

Consumer Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviours towards Sodium and Sodium- Reduced Foods

**First Report
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Consumer Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviours towards Sodium and Sodium-Reduced Foods

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Methods

INSTRUMENT

The survey was completed on-line from **May 1, 2012 to June 5, 2012** using Leger Marketing's online panel, **LegerWeb**, with a sample of 4,073 Canadians.

A probability sample of the same size would yield a margin of error of $\pm 1.54\%$, 19 times out of 20.

ONLINE PANEL

Leger Marketing's online panel has approximately 400,000 members nationally – with between 10,000 and 20,000 new members added each month, and has a retention rate of 90%.

Panel members are randomly selected to receive email invitations to the individual surveys.

They ensure the protection of privacy via the usage of unique URLs and respondent IDs in combination with survey IDs.

QUALITY CONTROL

Stringent quality assurance measures allow Leger to achieve the high-quality standards set by the company. As a result, our methods of data collection and storage outperform the norms set by **WAPOR** (The World Association for Public Opinion Research). These measures are applied at every stage of the project: from data collection to processing, through to analysis. Leger has also obtained "**Gold Seal**" certification from the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA), the leading professional marketing association in Canada. This is obtained following an audit of the company's quality control and business procedures by Deloitte. Leger was certified in 2006 and was re-certified again this year. And Leger **meets or exceeds the standards for marketing research** created by ESOMAR, the international association of public opinion and market research professionals. Its code of ethical practice is reviewed frequently to ensure that representatives respect respondent privacy, regardless of the techniques or technologies used to conduct the research.



STRATEGIC CONCLUSIONS

Strategic Conclusions

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Knowledge gaps about sodium are prevalent throughout Canada

It is well documented¹ that on average, Canadians consume more than double the amount of sodium that a person needs to stay healthy. More than nine in ten agree that the average Canadian consumes too much sodium – yet many are convinced that they are the exception to that trend. Only one in ten Canadians acknowledge that they might consume a greater-than-average quantity of sodium, while the majority remain convinced that they eat less. Further compounding this problem is a lack of understanding of what is a healthy level of daily sodium intake for an average person. Only one in ten Canadians can correctly identify the recommended sodium intake for an adult, and around the same proportion knows the recommended daily allotment for children.

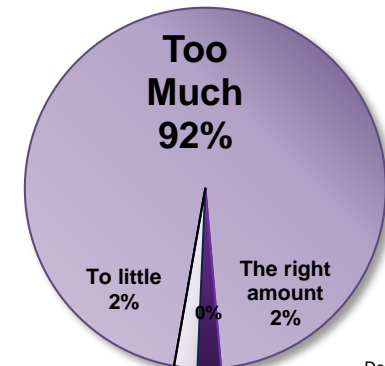
Gender, age and region are key demographic distinctions.

Throughout this study, three demographic categories had a stronger influence than most on the ways that Canadians understand and perceive sodium, and ultimately on their eating habits. In the following pages we examine Canadians' perspectives on sodium through the lens of gender, age and region.

National View: Sodium



How much sodium do you think the average Canadian consumes?



¹Source: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/sodium/index-eng.php>

Focus: Gender



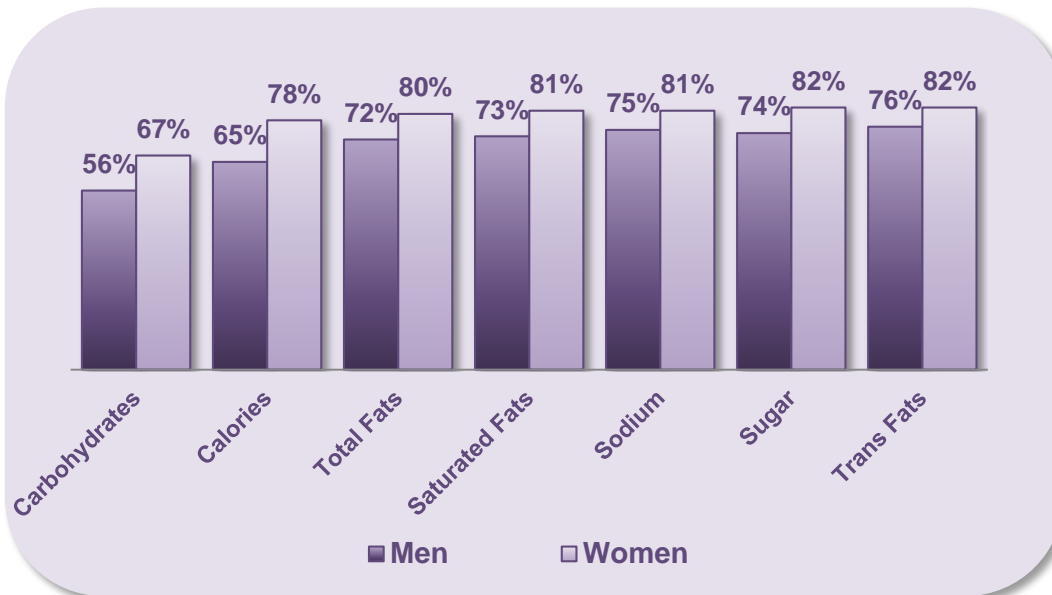
Strategic Conclusions

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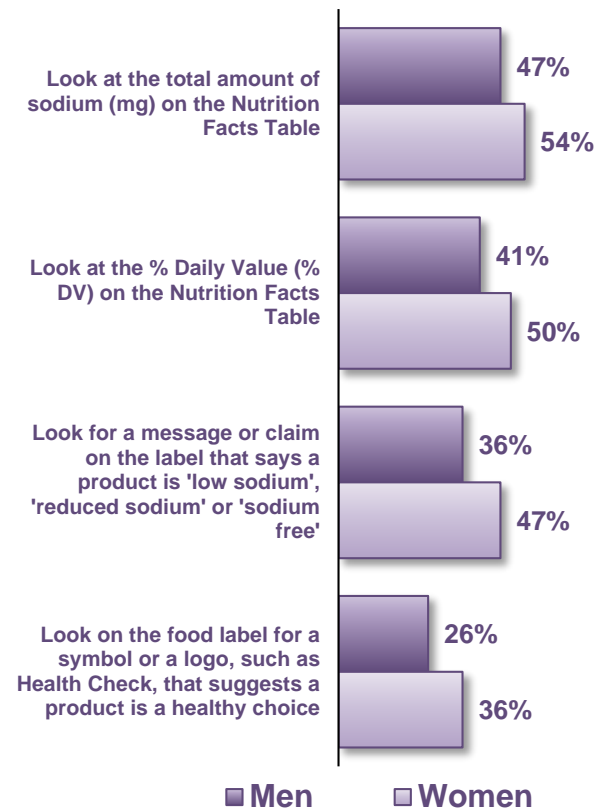
Focus: Gender

Canadian women consistently demonstrate the strongest will to monitor their dietary choices, including sodium. When grocery shopping, men are less likely to look closely at the Nutrition Facts Table, look for a message that claims the product is low in sodium, and are less likely to look for a Health Check logo.

Do you monitor / limit / avoid any of the following nutrients?



Do you do any of the following to find low sodium options ?



Strategic Conclusions

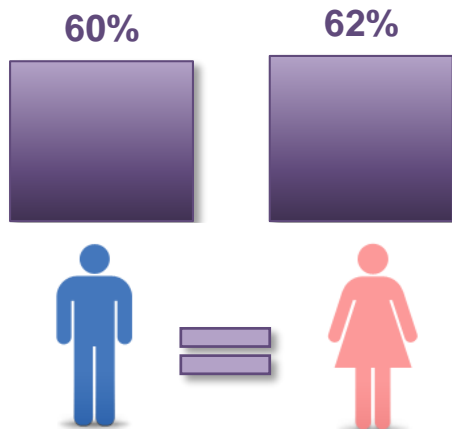
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Focus: Gender

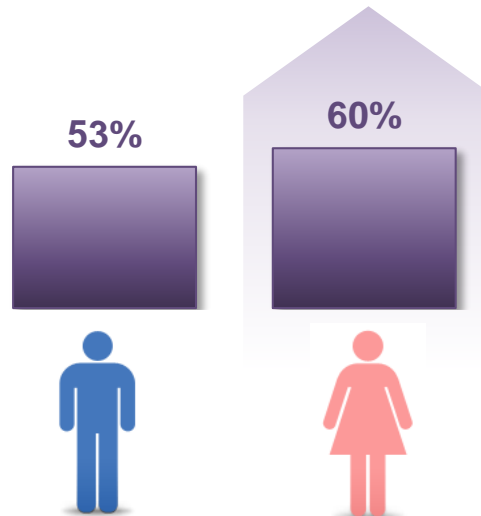
While both men and women say they are equally concerned about their sodium intake, more women take time to monitor how much sodium is in their diet. Not surprisingly, more men than women have been advised by their physician to reduce their sodium levels.



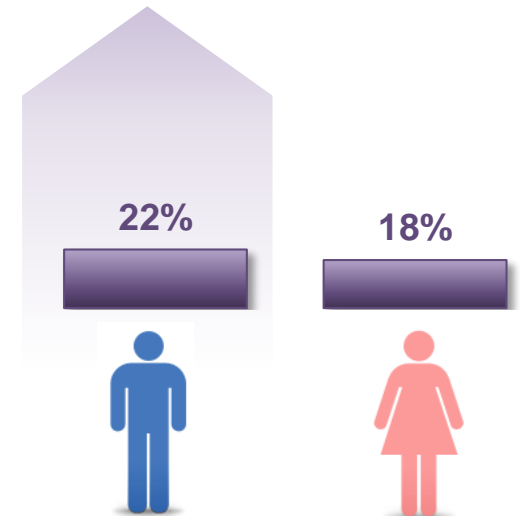
Are you concerned about your sodium intake?



How closely do you monitor the amount of sodium in your diet?



Has your physician ever advised you to reduce your sodium intake?





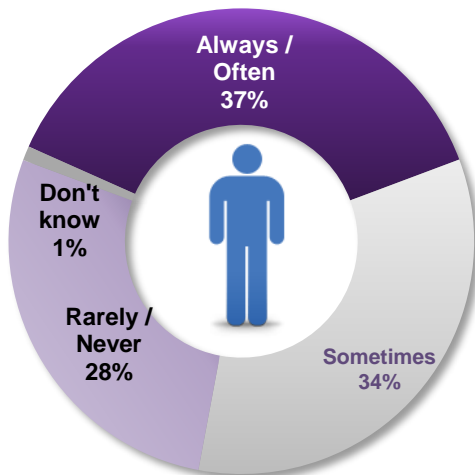
Strategic Conclusions

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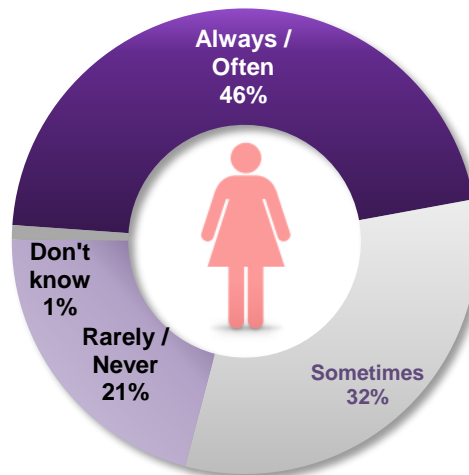
Focus: Gender

Overall, women are searching out low-sodium foods at a greater rate than men. Meanwhile, men are eating high-sodium premade or packaged foods in greater numbers than women. This leaves men with less control over their sodium intake.

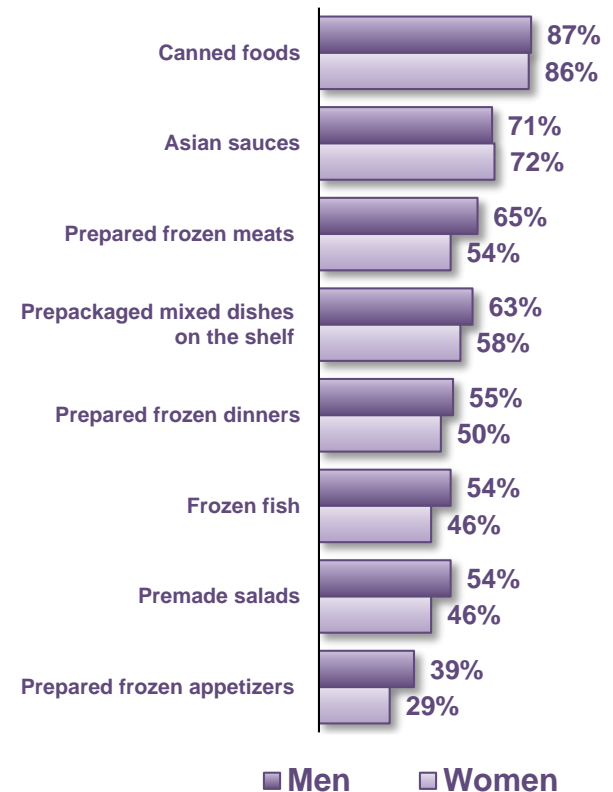
How often do you search for low-sodium products?



How often do you search for low-sodium products?



Have you eaten the following products at least once in the past month?



Focus: Quebec

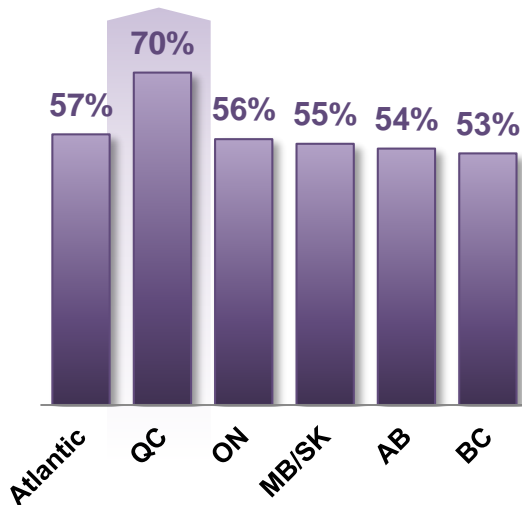
Strategic Conclusions

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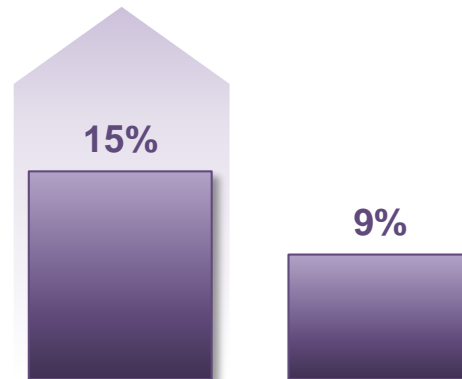
Focus: Quebec

Quebec's predominantly French-speaking population differ significantly in their outlook and their approach to sodium. Residents of Quebec are the most likely to say that the average Canadian eats far too much salt, yet paradoxically are also the most likely to admit that their salt intake is higher than average.

"Canadians eat *far too much* salt"



"My salt intake is *higher* than the average Canadian"

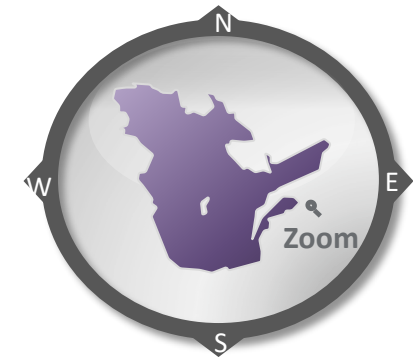


Strategic Conclusions

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Focus: Quebec

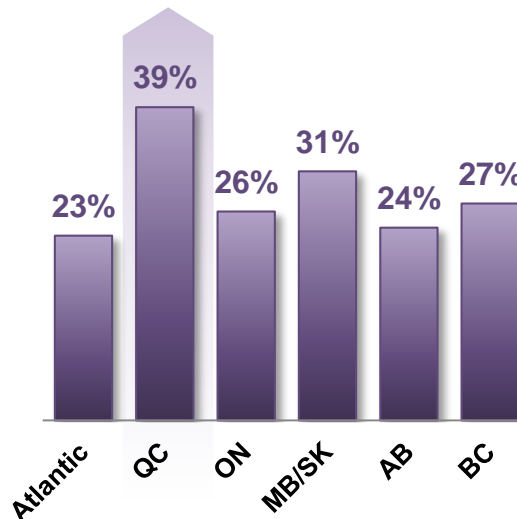
More than virtually anywhere else in the country, residents of Quebec have taken to home-cooking their sauces, dressings and soups in an effort to reduce their sodium intake. Unfortunately, residents of Quebec are also the most likely in Canada to *always* or *often* add salt to their home-cooking, which might render this approach less effective. This may be indicative of a gap in understanding about how to reduce sodium levels in Quebec that is more prevalent than anywhere else in Canada



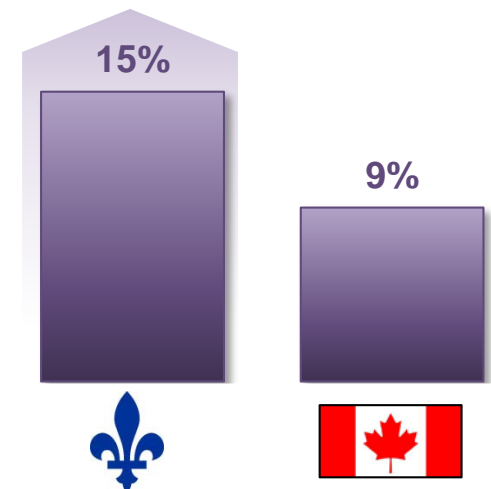
Do you make your own soups, sauces and dressings to lower the amount of sodium in your diet?



