

Eating More; Enjoying Less

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- About six-in-ten Americans say they eat more than they should
- Enjoyment of eating is down most among the overweight
- Enjoyment of cooking has held steady
- Men and women now enjoy cooking about equally

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PewResearchCenter
A Social Trends Report

Eating More; Enjoying Less

Americans are eating more but enjoying it less. Just 39% of adults in the latest Pew Research Center survey say they enjoy eating “a great deal,” down from the 48% who said the same in a Gallup survey in 1989.

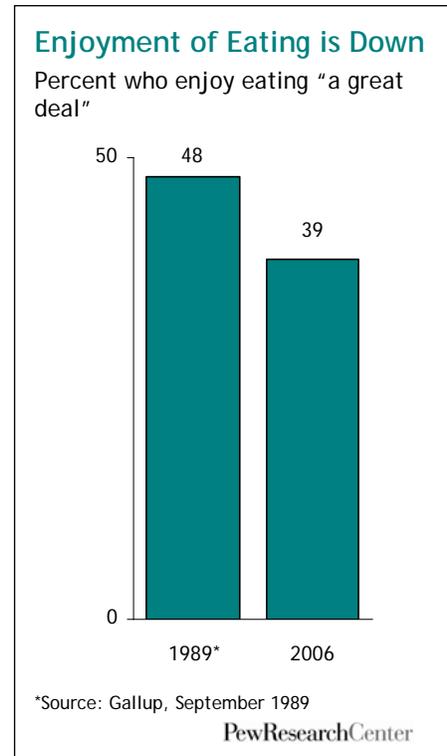
The decline in enjoyment of eating has been greater among those who consider themselves “overweight” than among those who consider themselves “just about the right weight.”

The Pew survey also finds that about six-in-ten Americans say they eat more than they should, either often (17%) or sometimes (42%). More particularly, a majority of Americans report that they eat more junk food than they should, either often (19%) or sometimes (36%). The biggest reason, people say, is convenience.

It’s not possible to determine from this survey how much of people’s perception that they eat too much is the result of changes in their own food consumption patterns and how much is the result of changing attitudes and social norms about health and weight.

But one thing is indisputable: Americans have been gaining weight for quite some time. The most recent National Center for Health Statistics report found that 32% of all adults in this country are obese according to the government’s Body Mass Index (BMI) classification system. By contrast, just 23% of adults were classified as obese in government surveys taken from 1988 through 1994. Government surveys also find that the increase in weight is in part related to an increase in calorie and dietary intake. In short, people are eating more.

The Pew telephone survey, which was conducted from February 8 through March 7 among a randomly-selected representative national sample of 2,250 adults, finds the public is troubled by the nation’s expanding waistline; more than eight-in-ten people (85%) say Americans are more overweight now than they were five years ago, and two-thirds of the public calls this a “major problem.”



Fewer People Enjoy Eating; Just as Many Enjoy Cooking

Since 1989, enjoyment of eating has fallen among all Americans, but it has fallen most sharply among those who describe themselves as overweight.

Among overweight adults, just 42% now say they enjoy eating a great deal, down from 56% who said this in 1989. There has also been a drop-off in enjoyment of eating among people who consider their weight about right, but this decline had been smaller – down to 38% today, from 44% in 1989.

While the drop-off has been greatest among the overweight, it remains the case now, as it was back in 1989, that the overweight are more prone than those not overweight to enjoy eating a great deal. But the margin between the two groups on this question is smaller now (4 percentage points) than it was then (12 percentage points).

Men and women say they enjoy eating about equally, as do whites and blacks. Hispanics are less likely than either non-Hispanic whites or blacks to say they enjoy eating a great deal.

Not surprisingly, enjoyment of eating goes hand-in-hand with an enjoyment of cooking. Enjoyment of eating also correlates with dining out frequently; with exercising regularly; with more education; with having an annual family income in excess of \$100,000; and with being a younger rather than an older adult.

While enjoyment of eating has dropped since 1989, enjoyment of cooking has held steady. About a third of the public (34%) say they enjoy cooking “a great deal” and another quarter (26%) say they enjoy cooking “a fair amount.”

These figures are essentially unchanged since 1989, but there has been a notable shift in their gender composition. Today about the same percentage of women (35%) and men (32%) say they enjoy cooking a great deal; in 1989, women (39%) were more likely than men (25%) to say this. Also, more blacks (40%) than whites (33%) enjoy cooking a great deal.

