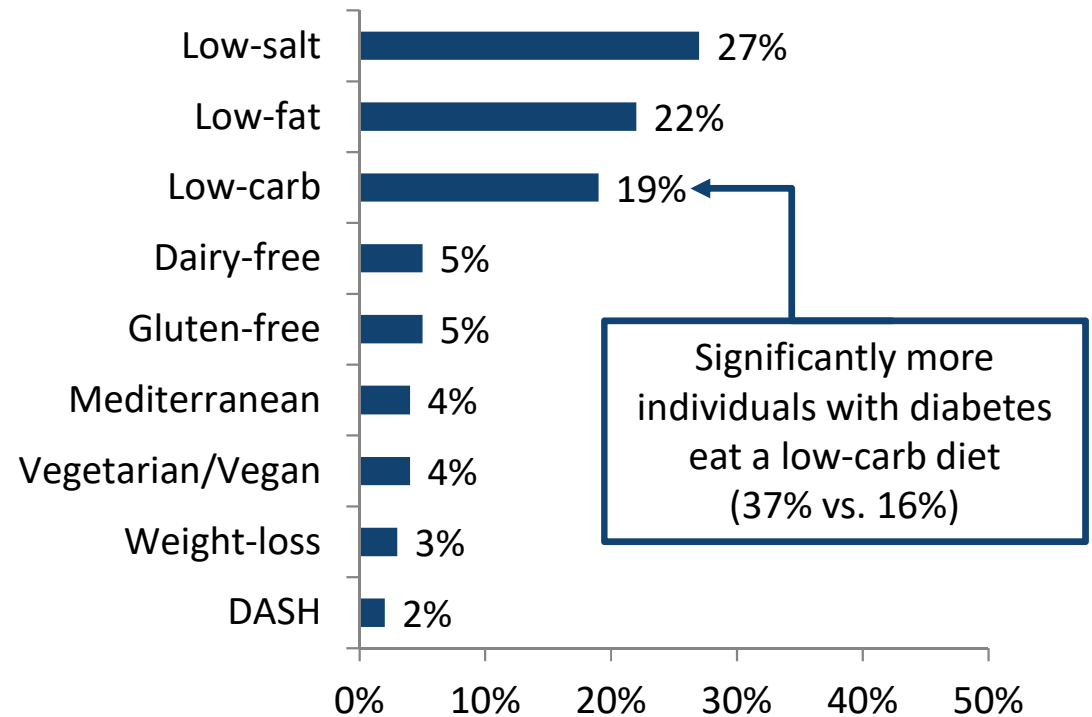
Q28a What is your height (feet, inches)?

Q28b What is your weight (pounds)?

Relatively few adults age 40 and older follow special nutrition plans. However, significantly more adults with heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and high cholesterol follow a low-salt diet.

Health concern	Percent who eat a low-salt diet, by whether or not they have a specific health concern	
	Yes	No
Heart disease	43%	26%
High blood pressure	40%	20%
Diabetes	37%	26%
High cholesterol	35%	24%