Do you add salt to your cooking?
% *always* or *often*



“I don’t know how to lower my sodium intake”



Focus: Age

Strategic Conclusions

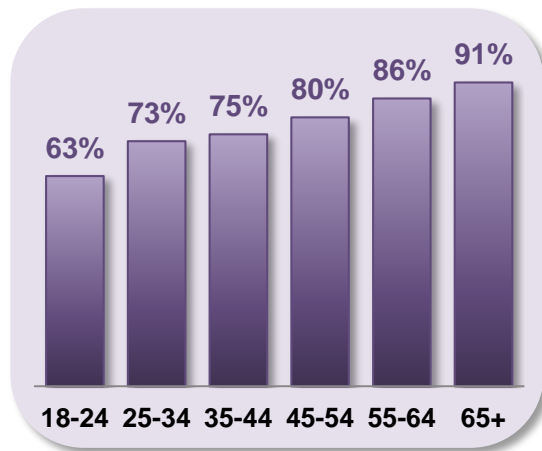
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Focus: Age

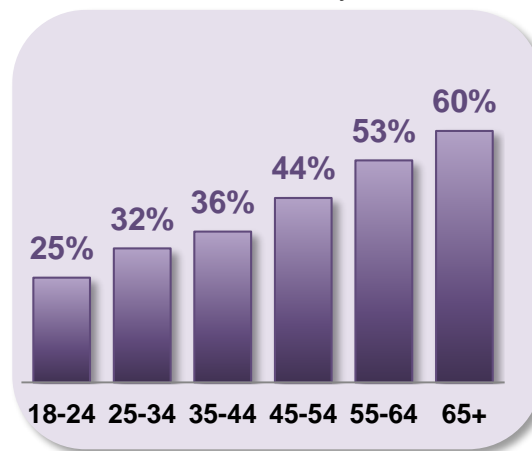
Young Canadians often do not think about the health ramifications of the foods that they consume. In nearly every case, younger Canadians report being less concerned about the sodium content in their food. They are the least likely to monitor, limit or avoid their sodium intake, are the least likely to purchase low-sodium product and are also the least likely to currently be trying to cut back on the sodium in their diet.



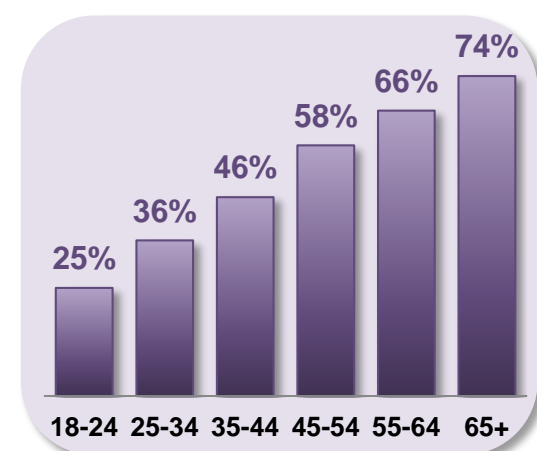
Do you monitor, limit or avoid sodium?



How often do you deliberately purchase low-sodium
% Often / Always.



"I am currently trying to limit my sodium"



Strategic Conclusions

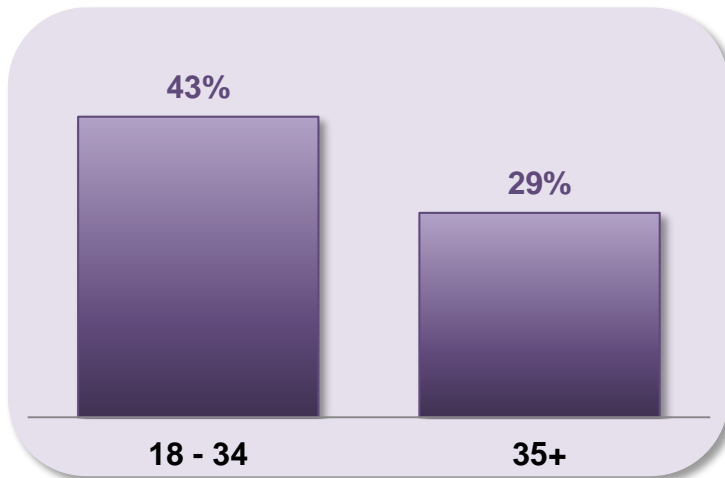
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Focus: Age

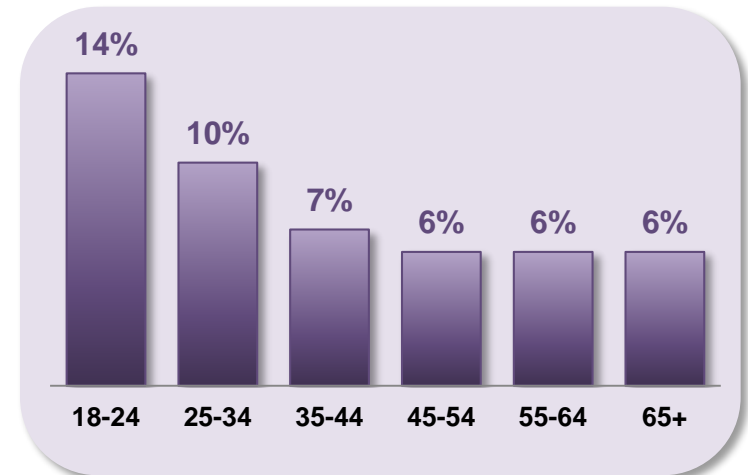
Young Canadians between 18 and 34 are by far the most likely to eat meals that were prepared away from home once a week or more, which limits their ability to control how much sodium they consume. It is therefore not surprising that Canadians under the age of 35 (particularly between 18 and 24) are the most likely to believe that restaurant food is the largest source of sodium in Canadian diets.



Eats a meal away from home once a week or more



The largest source of sodium in the Canadian diet is restaurant food



Strategic Conclusions

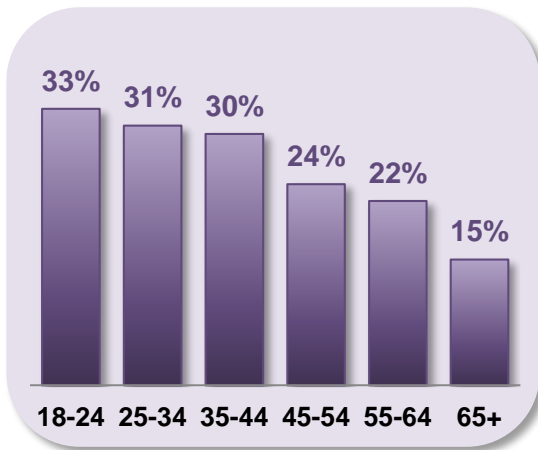
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Focus: Age

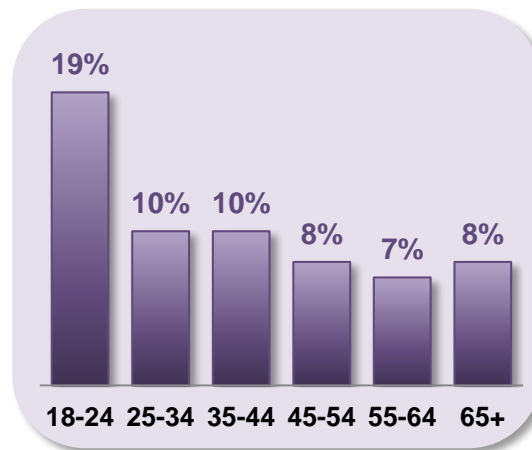
A number of underlying causes influence the higher-than-average sodium intake among young people. As they manage familial and career obligations, younger Canadians are the most likely to say that they have no time to prepare low-sodium meals from scratch, and are also the most likely to say that they don't know how to cook. Canadians between the ages of 18 and 24 are also twice as likely as any other age group to say that they lack support from their family or friends to make the dietary changes necessary to reduce their sodium intake.



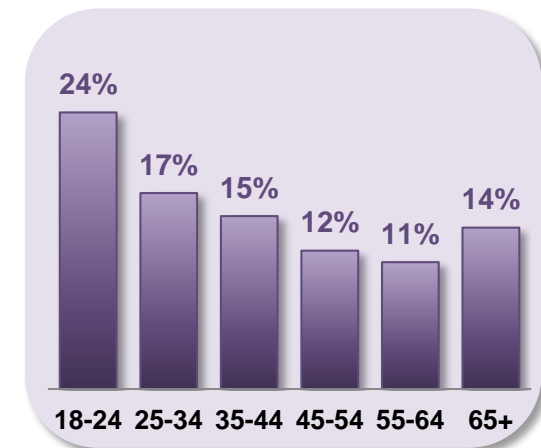
"I don't always have the time to prepare low sodium meals or meals from scratch"
% Agree



"A lack of support from my family/friends makes reducing sodium difficult"
% Agree



"I don't know how or don't like to cook"
% Agree



DETAILED ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Monitoring Nutritional Information

Monitoring Nutritional Information

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NUTRITION FACTS TABLE

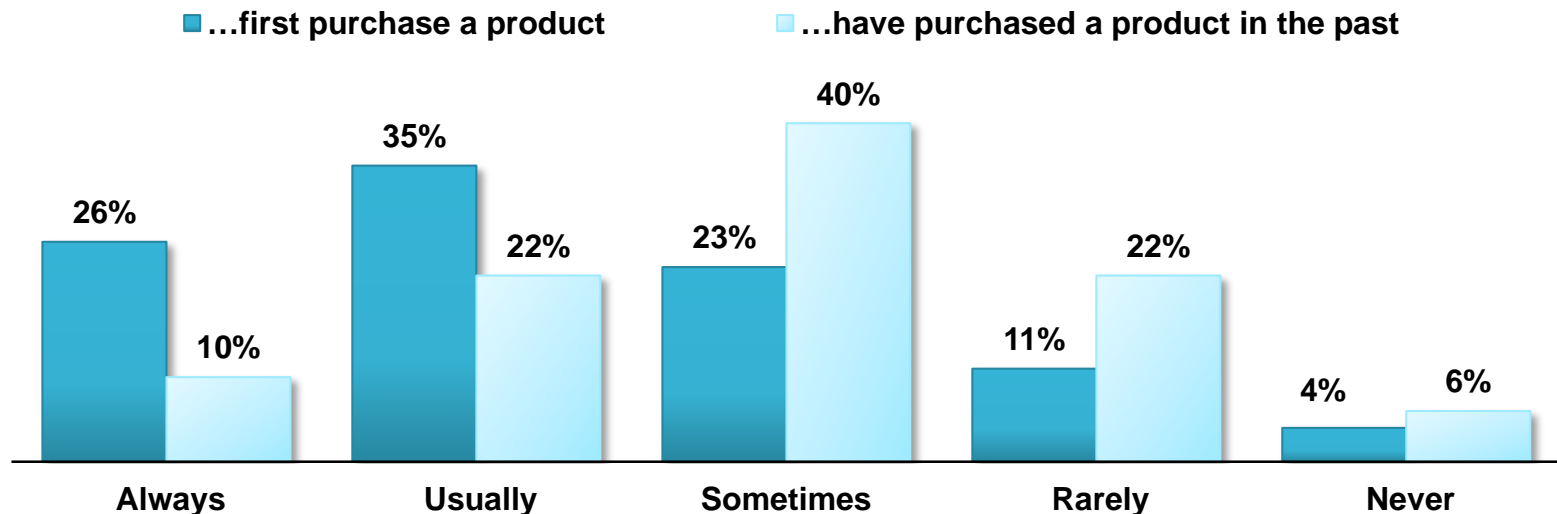
Likelihood to check the Nutritional Facts Table increases dramatically with age.

When first purchasing a product, 61% of Canadians *usually* or *always* check the product's Nutritional Facts table. The tendency to check the table is more common among women than men (67% say that they *usually* or *always* check the Nutritional Facts table) and among those with a college education or higher compared to people with a high school degree (63% vs. 53%). The likelihood to check the Nutritional Facts table also increases steadily with age, with 70% of those over the age of 55 usually or always check the table, also, retired people are the most likely to usually or always read the Nutrition Facts table (72%).

Those who are not married have the greatest tendency to rarely or never check the Nutrition Facts table (20%) and households with no children are more likely to always or usually check Nutrition Facts tables (63%).

If they have already purchased an item in the past, Canadians are substantially less likely to check the nutritional content – only 32% say they usually or always check the Nutritional Facts table.

I check the Nutrition Facts table when I...



Q4. The first time you purchase a food product, how often do you read the Nutrition Facts Table on the package? Base: Total (n=4073) / Q5. When you are purchasing foods you have purchased in the past, how often do you read the Nutrition Facts Table on the package? Base: Total (n=4073)

Monitoring Nutritional Information

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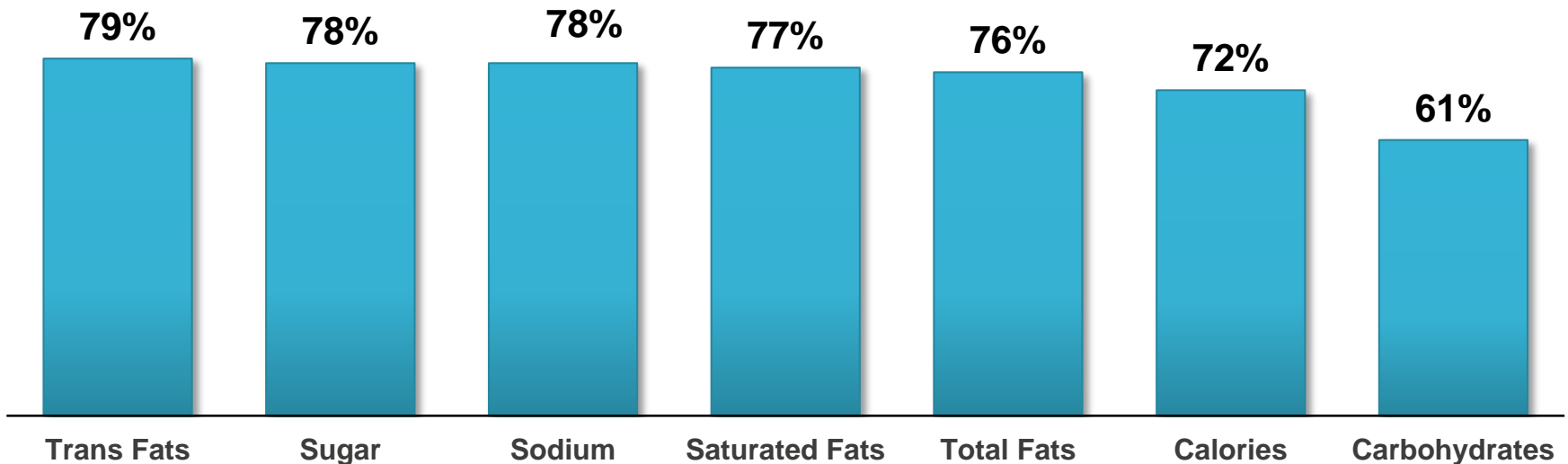
MONITORING NUTRIENTS

Canadians are conscious of the effect of their diet on their health; three quarters monitor their intake of each of the nutritional attributes listed.