People who enjoy cooking a great deal are less likely to eat out regularly than are those who don’t enjoy cooking as much. But about 13% of Americans say all of the following: they eat at restaurants at least weekly; they enjoy

Who Likes to Eat?			
Percent who enjoy eating “a great deal”			
	1989*	2006	Difference
	%	%	%
All adults	48	39	-9
Gender			
Men	49	41	-8
Women	48	38	-10
Self Description			
Overweight	56	42	-14
About right	44	38	-6
*Source: Gallup, September 1989			PewResearchCenter

Who Likes to Cook?			
Percent who enjoy cooking “a great deal”			
	1989*	2006	Difference
	%	%	%
All adults	32	34	+2
Gender			
Men	25	32	+7
Women	39	35	-4
Self Description			
Overweight	35	34	-1
About right	31	34	+3
*Source: Gallup, September 1989			PewResearchCenter

cooking “a great deal”; and they enjoy eating “a great deal.” More men than women and more younger adults (ages 18-49) than older adults (ages 50 and older) are in this gourmand grouping.

Who Thinks They Eat Too Much?

Not surprisingly, people who are overweight are more prone than people who aren’t to say they often eat too much. But so, too, are people who are on a diet; people who frequently worry about their weight; and people who dine out in a restaurant and/or eat fast food at least two times a week. Also, slightly more women (61%) than men (56%) say they often or sometimes eat more than they should.

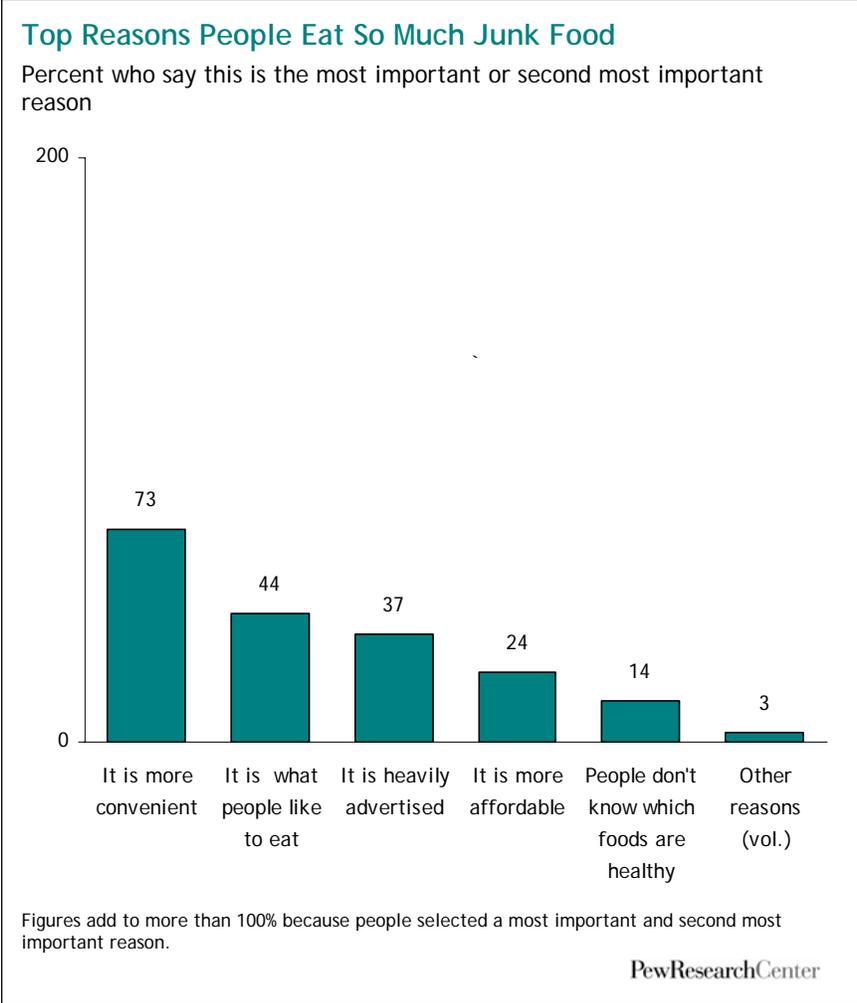
Asked specifically about whether they eat more “junk food” than they should, a majority of respondents said that they did, either often (19%) or sometimes (36%). Here again, the groups most prone to say this include those who are overweight, those who worry about their weight, and those who are on a diet. And here again, more women (58%) than men (51%) say they eat too much junk food.

The survey also finds that there is a correlation between stress and eating. Of those who report that they frequently feel stressed, 21% report that they often overeat and 25% report that they often eat too much junk food. By contrast, among those who rarely or never feel stressed, 15% say they often overeat and 15% say they often eat too much junk food.

Why Do People Eat Junk Food? Convenience.

Asked to pick the top two from a list of five possible reasons that people eat so much junk food, respondents most often cited convenience (73%). Other reasons were that it’s what people like to eat (44%); it’s because of heavy advertising (37%); it’s more affordable (24%); and it’s because people don’t know which foods are healthy (14%).