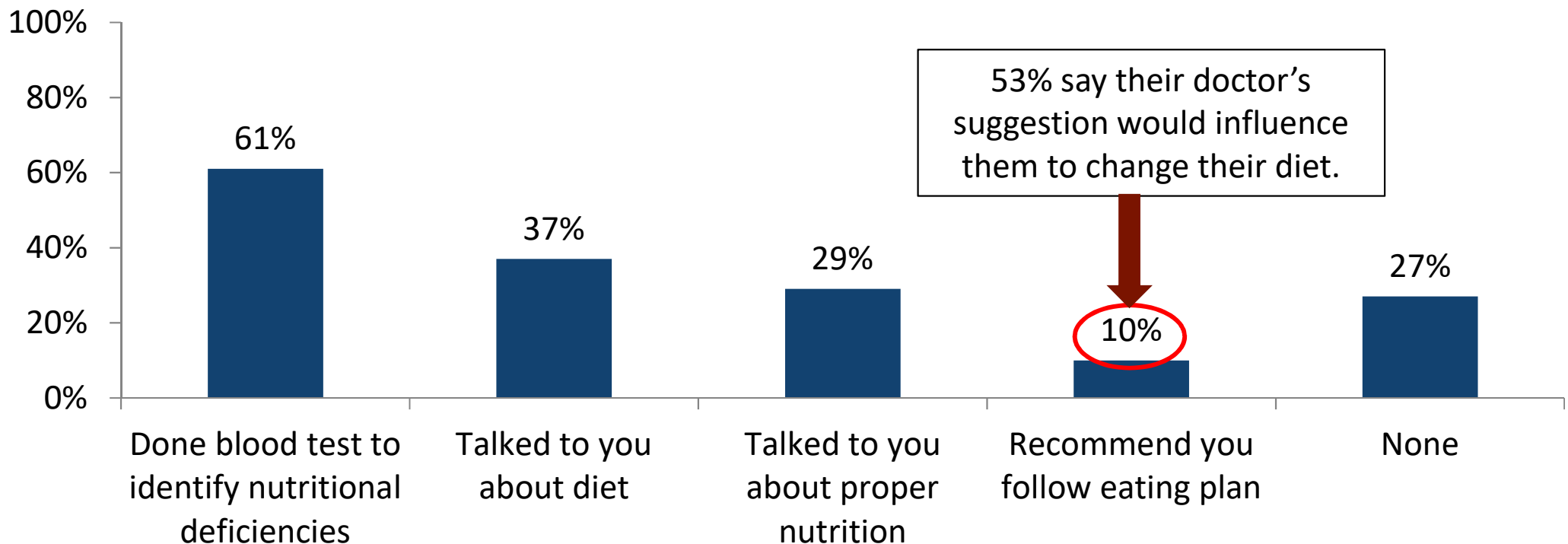
Percent who follow specific nutrition plans



Q20 Which of the following, if any, nutrition plans do you currently follow?

Relatively few doctors discuss diet and proper nutrition with their patients and even fewer have recommended they follow an eating plan. More than half of adults (53%) agree that if their doctor told them to change their diet, they would be more likely to do it.

### Percent whose doctor has done any of the following...



Q23 Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements: If my doctor told me to change my diet, I'd be more likely to do it.  
Q27 Thinking about your visits to see your doctor or your primary health care provider, have they ever done any of the following?

Obese adults are more likely to say their doctors talk to them about diet (51%) and nutrition (35%). Very few (14%) say their doctor has recommended they follow a special eating plan. Because obesity is associated with many adverse health outcomes, this suggests that not enough doctors are addressing this issue.

BMI classification* (%)	% who say their doctor has...		
	Talked to them about their diet	Talked to them about proper nutrition	Recommended they follow a special eating plan
Underweight (3%)	26%	27%	11%
Normal weight (29%)	24%	25%	7%
Overweight (33%)	36%	27%	8%
Obese (35%)	51%	35%	14%

\*BMI classification: Underweight – Less than 18.5; Normal weight – 18.5-24.9; Overweight – 25-29.9; Obese – 30 and over

Q27 Thinking about your visits to see your doctor or your primary health care provider, have they ever done any of the following? Talked to you about your diet; Talked to you about proper nutrition; Recommended you follow a special eating plan.

Underweight and obese adults share several similar barriers to healthy eating compared to normal weight and overweight adults. However, obese adults are much more likely than other adults to feel that eating a healthy diet is too expensive, difficult, and they are not a “healthy foods” type of person.

Barrier to healthy eating	% who agree with each barrier to healthy eating by BMI classification			
	Underweight	Normal weight	Overweight	Obese
Family may not like the taste of healthy foods	42%	21%	25%	35%
It is hard to eat a healthy diet	38%	30%	38%	48%
Eating healthy would be too expensive	35%	30%	35%	45%
Do not know what foods are best to eat	24%	18%	17%	20%
I am not a “healthy foods” type of person	19%	23%	31%	35%
Do not like the taste of healthy foods	11%	18%	20%	21%

\*BMI classification: Underweight – Less than 18.5; Normal weight – 18.5-24.9; Overweight – 25-29.9; Obese – 30 and over

Q23 Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. (7-point scale: 1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)