A strong majority of Canadians avoid, monitor, or limit their intake of foods with a negative effect on their health. In virtually every case, women are more likely than men to be mindful of their consumption of trans fats, sugar, sodium, saturated fats, total fats, calories and carbohydrates. Additionally, those with a college education or higher are more likely to monitor, avoid, or limit their intake of these nutrients compared to their high school, or less, educated counterparts. Similarly those making less than \$40k/year are less likely to monitor, avoid or limit any of these nutrients.

Older Canadians, particularly those over the age of 55, are also much more likely to monitor, limit, or avoid these nutrients, along with retirees as well. Interestingly, those without children are typically more likely to monitor, limit or avoid each of these nutrients.

Do you monitor, limit, or avoid any of the following nutrients?

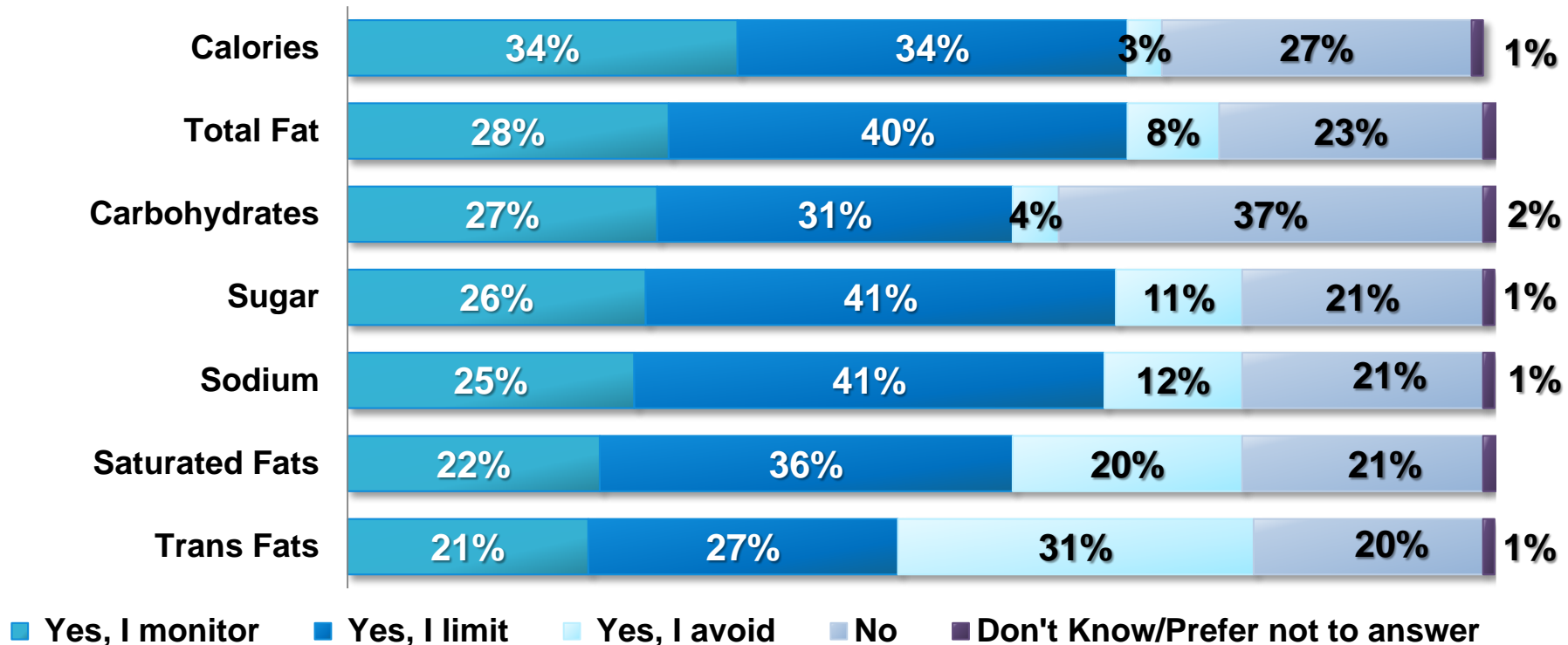


Monitoring Nutritional Information

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MONITORING NUTRIENTS (DETAILED BREAKDOWN)

With the exception of trans fats, the majority of Canadians limit or monitor their consumption of these nutrients, but few choose to avoid them completely.



Concern about Sodium

Concern about Sodium

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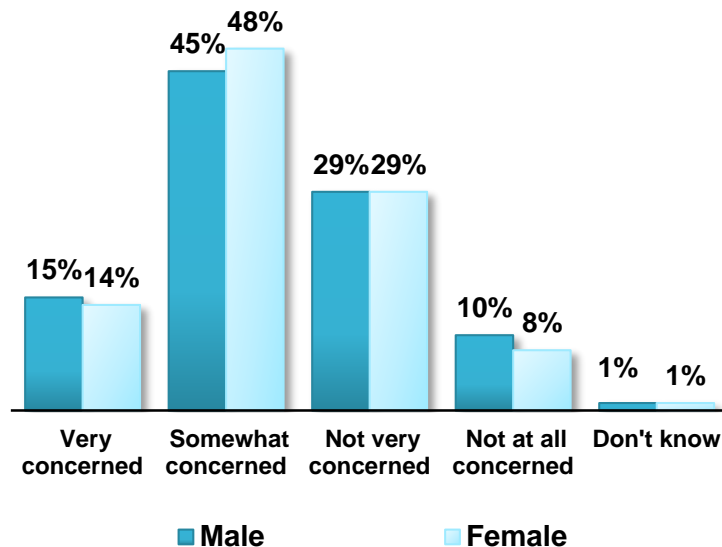
Concern over the amount of sodium ingested and the degree to which sodium intake is monitored increases steadily with age

Three quarters of retired Canadians monitor their sodium intake, as well as three out of five college graduates.

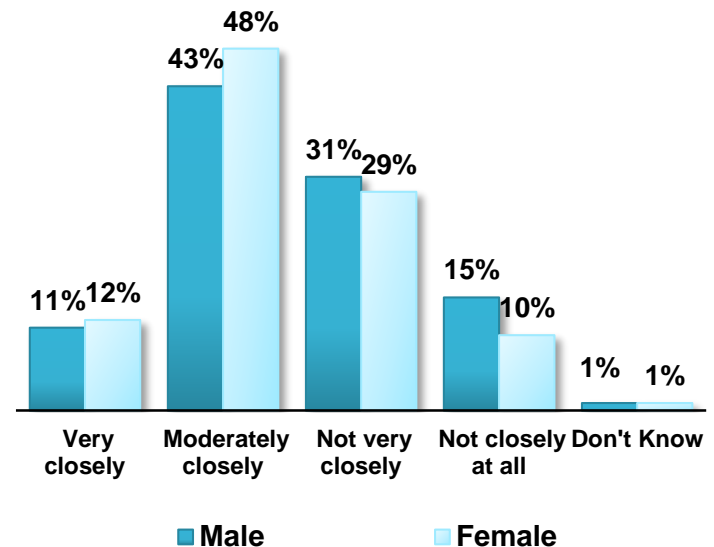
CONCERNED ABOUT SODIUM?

More than half (61%) of Canadians are at least somewhat concerned about the amount of sodium in their diet. Concern over sodium increases steadily with age, however those with children tend to be less concerned with their sodium intake than those without (62% vs. 58%). While men are more likely than women to say they are *not at all concerned* (10% compared to 8%), both genders are equally likely to say that they are concerned. That said, women are more likely than men to count themselves a part of the 57% who monitor their sodium intake closely (60% vs. 53% of men). The degree to which Canadians monitor their sodium intake also increases steadily with age. Parents with children are also less likely to monitor their sodium intake— only 51% monitor it, compared to 59% of those without children. Not surprisingly, the same three groups that eat away from home most often, students, workers, and those who are single, are most likely to not be concerned with the amount of sodium in their diet (48%, 40%, and 45% respectively).

How concerned are you about the amount of sodium in your diet?



How closely do you monitor the amount of sodium in your diet?



Q29. How concerned are you about the amount of sodium in your diet? Base: Total (n=4073)

Q30. How closely do you monitor the amount of sodium in your diet? Base: Total (n=4073)

Perceptions about Sodium

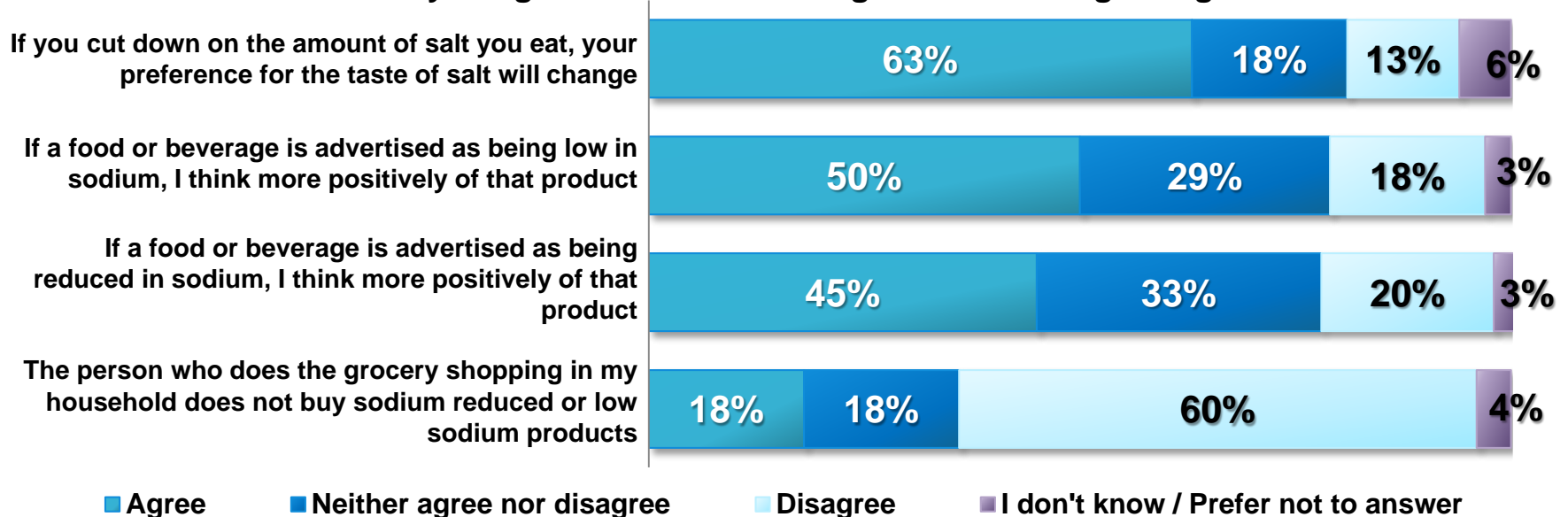
Perceptions about Sodium

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Half of Canadians react positively to products that are low or reduced sodium.

The majority acknowledge that cutting back on the amount of salt that they eat will ultimately reduce their cravings for salty food. Canadians over the age of 45 are the most likely to agree with this statement (71%) and this belief increases with education level, while more than one in ten 18 to 24 year olds are unsure if this statement is true (12%). Half of Canadians respond positively to a product that is advertised as “low in sodium”, and the likelihood to react in this manner increases steadily with age – in fact, 26% of Canadians over the age of 65 *strongly agree* with this statement. A similar proportion of Canadians (45%) respond positively to products that are advertised as “reduced sodium”. Discouragingly, one in five (18%) say that the person who buys groceries in their household does not buy low-sodium products. This trend is most pronounced among young Canadians between the ages of 18 and 24 and with students (25% agree).

How much do you agree with the following statements regarding sodium



Perceptions about Sodium

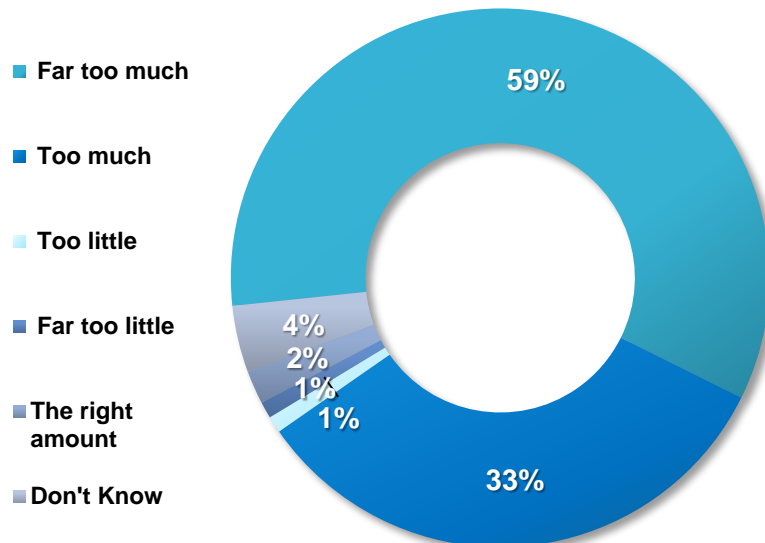
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PERCEIVED SODIUM INTAKE

Most believe that Canadians consume too much salt, but consider themselves to be an exception to that trend.

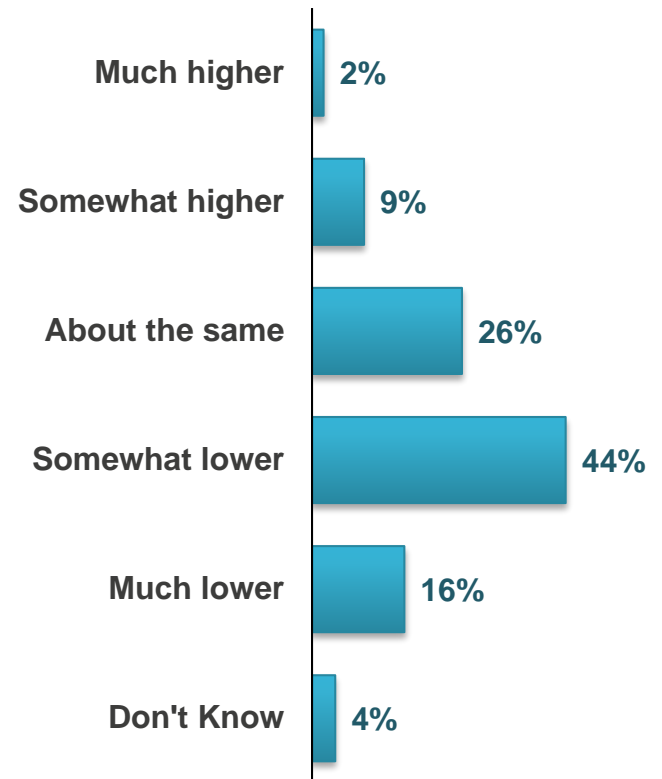
An overwhelming majority suspect that on average, Canadians consume too much sodium. This perspective is most prevalent among 55 to 64 year olds, 66% of whom believe that Canadians consume *far too much* sodium. Although 92% believe that Canadians consume too much sodium, a majority (60%) believe that they consume at least somewhat less sodium than the Canadian average, and only 10% believe that they consume sodium in greater quantities than the average Canadian.

How much sodium do you think Canadians consume?



Q11. How much sodium do you think the average Canadian consumes? Base: Total (n=4073)

How do you think your sodium intake compares to an average Canadian?



Q12. How do you think your own intake of sodium compares with the average Canadian adult? Base: Total (n=4073)

Perceptions about Sodium

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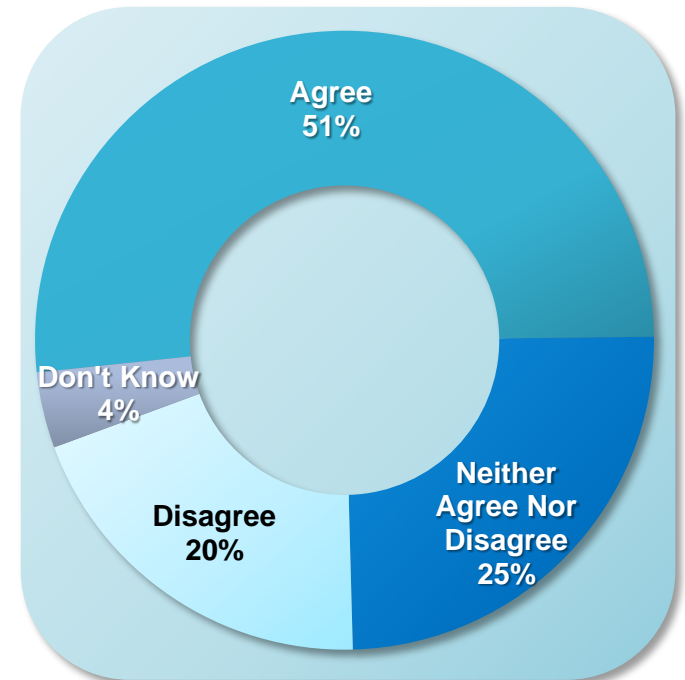
PERCEIVED IMPACT OF SODIUM ON OWN HEALTH

Most agree that their health would improve if they lowered the amount of sodium they ingest.