There is some variation in this pattern of responses depending on whether the respondent is



or isn't a heavy consumer of junk food. Both groups agree that convenience is the biggest reason for America's junk food habit. But among those who say they rarely or never overeat junk food, there is a greater tendency to stress the importance of advertising as a factor in the consumption of junk food by others. Among those who acknowledge that they themselves eat too much junk food, there is more of a tendency to stress the fact that it's what people like to eat.

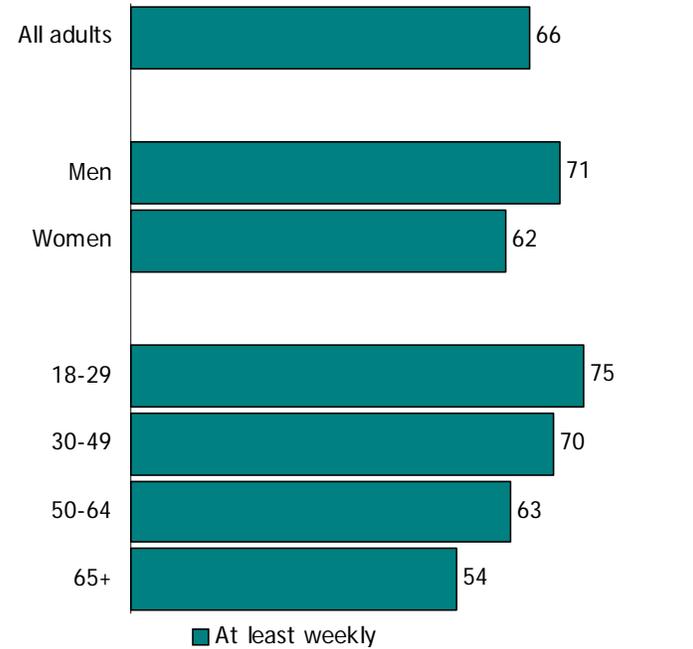
Who Eats Where, and How Often

About a third of the public say they eat in a restaurant less than weekly; another third say they eat out about once a week, and another third say they eat out twice a week or more.

When respondents were asked whether they eat a meal from fast food restaurants such as McDonald's or Burger King, one third of the public say they never eat such food; a quarter say they do so less than once a week, 22% say they do so about once a week and the remaining 19% say they do so twice a week or more.

How Often Do You Eat Out?

Percent who say they eat a meal at a restaurant at least weekly

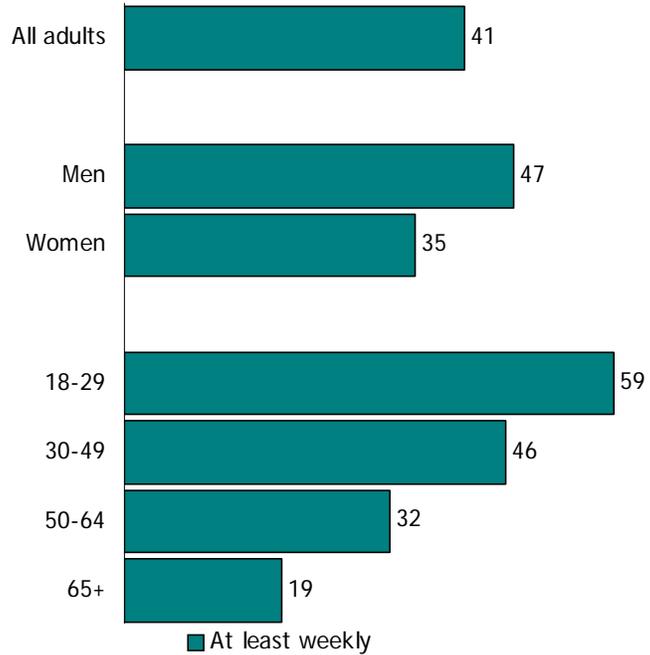


Question wording: About how often in an average week do you eat a meal at any restaurant? (open end)

Men eat at restaurants and eat fast food more frequently than do women. Younger adults (ages 18-49) tend to eat at restaurants and eat fast food more often than do older adults (ages 50 and older). The generational differences are especially strong when it comes to eating fast food. About six-in-ten (59%) adults under age 30 eat a meal every week from a fast food restaurant, compared with about two-in-ten (19%) of those ages 65 and older who do so.

How Often Do You Eat Fast Food?

Percent who say they eat at a meal from a fast food restaurant at least weekly



Question wording: About how often in an average week do you eat a meal from a fast food restaurant like McDonald's or Burger King? (open end)

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About the Pew Social Trends Reports

The Pew social trends reports explore the behaviors and attitudes of Americans in key realms of their lives – family, community, health, finance, work and leisure. Reports analyze changes over time in social behaviors and probe for differences and similarities between key sub-groups in the population.