Although the majority agree that their health would improve if they lowered the amount of sodium in their diet, one in five disagree with this statement. While this seems discouraging, some Canadians may feel that their salt intake is at a healthy level, and as a result may disagree. In fact, those over the age of 65 (who are among the least likely to overindulge in salty food) are the most likely to *strongly disagree* with this statement (10%), which lends credence to this hypothesis.



“My health would improve if I lowered the amount of sodium I eat”



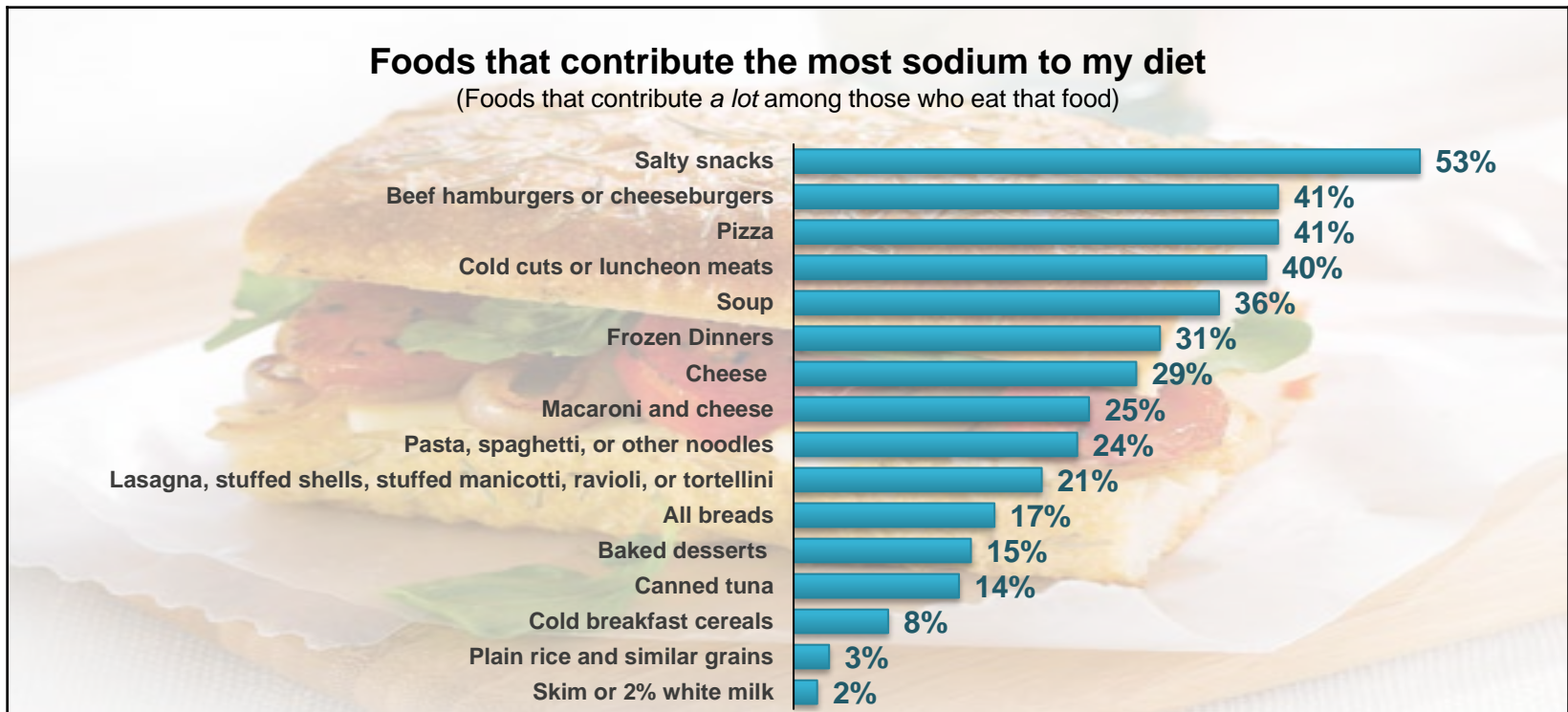
Perceptions about Sodium

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PERCEIVED BIGGEST CONTRIBUTORS OF SODIUM TO OWN DIET

Among those who eat them, salty snacks are perceived to contribute the most sodium to diets.

Unsurprisingly, more than half of those who eat salty snacks say that they contribute a *lot* of sodium to their diets. That said, residents of Quebec who eat salty snacks are the least likely to say that they inject a *lot* of sodium into their overall diet. Residents of Quebec who eat breads, on the other hand, are the most likely to say that bread contributes a *lot* of sodium to their diet (22%).



Q26. Of the foods you typically eat, which of the following foods do you think contribute the most sodium to your total diet? Base sizes vary.

Sodium Knowledge

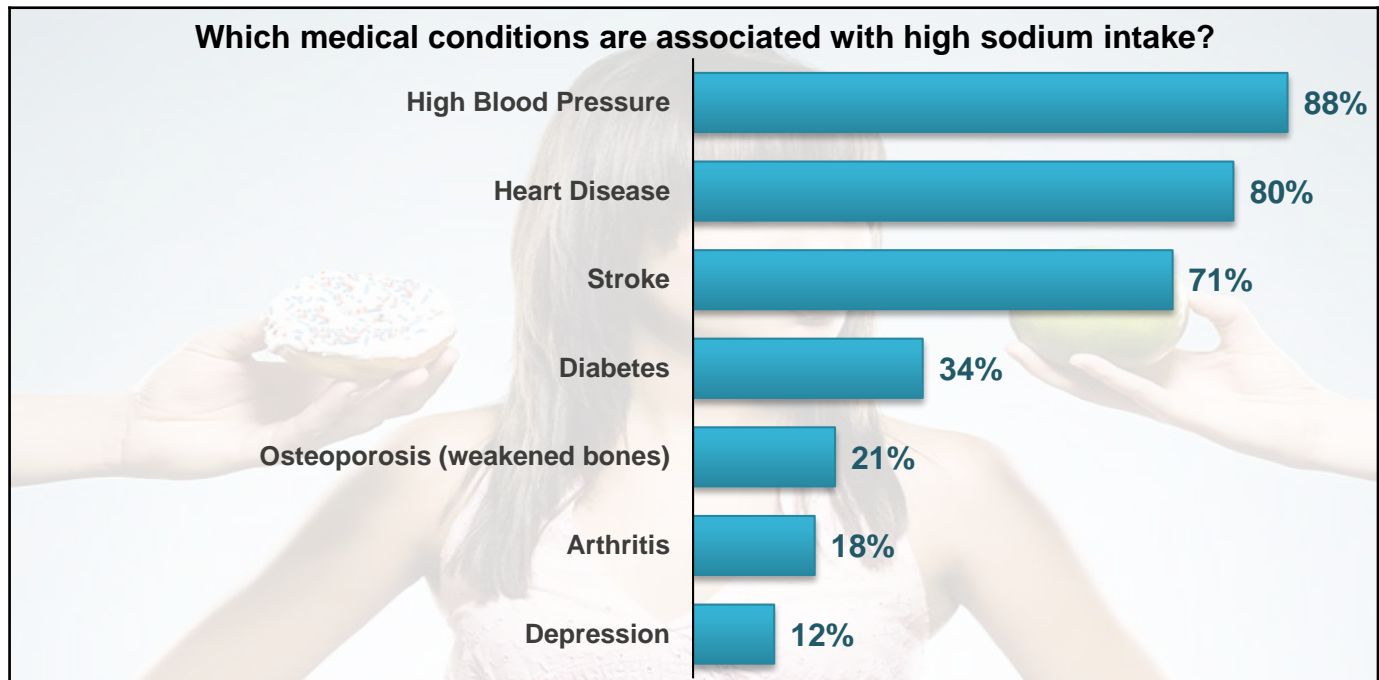
Sodium Knowledge

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ASSOCIATED MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Many Canadians are unaware that osteoporosis, arthritis and depression are associated with high levels of sodium.

A strong majority of Canadians identify high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke with high sodium intake. Fewer associate diabetes, osteoporosis, arthritis and depression with a diet where salt is overabundant. Interestingly, residents of Quebec are more likely than any other region in Canada to associate osteoporosis (27%) and arthritis (24%) with high sodium intake. Young Canadians between the ages of 18 and 24, as well as students, are the most likely age group to believe that diabetes can result from too much sodium in a diet (43% and 46% respectively). As education level increases, so does the tendency to associate high sodium intake with most of the listed medical conditions. While retirees are more likely to associate high sodium intake with the following medical conditions, those who are single are least likely to in almost all cases.



Q41. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following medical conditions is or is not associated with high sodium intake? Base: Total (4073)

Sodium Knowledge

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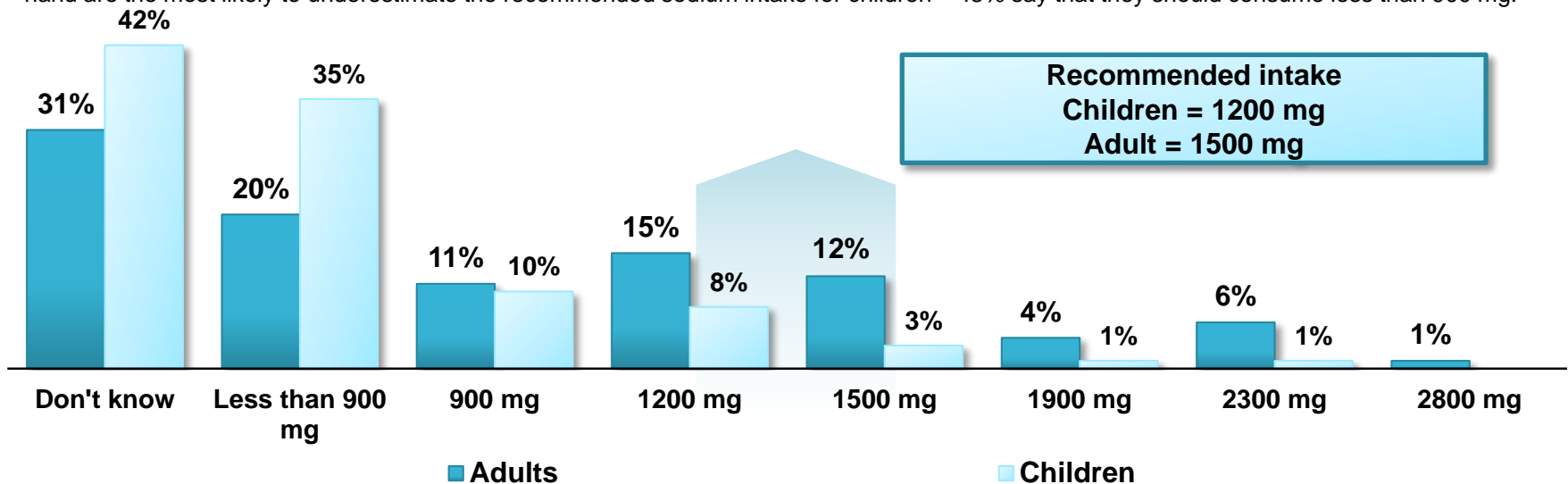
RECOMMENDED AMOUNT OF SODIUM

Many Canadians do not know their own recommended daily intake of sodium.

To promote healthy dietary choices, the United States Institute of Medicine recommends 1,500 mg of sodium per day for individuals aged 9 to 50, and up to 1,200 mg for children between the ages of 4 and 8².

Only one in ten Canadians correctly identified the recommended adult value. Over two out of five Canadians, and almost half with a high school education or less, said that they did not know what a child's recommended sodium intake might be. People with a college education or higher were the most likely to underestimate the recommended intake for children (10%).

Adults between the ages of 45 and 64 are the most likely to underestimate the recommended daily sodium intake for adults, with 24% stating that adults should consume less than 900 mg in a day while only one in ten students hold the same opinion. Residents of Quebec, on the other hand are the most likely to underestimate the recommended sodium intake for children – 43% say that they should consume less than 900 mg.



²Source: Statistics Canada. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2006004/article/sodium/4148995-eng.htm>

Q9. As far as you know, what is the recommended amount of sodium that adults aged 19 to 50 years should have in one day? Base: Total (n=4073)/ Q10. As far as you know, what is the recommended amount of sodium that children aged 4 to 8 years should have in one day? Base: Total (n=4073)

Sodium Knowledge

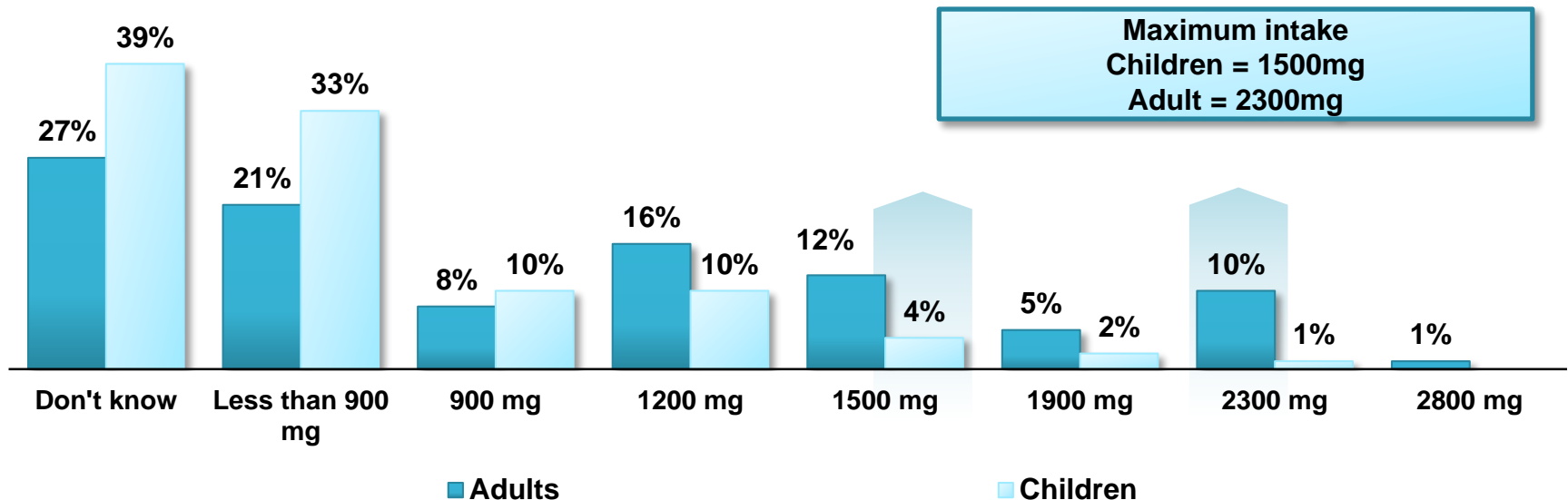
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MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF SODIUM

Most Canadians have little knowledge of maximum sodium intake levels for adults or children.

As a tolerable upper intake level, the United States Institute of Medicine established a maximum of 1,500 mg of sodium per day for children between the ages of 4 and 8, and up to 2,300 mg for those over the age of 13³. One in ten Canadians correctly identified the maximum level of sodium for adults, while fewer than one in ten identified the correct intake level for children. Encouragingly, many Canadians underestimated what the maximum tolerable levels for both adults and children were. That said, a substantial proportion indicated that they are unsure of what the maximum levels might be, while those with a high school education or less being the most likely to not know the maximum amount for either children (33%) or adults (44%).

Women are the most likely to believe that the maximum adult intake of sodium is less than 900 mg (23%), while men are more likely to say that they do not know what the maximum intake might be (29%).



³Source: Statistics Canada. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2006004/article/sodium/4148995-eng.htm>

Q7. As far as you know, what is the maximum amount of sodium that adults aged 19 to 50 years should have in one day? Base: Base: Total (n=4073) / Q8. As far as you know, what is the maximum amount of sodium that children aged 4 to 8 years should have in one day? Base: Total (n=4073)

Sodium Knowledge

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LARGEST SOURCE OF SODIUM

The consensus among Canadians is that processed foods account for most of Canadians' sodium intake.

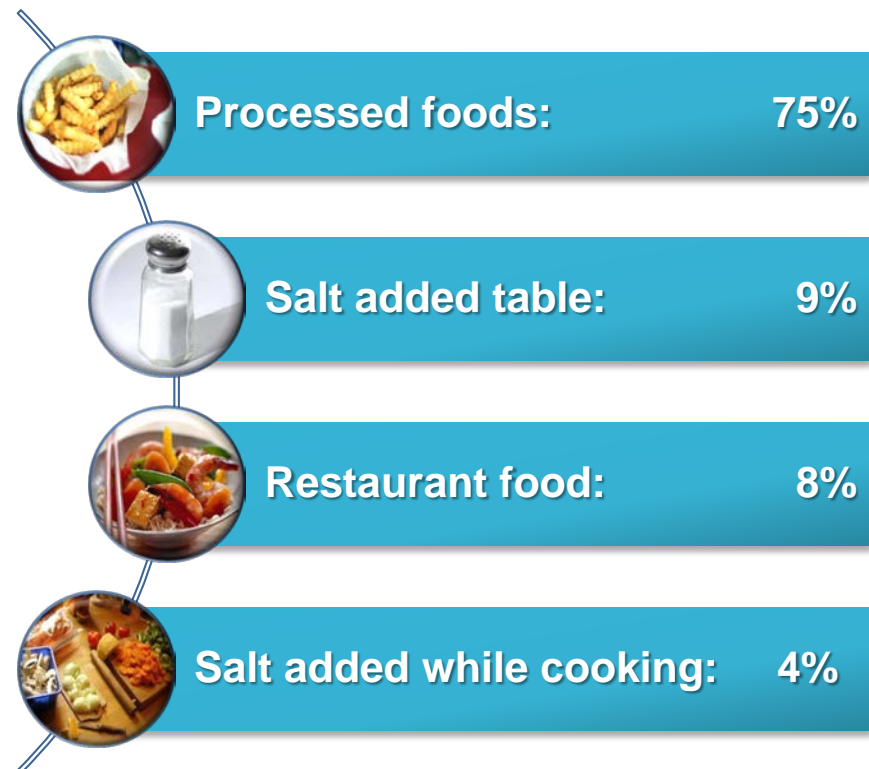
Overwhelmingly, Canadians point to processed foods as the largest contributor of sodium in their diets. Another one in ten believe that salt added at the table (9%) and restaurant foods (8%) constitute the greatest source of sodium in Canadian diets.

Young Canadians between the ages of 18 and 24 are the *least* likely to say that processed foods contribute the most sodium (61%), and are the *most* likely to identify restaurant foods (14%) as the largest source of sodium. This assertion is unsurprising given that this age group is also among the most likely to eat a meal prepared away from home once a week or more (40%).

As education level increases, Canadians are more and more likely to pick processed foods as the largest source of sodium in the Canadian diet.

Like young Canadians, those who are singles are more likely to eat away from home and, similarly, view restaurant food as a large source of sodium in their diet.

The largest source of sodium in Canadian diets is...



Don't know 4%

Evaluating Sodium Content

Evaluating Sodium Content

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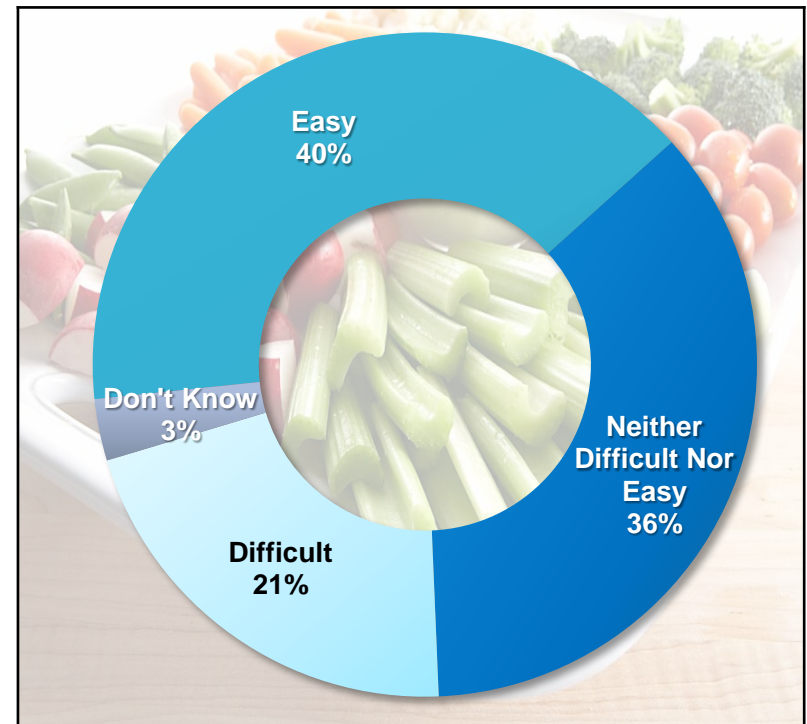
DETERMINING SODIUM CONTENT

Older Canadians have more difficulty determining a product's sodium content than younger Canadians.

Although two in five Canadians believe that it is at least *somewhat* easy to determine which foods are low in sodium, one in five say that the opposite is true. Interestingly, those married and those without children in the household find it more difficult to determine which foods are low sodium than those with children or single Canadians (23% vs. 17% say it is difficult). Canadians over the age of 55, and retirees, have the most difficulty determining which foods are low in sodium content, with 29% saying that this task is at least *somewhat difficult* for them.



How difficult is it to determine which foods are low sodium?



Evaluating Sodium Content

36

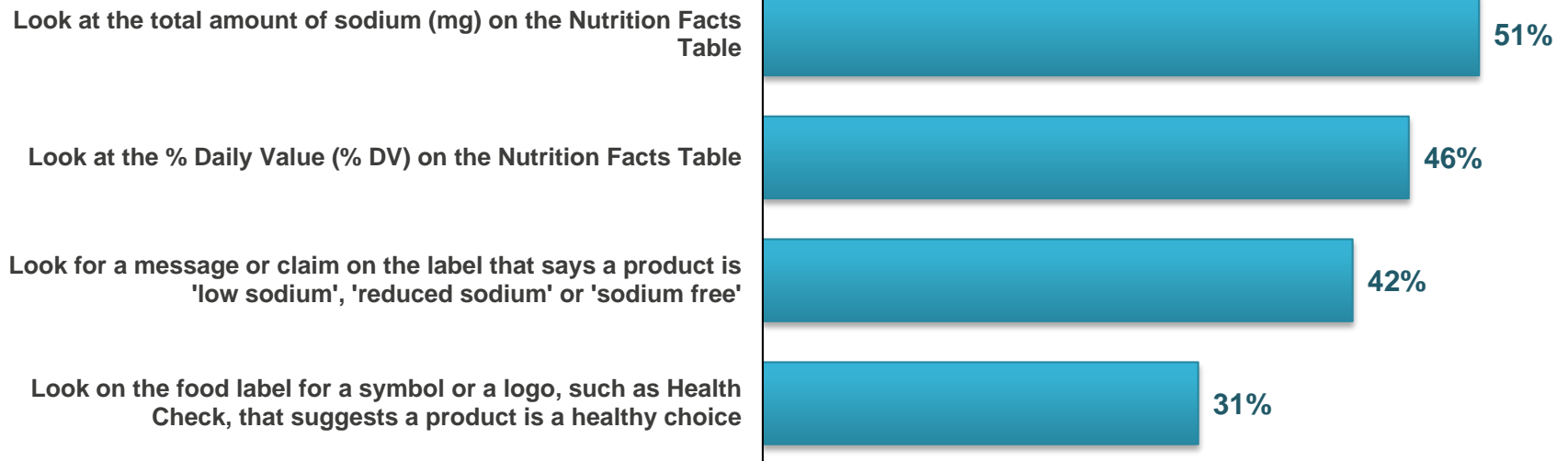
FINDING LOW SODIUM OPTIONS

Canadians focus on the Nutrition Facts Table when looking for a low-sodium food product.

Half of Canadians (51%) *often* or *always* look at the Nutrition Facts Table to find the total amount of sodium in a food product. A similar proportion (46%) look at the Daily Value percentage on that same table. Canadians are less concerned with logos such as Health Check when they are determining the sodium content of a product. In each case, women and retirees are more likely to *often* or *always* adopt each of the approaches listed below in order to find the lowest sodium options, while Canadians who are not married are the least likely to do so.

Do you/would you do any of the following to find the lowest sodium food choice?

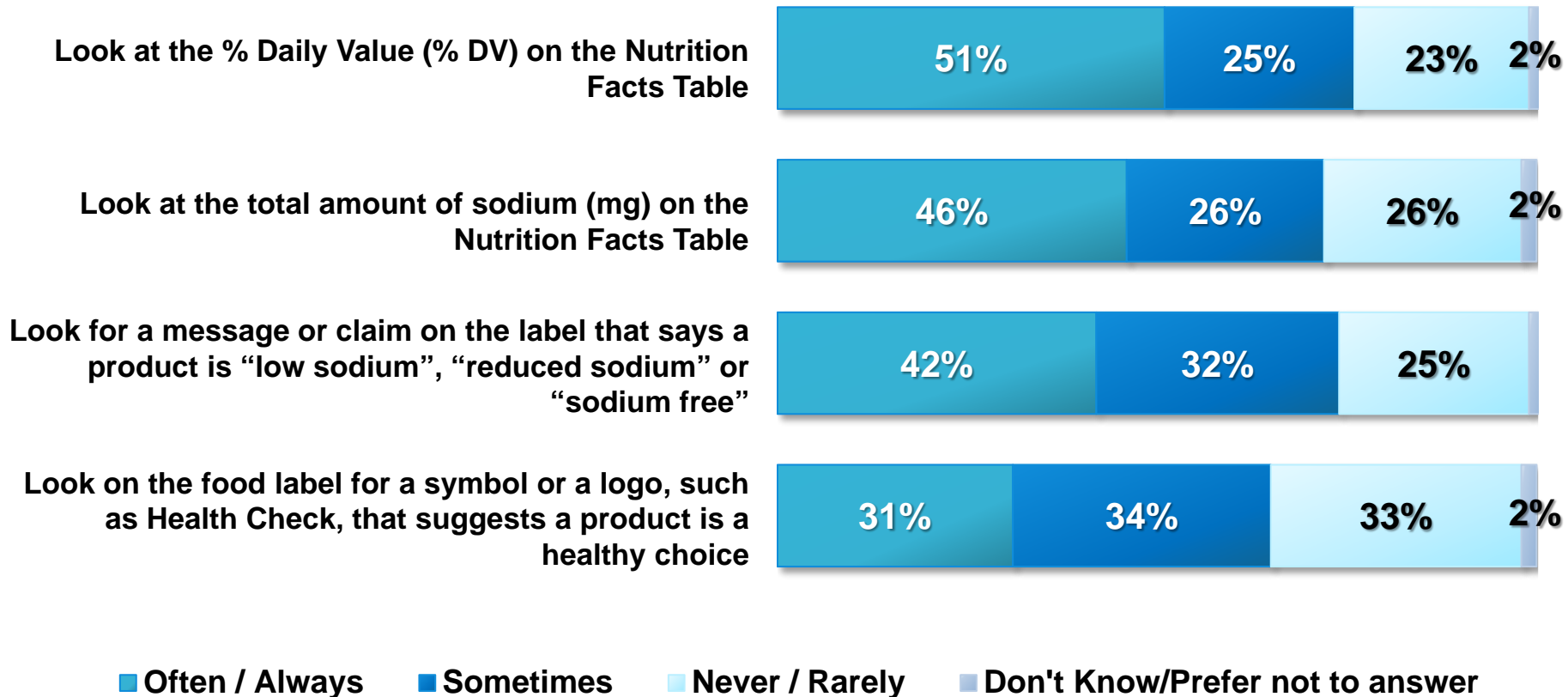
(Summary of often / always)



Evaluating Sodium Content

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DIFFICULTY DETERMINING SODIUM CONTENT (DETAILED BREAKDOWN)



Evaluating Sodium Content

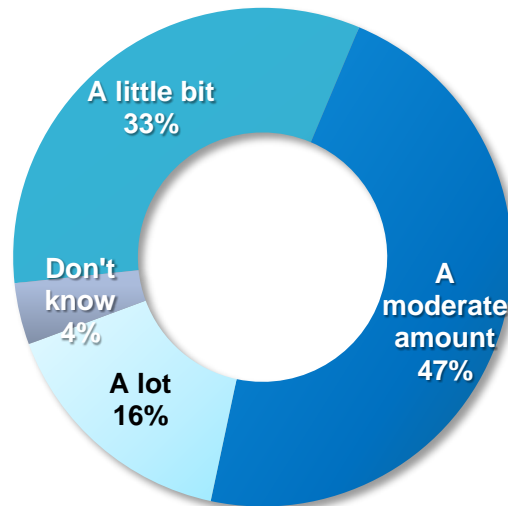
38

SODIUM IN CHEESE PRODUCTS

Canadians are cautious when they estimate how much sodium a product contains relative to their recommended daily intake.

Despite having the lowest sodium content of the three labels, half (47%) of respondents estimated that this product contained a *moderate* amount of sodium. A third believe that it contains a *little bit*, and more than one in ten believe that it contains a *lot*. Men are more likely than women to believe that this label shows a *little bit* of sodium (36% vs. 30% respectively) as are those that work compared to those retired (36% vs. 26%).

How much sodium do you think is in this product?



Nutrition Facts Valeur nutritive	
Per 30 g serving Par portion de 30 g	
Amount Teneur	% Daily Value % valeur quotidienne
Calories / Calories	120
Fat / Lipides	10 g 15 %
Saturated / saturés	6 g 32 %
+Trans / trans	0.3 g
Cholesterol / Cholestérol	30 mg
Sodium / Sodium	105 mg 4 %
Carbohydrates / Glucides	1 g 1 %
Fibre / Fibres	0 g 0 %
Sugars / Sucres	0 g
Protein / Protéines	7 g
Vitamin A / Vitamine A	10 %
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	0 %
Calcium / Calcium	20 %
Iron / Fer	0 %

Q14. This is a Nutrition Facts Table for a cheese product. If we were to ask you to judge how much sodium is in this product, would you say it has "a little bit," "a moderate amount," or "a lot" of sodium? Base: Those who saw Nutrition Fact Table A (n=1359).

Evaluating Sodium Content

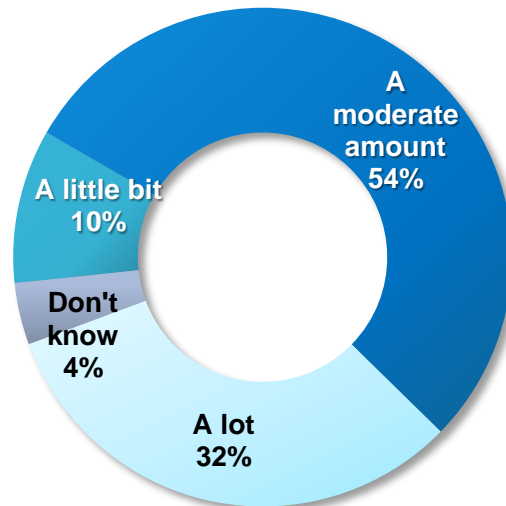
39

SODIUM IN CHEESE PRODUCTS

Canadians most commonly estimate that this product contains a moderate amount of sodium.

Half (54%) of Canadians say that a cheese product that contains 220 mg of sodium would be considered to have a moderate amount of sodium. Another third (32%) suggest that this quantity of sodium would qualify as *a lot* of sodium, while only one in ten (10%) believe that this product contains *a little bit* of sodium.

How much sodium do you think is in this product?