The surveys are conducted by the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan “fact tank” that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

Survey reports are the result of the collaborative effort of the social trends staff, which consists of:

Paul Taylor, Executive Vice President
Cary Funk, Senior Project Director
Peyton Craighill, Project Director

About the Survey

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted with a nationally representative sample of adults, ages 18 years and older, living in continental U.S. telephone households.

- Interviews conducted February 8- March 7, 2006
- 2,250 interviews
- Margin of sampling error is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points for results based on the total sample at the 95% confidence level. The margin of sampling error is higher for results based on subgroups of respondents.

Survey interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.

In addition to sampling error, bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias in the findings of opinion polls.

PEW SOCIAL TRENDS
 FINAL TOPLINE
 FEBRUARY 8 - MARCH 7, 2006
 N=2,250

QUESTIONS 1 – 37 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTIONS 38 - 41

ASK ALL:

On a different topic...

Q.42 Right now, do you feel that you are overweight, underweight, or just about the right weight for you?

ASK IF OVERWEIGHT (Q42=1):

Q.43 Do you feel you are very overweight, somewhat overweight, or only a little overweight?

		<u>July 1990</u>
39	Overweight	42
5	Very	6
16	Somewhat	13
18	Only a little	23
*	Don't know/Refused	*
3	Underweight	5
57	Just about right	53
1	Don't know/Refused	*
100		100

QUESTIONS 44 – 45 IN PREVIOUS RELEASE

QUESTION 46 FOR FUTURE RELEASE

B.1 How often do you worry about your weight? Would you say you worry all of the time, some of the time, not too often, or never?

	----- Gallup -----		
	<u>July 2005</u>	<u>July 1999</u>	<u>Oct 1990</u>
14	15	15	7
28	34	27	27
30	29	34	33
27	22	24	33
1	0	*	*
100	100	100	100

Q.47 Aside from your normal daily activities, do you do any type of exercise program that helps keep you physically fit, or not?

	<u>July 1990</u>
57	59
43	41
*	*
100	100

QUESTIONS 48 FOR FUTURE RELEASE
QUESTIONS 49 – 51B IN PREVIOUS RELEASE

Q.52 Are you currently trying to lose weight through some kind of special effort on your part, such as a special diet or exercise program?

ASK IF DIETING (Q52=1):

Q.53 Are you currently following any particular weight-loss diet plan, or not? **IF YES:** Which one?

25	Yes, dieting
6	<i>Using a specific plan (SPECIFY)</i>
19	<i>No plan</i>
*	<i>Don't know/Refused</i>
75	Not dieting
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)
100	

QUESTIONS 54 – 55 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

Q.56 How much do you enjoy cooking? (**READ**)

		<i>Gallup</i>
		<u>Sept 1989</u>
34	A great deal	32
26	A fair amount	27
17	Some	16
12	Not too much	13
10	Or, not at all	12
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)	*
100		100

Q.57 How much do you enjoy eating? (**READ**)

		<i>Gallup</i>
		<u>Sept 1989</u>
39	A great deal	48
40	A fair amount	36
14	Some	10
5	Not too much	5
1	Or, not at all	1
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)	*
100		100

Q.58 About how often in an average week do you eat a meal at any restaurant? **DO NOT READ**

		<i>ABC News/</i>
		<i>Time Magazine</i>
		<u>May 2004</u>
13	Never	14
20	Less than weekly	17
33	1 time a week	30
15	2 times a week	16
8	3 times a week	9
3	4 times a week	4
3	5 times a week	4
4	6 times a week or more	7
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)	*
100		100

Q.59 About how often in an average week do you eat a meal from a fast food restaurant like McDonald's or Burger King?
DO NOT READ

	<i>ABC News/ Time Magazine May 2004</i>
33 Never	34
25 Less than weekly	20
22 1 time a week	23
9 2 times a week	11
4 3 times a week	5
2 4 times a week	2
2 5 times a week	2
2 6 times a week or more	2
<u>1</u> Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)	<u>*</u>
100	100

Q.60 How often do you find yourself eating more than you should? (**READ**)

17 Often
42 Sometimes
30 Rarely
10 Never
<u>1</u> Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)
100

Q.61 How often do you eat more junk food than you should? (**READ**)

19 Often
36 Sometimes
33 Rarely
12 Never
<u>*</u> Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)
100

QUESTIONS 62 – 64 IN PREVIOUS RELEASE

NO QUESTION 65

ASK ALL:

Thinking about the country as a whole...

Q.66 Do you think Americans are more overweight now than they were five years ago, or not?

ASK IF YES (Q66=1):

Q.67 Is this a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem?