Nutrition Facts Valeur nutritive

Per 30 g serving
Par portion de 30 g

Amount Teneur	% Daily Value % valeur quotidienne
Calories / Calories 120	
Fat / Lipides 10 g	15 %
Saturated / saturés 6 g +Trans / trans 0.3 g	32 %
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 30 mg	
Sodium / Sodium 220 mg	9 %
Carbohydrates / Glucides 1 g	1 %
Fibre / Fibres 0 g	0 %
Sugars / Sucres 0 g	
Protein / Protéines 7 g	
Vitamin A / Vitamine A	10 %
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	0 %
Calcium / Calcium	20 %
Iron / Fer	0 %

Q14. This is a Nutrition Facts Table for a cheese product. If we were to ask you to judge how much sodium is in this product, would you say it has "a little bit," "a moderate amount," or "a lot" of sodium? Base: Those who saw Nutrition Fact Table B (n=1351).

Evaluating Sodium Content

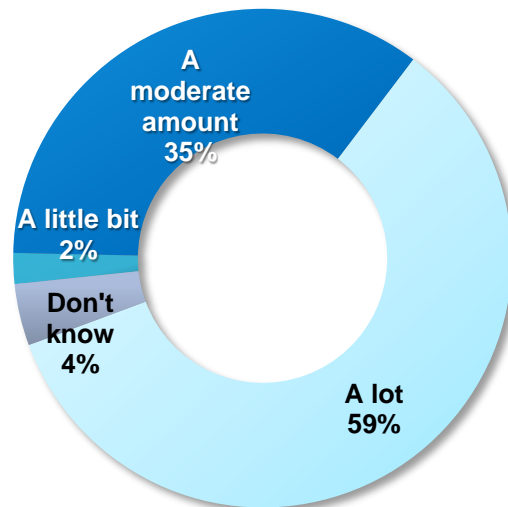
40

SODIUM IN CHEESE PRODUCTS

More than a third believe that 428 mg is a *moderate amount* of sodium.

Although most (58%) respondents correctly assume that this product contains a *lot* of sodium, a substantial proportion (35%) still believe that 428 mg only constitutes a *moderate amount* of sodium. Three percent even suggest that this product would only contain a *little bit* of sodium. Interestingly, those that are married had the highest likelihood of identifying this product as high in sodium (64% vs. 53% Canadians who are not married).

How much sodium do you think is in this product?



Nutrition Facts Valeur nutritive	
Per 30 g serving Par portion de 30 g	
Amount Teneur	% Daily Value % valeur quotidienne
Calories / Calories	120
Fat / Lipides 10 g	15 %
Saturated / saturés 6 g +Trans / trans 0.3 g	32 %
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 30 mg	
Sodium / Sodium 428 mg	18 %
Carbohydrates / Glucides 1 g	1 %
Fibre / Fibres 0 g	0 %
Sugars / Sucres 0 g	
Protein / Protéines 7 g	
Vitamin A / Vitamine A	10 %
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	0 %
Calcium / Calcium	20 %
Iron / Fer	0 %

Q14. This is a Nutrition Facts Table for a cheese product. If we were to ask you to judge how much sodium is in this product, would you say it has "a little bit," "a moderate amount," or "a lot" of sodium? Base: Those who saw Nutrition Fact Table C (n=1363).

Evaluating Sodium Content

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DETERMINING SODIUM CONTENT

Six different foods are most commonly perceived to be high in sodium.

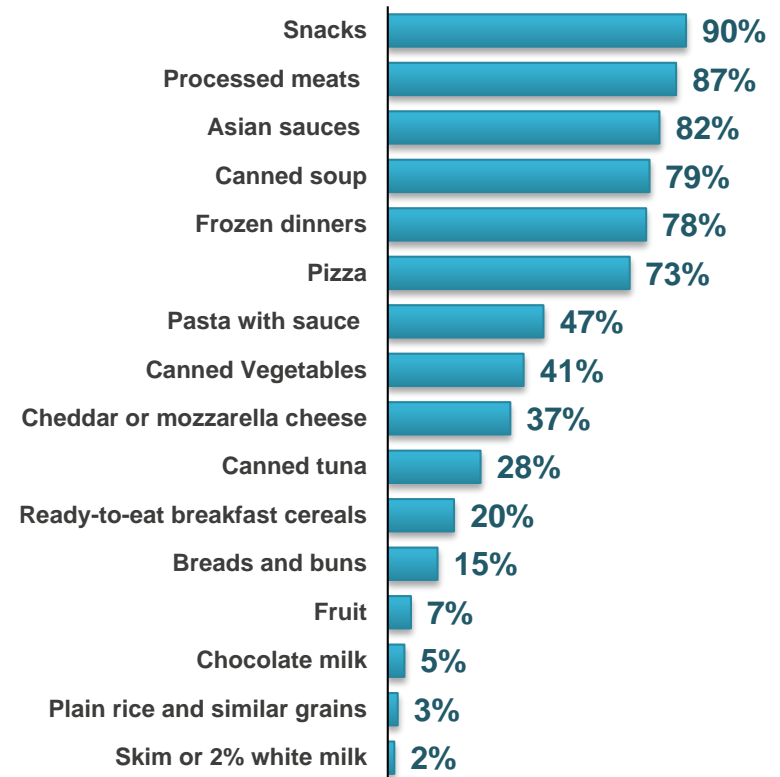
Snacks, processed meats, Asian sauces, canned soup and pizza are top of mind when Canadians think about foods with *a lot* of sodium. In most cases, women are more likely than men to identify these foods as high-sodium products.

There are some regional variations in which foods are considered to have *a lot* of sodium; Residents of Quebec are among the most likely to identify pizza as a high-sodium dish (79%), and are the most likely to say that cheddar or mozzarella cheese share this trait (44%). Albertans, on the other hand, target Asian sauces more often than most, with 88% saying that these products contain *a lot* of sodium.

For almost every food type, Canadians with a high school education or less are the least likely to identify them as high-sodium products.

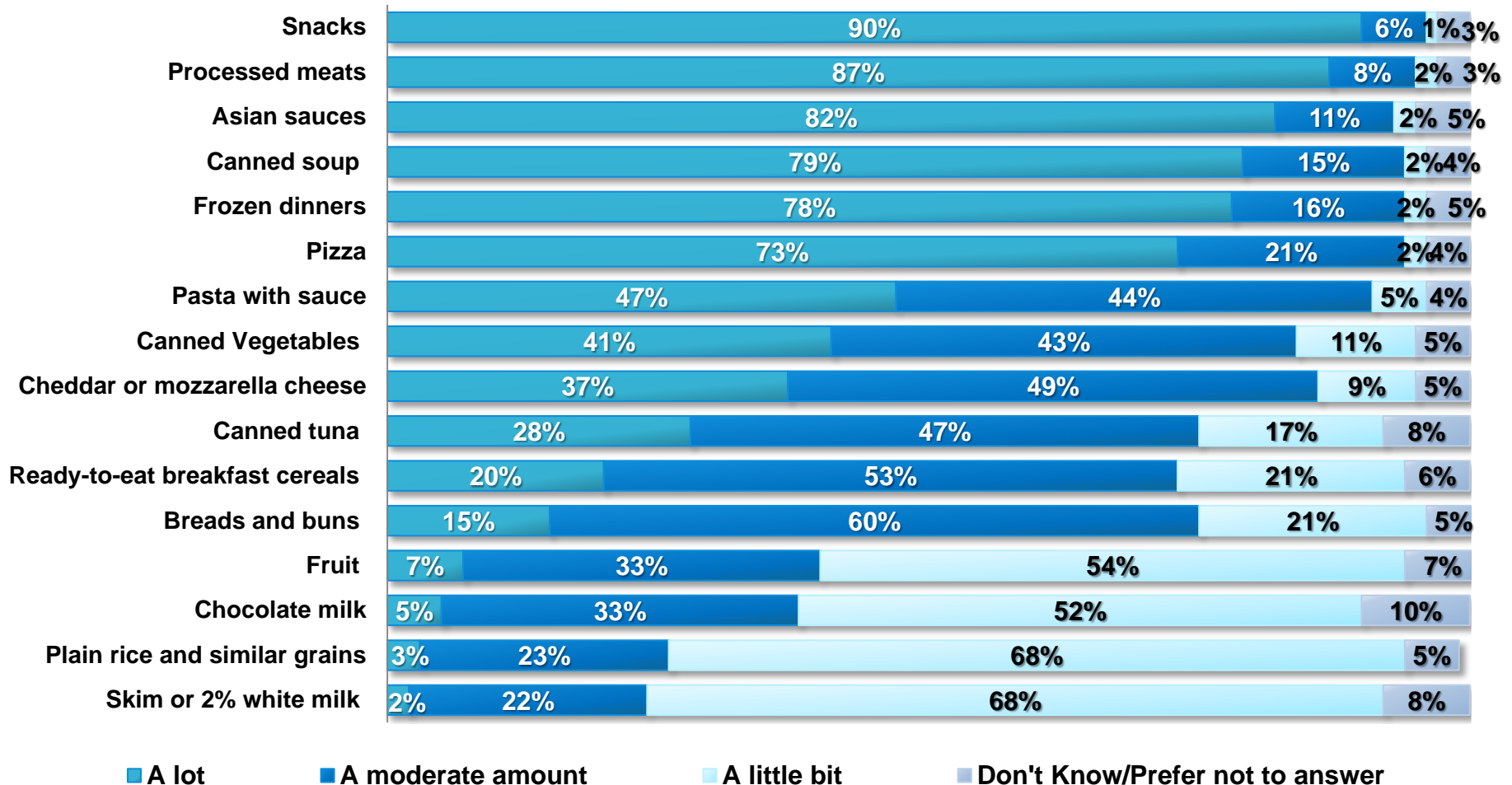
Retired and Canadians who are not married on the other hand are the most likely to believe that these foods are high in sodium.

Foods with *a lot* of sodium



Evaluating Sodium Content

DETERMINING SODIUM CONTENT (DETAILED BREAKDOWN)



Q16. For each of the following types of food, please tell me if you think a normal serving contains "a little bit," "a moderate amount," or "a lot" of sodium. Base: Total (n=4073)

Evaluating Sodium Content

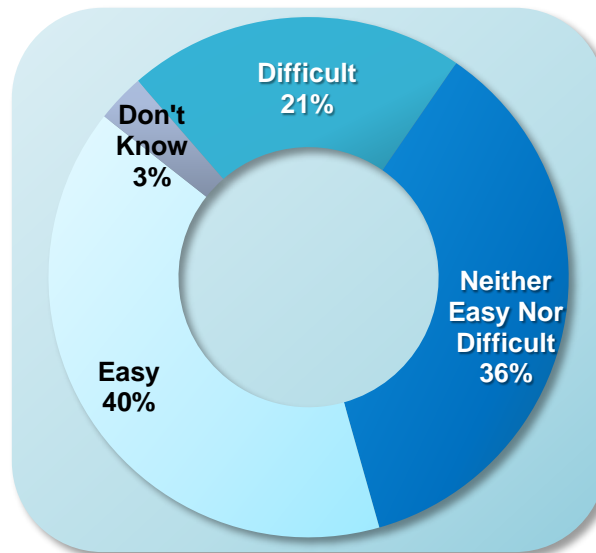
43

DIFFICULTY DETERMINING SODIUM CONTENT: BEFORE AND AFTER

Answering questions concerning sodium content in food has little affect on the perceived difficulty of identifying low-sodium options.

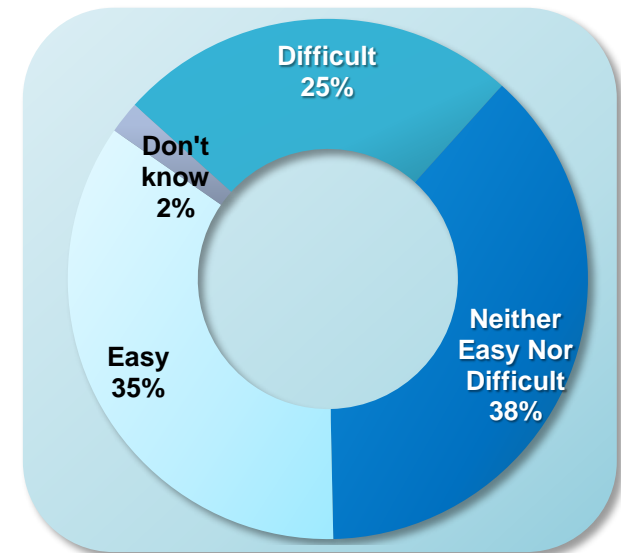
Prior to answering questions concerning the sodium content in both a hypothetical cheese product and the amount of sodium in a variety of product categories, one in five (21%) respondents indicated that they found it difficult to determine which foods are low in sodium. Upon being asked the same question again, that proportion increased by 4% to one in four.

How difficult do you think it is to determine which foods are low sodium?



Q13. How difficult or easy do you think it is to determine which foods are **low or reduced in sodium**? Base: Total (n=4073)

Upon completing the previous questions, now how difficult do you believe it is to identify low-sodium foods?



Q17 After completing the previous questions, now what do you think about... Base: Total (n=4073)

Eating Habits

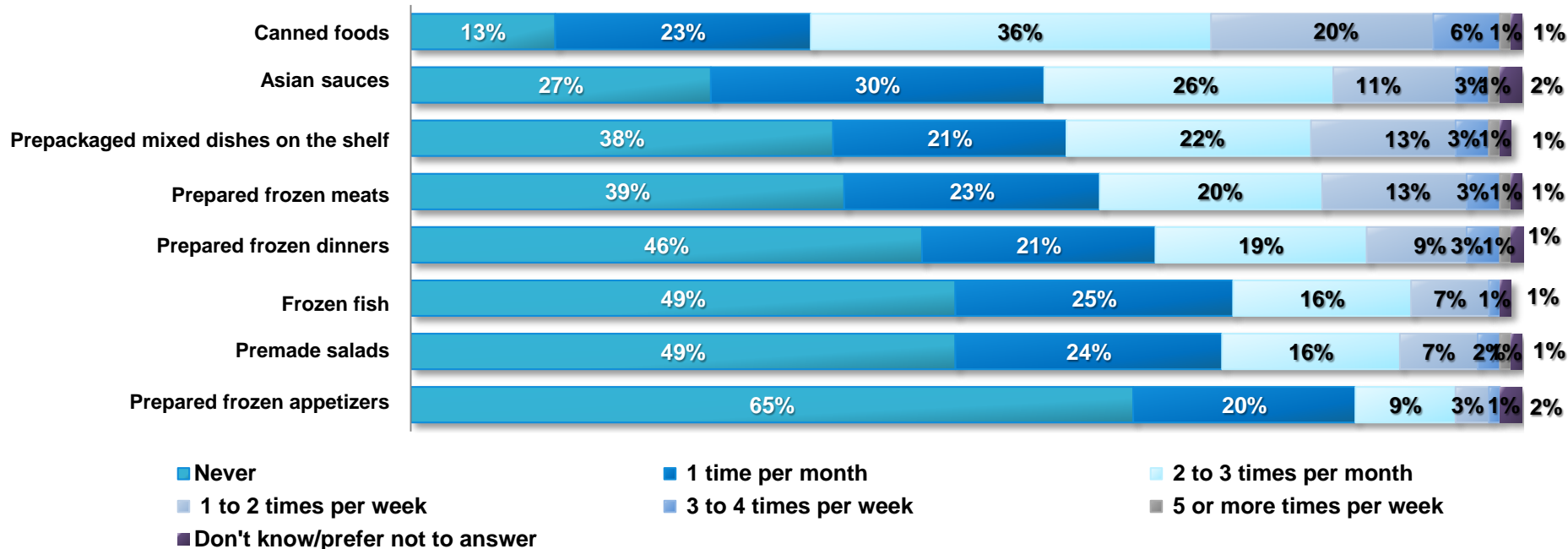
Eating Habits

45

FREQUENCY OF FOOD CONSUMPTION

Men tend to consume more pre-made foods when compared to women.

Eighty-six percent of Canadians consume canned foods at least once per month. Seventy-one percent consume Asian sauces once per month or more, and 60% consume pre-packaged mixed dishes and frozen meats at the same rate. Prepared frozen appetizers are the least popular item on the list, with 65% having *never* consumed them in the past month. Men are more likely than women to have consumed an item from most of these product categories at least once in the past month. Specifically, in the past month men have consumed frozen fish (54%), frozen meats (65%), prepared frozen appetizers (39%), prepared frozen dinners (55%), premade salads (54%), and pre-packaged mixed dishes (63%) at least once. Generally, those with children and those working are more likely to have consumed each of these foods at least once.



Q18. Over the PAST MONTH, how often did you eat... Base: Total (n=4073)

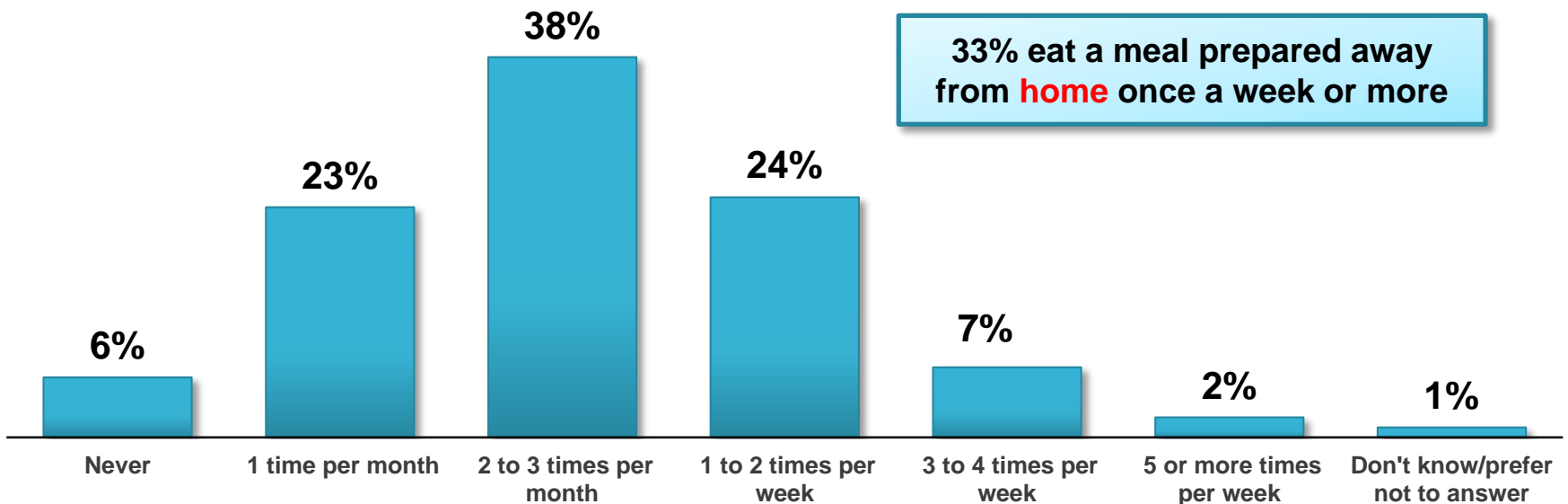
Eating Habits

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EATING AWAY FROM HOME

Virtually all Canadians eat a meal that was prepared away from home at least once a month.

While 93% of Canadians eat away from home at least once per month, many do so in moderation: six in ten (61%) eat away from home 2 to 3 times per month or less. The tendency to frequently eat away from home is concentrated among younger age groups – 43% of those under the age of 34 eat a meal that was prepared away from home once a week or more. Virtually all students eat a meal prepared away from home once per month or more and one third eat away from home one to two times a week. Working Canadians, however, have the greatest tendency to eat away from home almost everyday (3%).



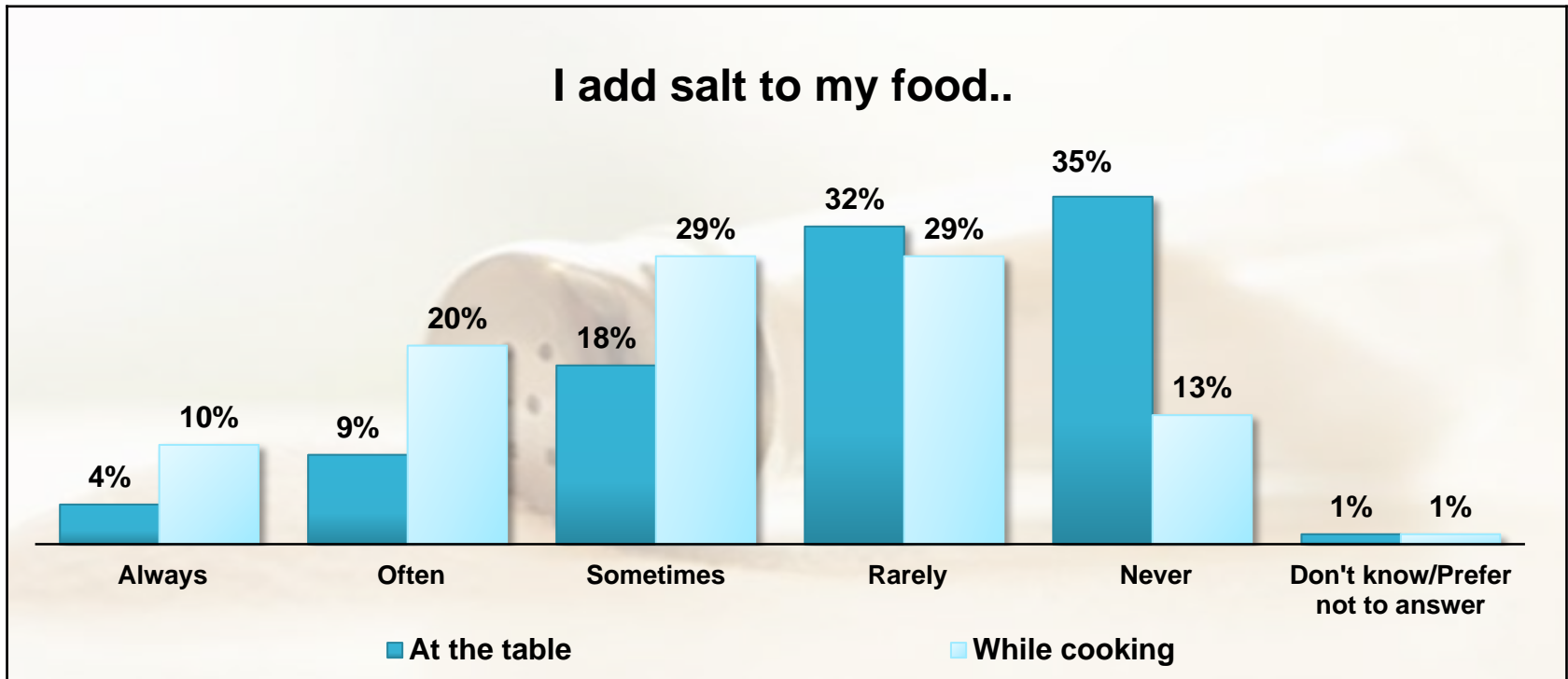
Q20. In a typical month, how often do you eat a meal prepared away from home (e.g. in a sit-down restaurant, fast food restaurant like McDonalds, café like Tim Hortons, etc.)? Base: Total (n=4073).

Eating Habits

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Canadians often cook with salt, and many add it at the table

The majority of Canadians cook with salt at least sometimes (86%). Additionally, 32% still add salt at the table at least *sometimes*. Residents of Quebec are by far the most likely to add salt when they cook, with 39% *often* or *always* adding it at this stage of their meal preparation. Individuals with children are also more likely to add salt to their meals as they cook compared to those without children (33% vs. 28%). The tendency to add salt to meals while cooking decreases with age – 49% of those over the age of 55 *rarely* or *never* add salt while cooking meals. Similarly, as education level increases, the tendency to add salt to food at the table decreases, however, students have the greatest tendency to add salt while cooking with two in five doing so, compared to 29% of those working or retired.



Q21. How often do you add salt to your food **at the table**? Base: Total (n=4073) / Q22. How often is salt added in **cooking** or **preparing** foods in your household? Base: Total (n=4073)

Eating Habits

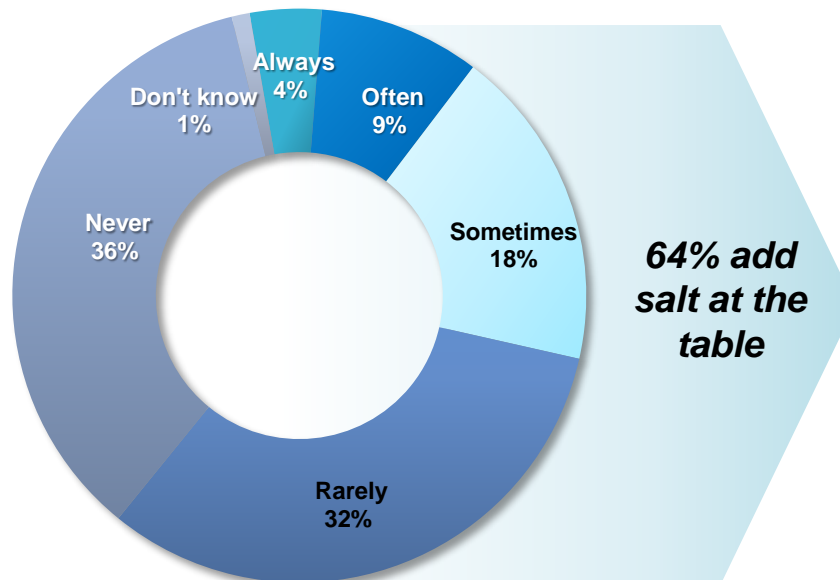
48

PREFERRED TYPE OF TABLE SALT

Men and women exhibit preferences when choosing table salt.

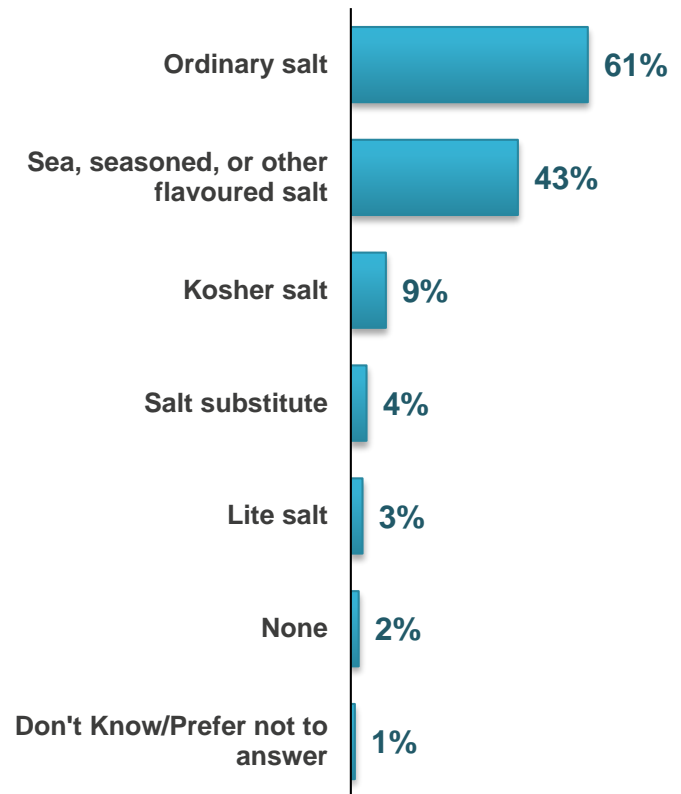
Ordinary salt is the top choice for salt among those who salt their meals at the table, while sea salt or a flavoured salt are preferred by two in five (43%). Men have propensity to choose ordinary salt (64%), while women are more likely than men to opt for sea, seasoned or flavoured salt (45%).

How often do you add salt to your food at the table?



Q21. How often do you add salt to your food **at the table**?
Base: Total (n=4073)

Which type of salt do you use?



Q23. What type of salt do you usually add to your food **at the table**? Base: Those who add salt at the table (n=2595)

Eating Habits

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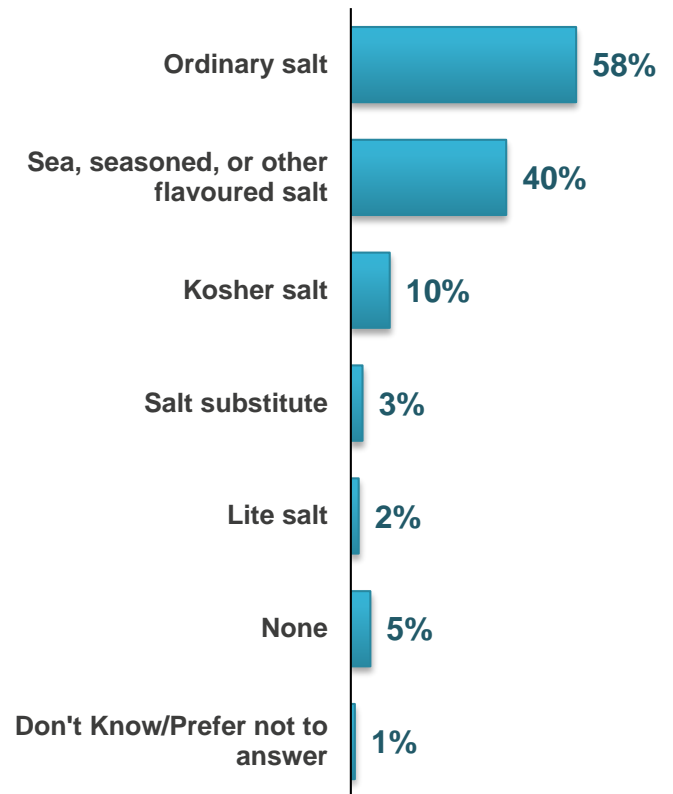
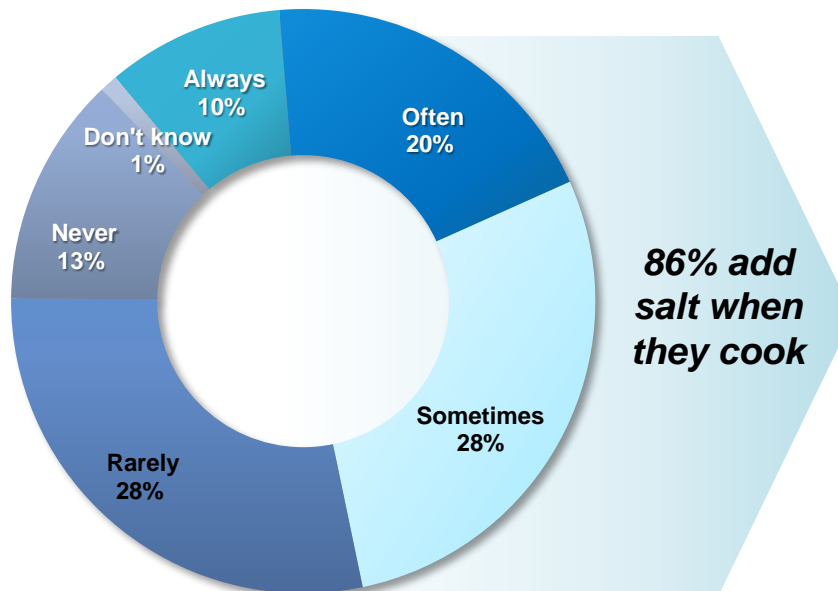
PREFERRED TYPE OF TABLE SALT

Canadians prefer the same types of salt for both their tables and their cooking.

In similar proportions, Canadians prefer ordinary salt for both their tables and for cooking. Four in ten prefer sea salt or other flavoured salt, which mirrors the proportion of those who prefer these types of salt for their tables.

Which type of salt do you use?

How often do you add salt to your food when you cook?