85	Yes, Americans more overweight now
67	Major problem
15	Minor problem
2	Not a problem
1	Don't know/Refused
10	No
<u>5</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

QUESTIONS 68 – 77 IN PREVIOUS RELEASE

ASK ALL:

Q.78A Which of these is the MOST IMPORTANT reason why people eat so much junk food? **(READ AND RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS)**

ASK IF ANY ANSWER GIVEN (1-6 IN Q78A):

Q.78B What would you say was the SECOND most important reason why people eat so much junk food? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE EXCLUDING ITEM GIVEN IN Q78A]**

<u>COMBINED 1ST & 2ND REASON</u>		<u>1ST REASON</u>	<u>2ND REASON</u>
14	People don't know which foods are healthy	6	8
24	Junk food is more affordable	8	16
37	Junk food is heavily advertised	14	23
44	Junk food is what people like to eat	21	23
73	Junk food is more convenient	49	24
3	Other not on list (VOL.)	1	2
3	Don't know/Refused/No first reason	<u>1</u>	3
		100	

Figures add to more than 100% for combined reasons due to multiple responses.

QUESTIONS 79 – 90 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

STRESS In general, how often do you experience stress in your daily life—never, rarely, sometimes, or frequently?

		----- Gallup -----				
		<u>Dec 2004</u>	<u>Dec 2003</u>	<u>Dec 2002</u>	<u>Dec 2001</u>	<u>Jan 1994</u>
6	Never	4	2	4	2	4
19	Rarely	17	20	18	18	17
39	Sometimes	41	45	37	38	39
35	Frequently	37	33	41	42	40
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100

Enjoy Eating...

How much do you enjoy eating?

	Great deal	Fair amount	Some	Not much/ at all	DK	N
	%	%	%	%	%	
All adults	39	40	14	6	1=100	2,250
Gender						
Men	41	39	14	5	1=100	1,038
Women	38	40	15	7	*=100	1,212
Race/Ethnicity						
White*	42	38	14	5	1=100	1,686
Black	40	40	11	9	*=100	234
Hispanic*	30	47	14	7	2=100	239
Age						
18-29	45	37	13	5	*=100	332
30-49	41	38	15	5	1=100	799
50-64	37	40	16	6	1=100	580
65+	34	46	11	7	2=100	484
Education						
College graduate	45	39	13	3	*=100	703
Some college	41	38	15	5	1=100	526
High School grad	37	41	15	6	1=100	780
Less than HS grad	32	42	13	11	2=100	224
Family Income						
\$100,000+	51	36	8	4	1=100	273
\$50K - \$100K	40	41	15	4	*=100	584
\$30K - \$50K	41	37	16	5	1=100	469
Less than \$30K	35	44	14	7	*=100	561

* Whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Hispanics are of any race. Interviews conducted in English and Spanish.

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Enjoy Eating...						
How much do you enjoy eating?						
	Great deal	Fair amount	Some	Not much/ at all	DK	N
	%	%	%	%	%	
All adults	39	40	14	6	1=100	2,250
Dine Out						
2+ times/week	45	37	13	5	*=100	762
1 time/week	39	42	15	4	*=100	734
Less than that or never	35	40	15	8	2=100	735
Exercise Regularly						
Yes	42	40	13	4	1=100	1,320
No	36	40	16	8	*=100	924
Self Description						
Overweight	42	37	16	5	*=100	912
About right	38	42	13	6	1=100	1,248
Enjoy Cooking						
Great deal	58	31	7	2	2=100	726
Fair amount	31	55	10	4	*=100	610
Some	31	34	28	6	1=100	395
Not too much/at all	27	41	20	12	*=100	504
PewResearchCenter						

Enjoy Cooking...

How much do you enjoy cooking?

	Great deal	Fair amount	Some	Not much/ at all	DK	N
All adults	34	26	17	22	1=100	2,250
Gender						
Men	32	25	18	24	1=100	1,038
Women	35	28	17	20	*=100	1,212
Race/Ethnicity						
White*	33	28	18	21	*=100	1,686
Black	40	25	13	22	1=100	234
Hispanic*	32	24	16	26	2=100	239
Age						
18-29	38	23	15	23	1=100	332
30-49	36	27	19	18	*=100	799
50-64	31	27	20	22	*=100	580
65+	29	28	13	29	1=100	484
Education						
College graduate	32	28	19	21	*=100	703
Some college	34	28	19	18	1=100	526
High School grad	35	25	16	23	1=100	780
Less than HS grad	36	24	14	24	2=100	224
Family Income						
\$100,000+	38	24	18	19	1=100	273
\$50K - \$100K	31	30	19	20	*=100	584
\$30K - \$50K	34	26	19	20	1=100	469
Less than \$30K	36	25	15	24	*=100	561

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Enjoy Cooking...

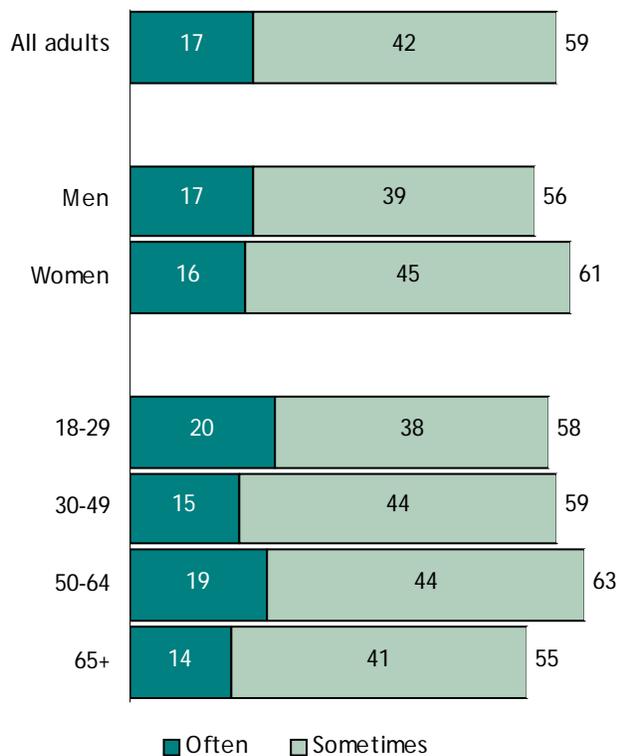
How much do you enjoy cooking?

	Great deal	Fair amount	Some	Not much/ at all	DK	N
	%	%	%	%	%	
All adults	34	26	17	22	1=100	2,250
Dine Out						
2+ times/week	30	22	19	28	1=100	762
1 time/week	32	31	19	18	*=100	734
Less than that or never	40	25	14	20	1=100	735
Exercise Regularly						
Yes	36	26	16	22	*=100	1,320
No	31	26	19	23	1=100	924
Self Description						
Overweight	34	28	18	20	*=100	912
About right	34	26	17	22	1=100	1,248
Enjoy Eating						
Great deal	50	21	14	15	*=100	878
Fair amount	26	36	15	23	*=100	901
Some	17	18	34	30	1=100	327
Not too much/at all	14	18	18	48	2=100	124

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How often do you find yourself eating more than you should?

Percentage of Americans who "often" or "sometimes" overeat

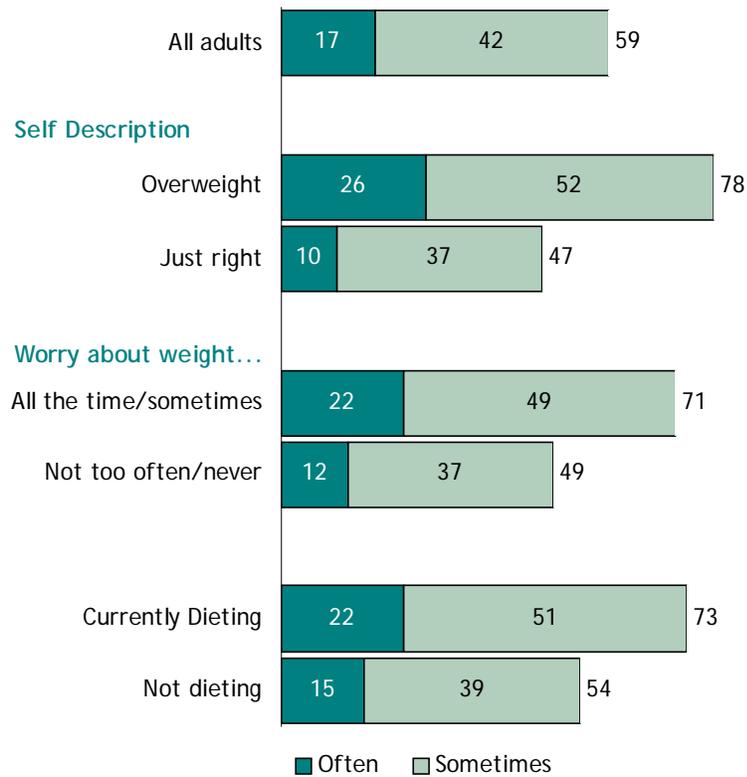


Question wording: How often do you find yourself eating more than you should?—often, sometimes, rarely, never

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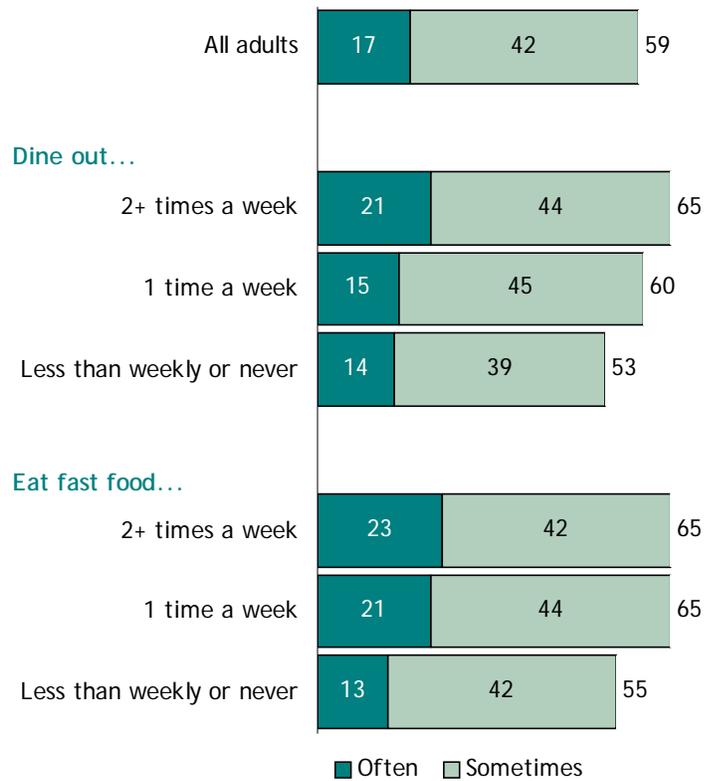


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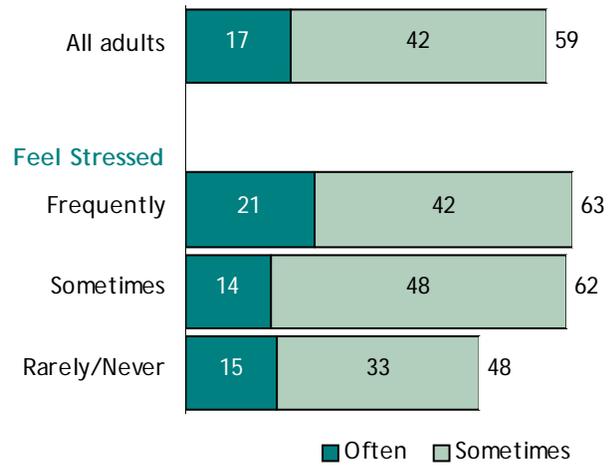


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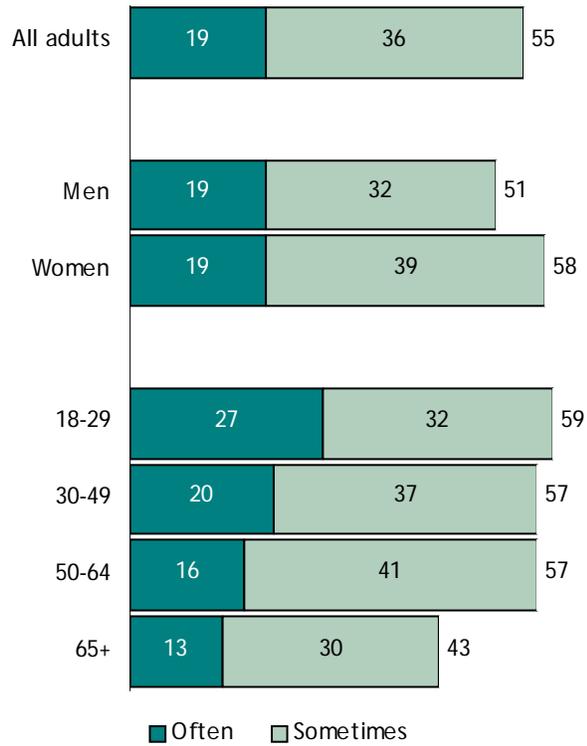


Question wording: How often do you find yourself eating more than you should?—often, sometimes, rarely, never

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How often do you eat more junk food than you should?

Percentage of Americans who "often" or "sometimes" overeat junk food



Question wording: How often do you eat more junk food than you should?—often, sometimes, rarely, never

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How often do you eat more junk food than you should?

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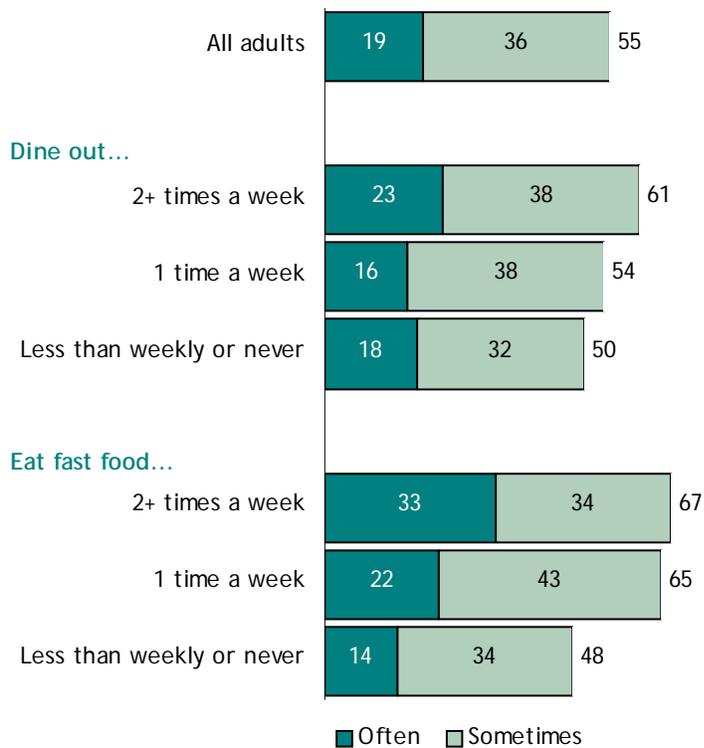


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How often do you eat more junk food than you should?

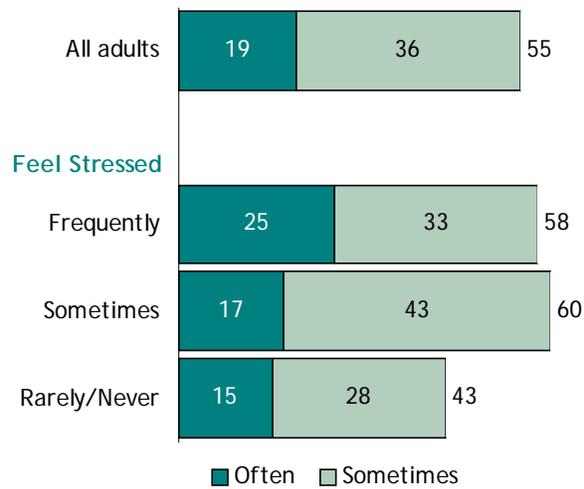
Percentage of Americans who "often" or "sometimes" overeat junk food



Question wording: How often do you eat more junk food than you should?—often, sometimes, rarely, never

How often do you eat more junk food than you should?

Percentage of Americans who "often" or "sometimes" overeat junk food

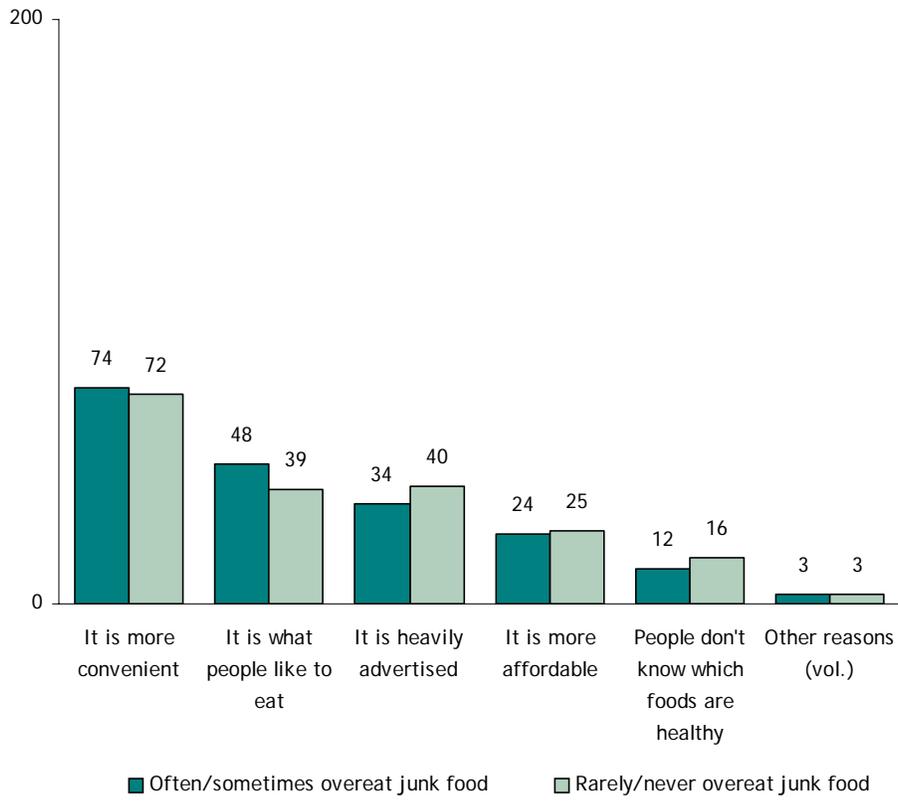


Question wording: How often do you eat more junk food than you should?—often, sometimes, rarely, never

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Why Do People Eat So Much Junk Food? Those Who Do and Those Who Don't Have Slightly Different Explanations

Percent who say this is the most important or second most important reason



Figures add to more than 100% because people selected a most important and second most important reason.