Q22. How often is salt added in **cooking** or **preparing** foods in your household? Base: Total (n=4073)

Q24. What type of salt do you usually add to your food **during cooking**? Base: Those who add salt to their food during cooking (n=3496)

Limiting Sodium Intake

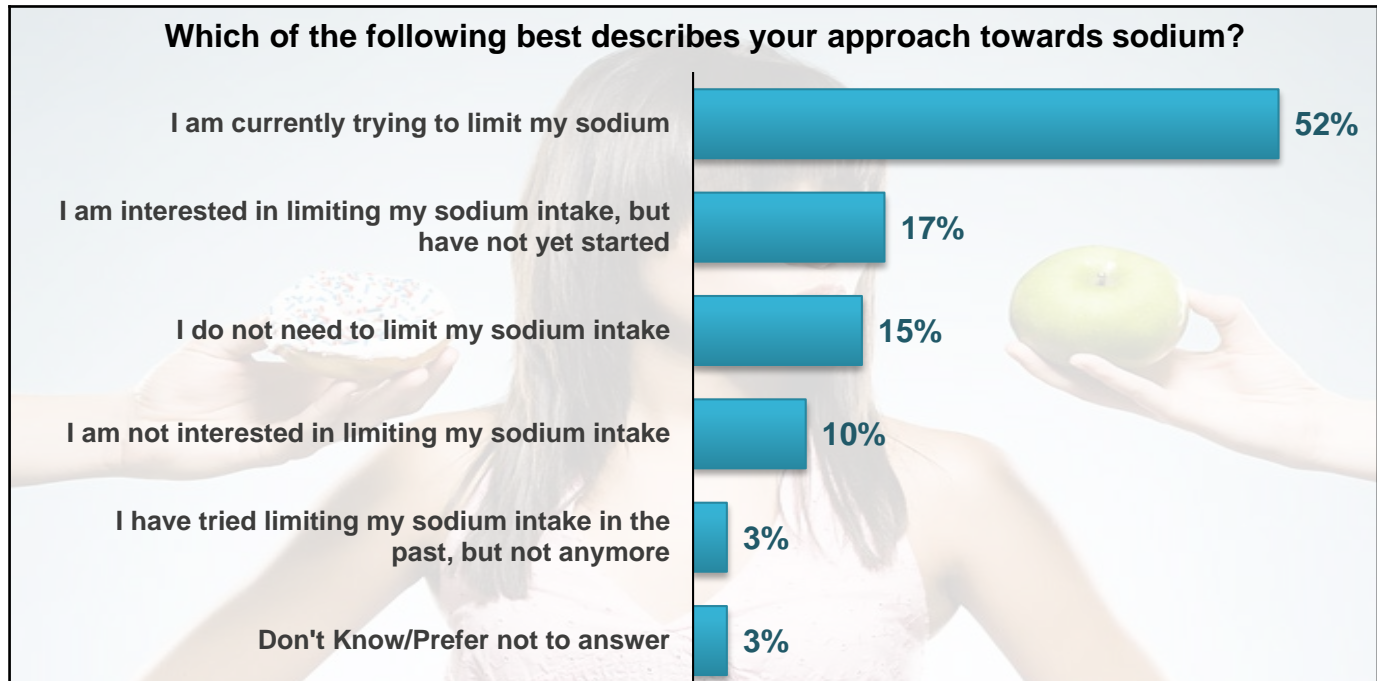
Limiting Sodium Intake

51

APPROACH TOWARDS LIMITING SODIUM

Most Canadians are interested in reducing their sodium intake.

Seventy-two percent of Canadians are currently limiting, are interested in limiting, or have attempted to limit their sodium intake in the past. A majority are currently engaged in reducing their sodium levels, while one in five are interested in limiting their intake but have yet to start. The latter trend is most common in Quebec (21%), while the former is more common among those over the age of 55 (70%). Interestingly, while one third of students are not limiting their sodium intake, an almost equal proportion are interested but have yet to start limiting their sodium consumption. Whereas, 81% of retirees are already limiting their intake.



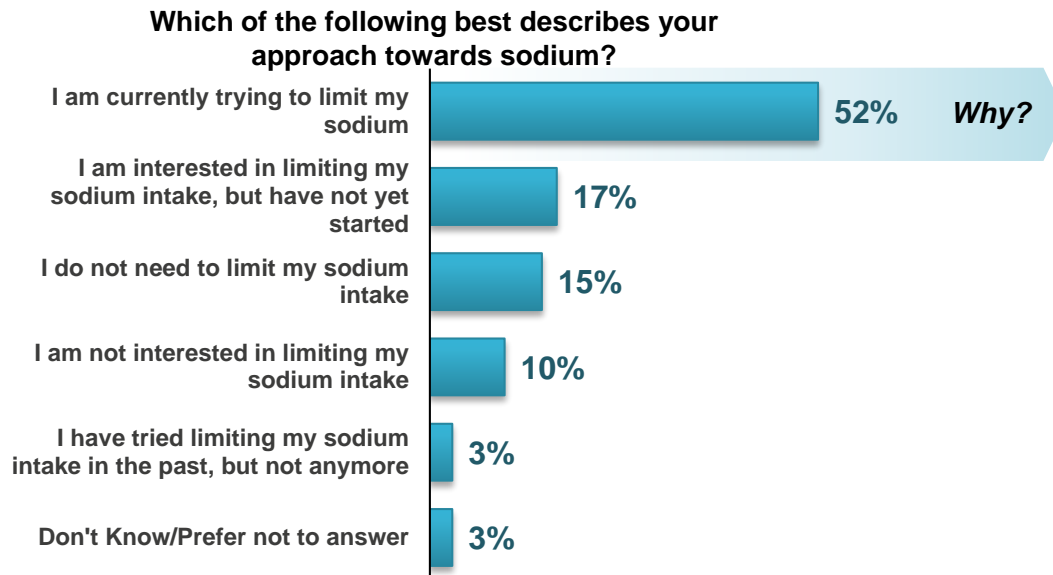
Limiting Sodium Intake

52

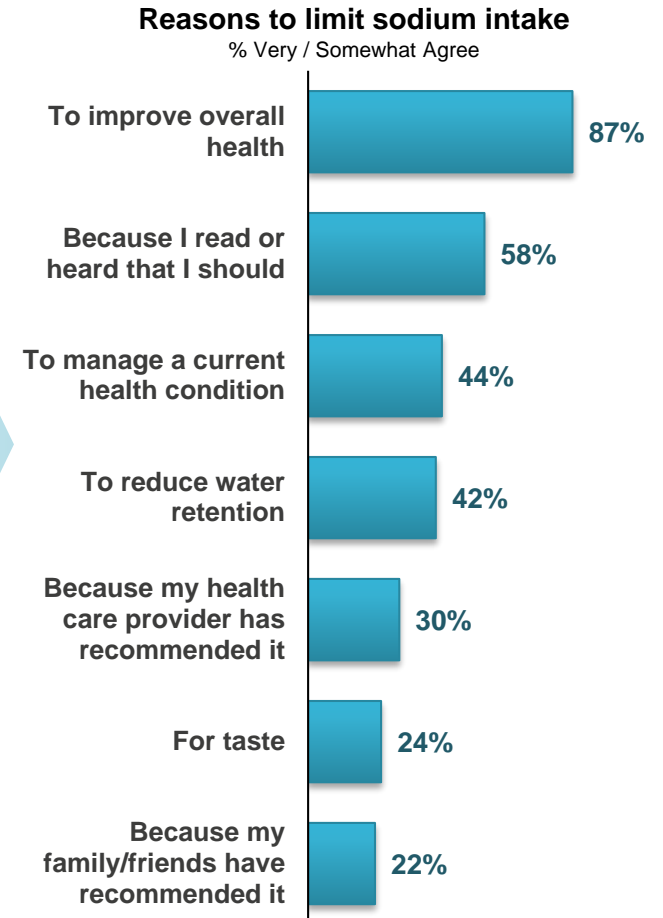
REASONS TO LIMIT SODIUM INTAKE

Improving overall health is the most common reason to cut back on sodium.

Canadians who either are currently trying or have tried in the past to limit their sodium intake nearly unanimously agree that their efforts have been aimed at improving their overall health. Women from this group are particularly apt to agree with this assessment (89% vs. 84% of men). The majority of Canadians from this group are also likely to have undertaken a sodium reduction plan because they read or heard that they should – this is particularly common among those over the age of 55 (53%). In fact, individuals in this age group, and retired Canadians, are more likely to agree with virtually all of the statements listed. Students however, are the least likely to agree with almost all of the statements.



Q31. Which of the following best describes your approach towards sodium? Base: Total (n=4073)



Q32. Please tell us the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements as reasons for limiting (or trying to limit) your sodium intake. Base: Those who currently or previous have tried to limit sodium intake (n=2988)

Limiting Sodium Intake

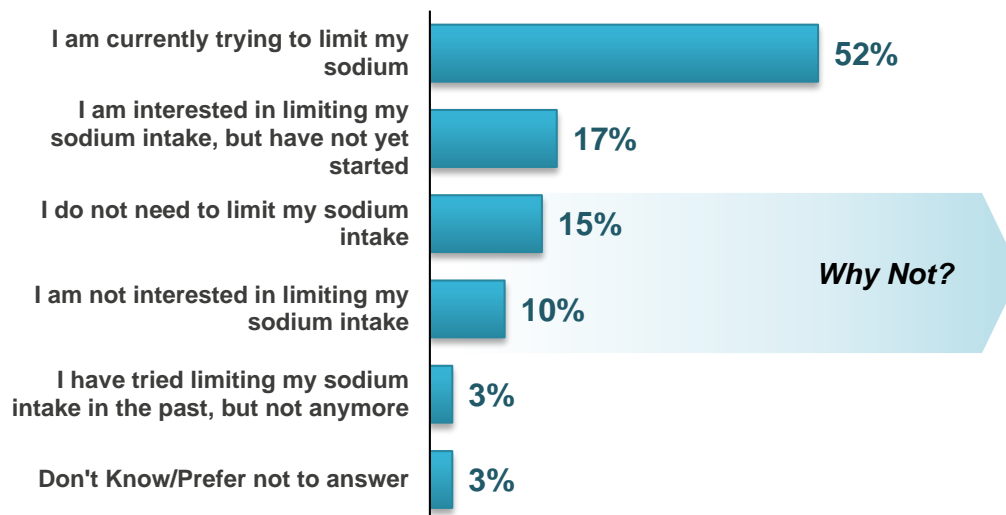
53

REASONS NOT TO LIMIT SODIUM INTAKE

Many who are not trying to limit the sodium in their diet do not feel that it is necessary given their current level of health.

Most who are not actively monitoring their sodium intake believe that they are in good health and do not need to concern themselves with how much salt is in their diet. Forty-two percent indicate that they would only consider monitoring their sodium intake on the advice of a health care provider, while about a third say that their sodium consumption is not a subject that they particularly care about (35%).

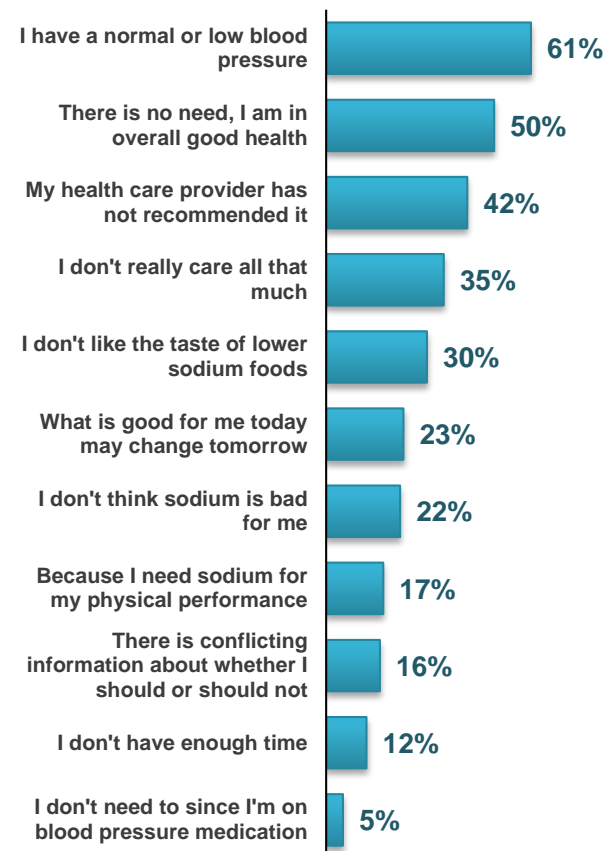
Which of the following best describes your approach towards sodium?



Q31. Which of the following best describes your approach towards sodium? Base: Total (n=4073)

Reasons not to limit sodium intake

% Very / Somewhat Agree



Q33. Please tell us the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements as reasons for not limiting your sodium intake. Base: Those who are not trying to limit their sodium intake (n=958)

Limiting Sodium Intake

54

STRATEGIES TO LIMITING SODIUM INTAKE

Canadians have adopted a variety of strategies and approaches when attempting to limit their sodium intake.

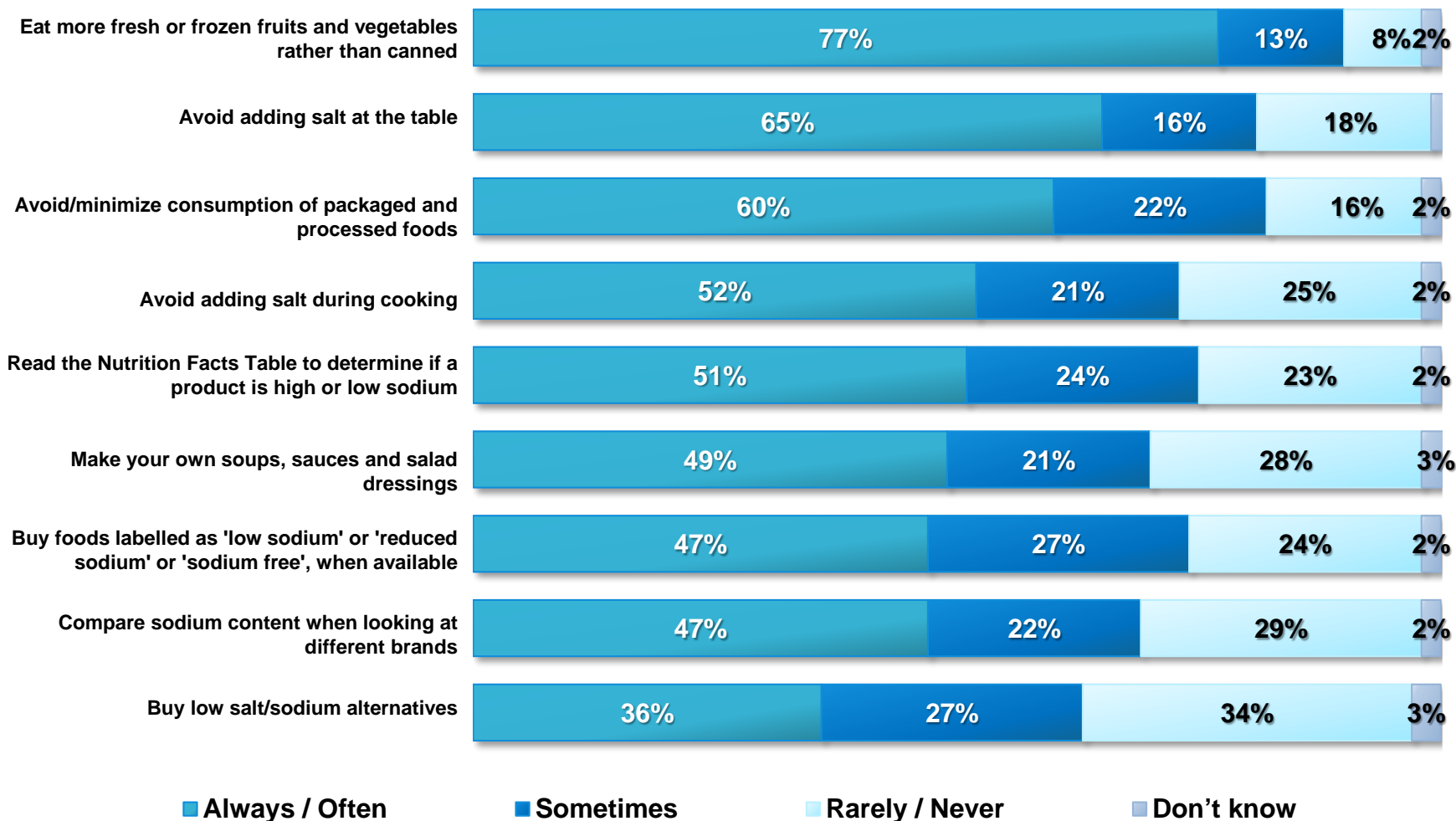
The following page details the extent to which Canadians have adopted different strategies to lower their sodium intake. The most popular approach involves eating more fresh fruits and vegetables and avoiding canned versions of these products (77% *often* or *always* adopt this approach). Many Canadians (65%) have also begun to avoid adding salt to their food at the table to curb their sodium intake. Nowhere is this trend more pronounced than in Atlantic Canada, where 64% *often* or *always* avoid adding salt at the table. Residents of Quebec, on the other hand, have embraced home-cooking as a way to limit their sodium intake; 53% *often* or *always* make their own soups, sauces and salad dressings. Interestingly, few (36%) have opted to purchase low-sodium alternatives, but instead have embraced different ways to lower their sodium intake.

In virtually every case, women and Canadians over the age of 55 are more likely than men or those under 55 (respectively) to have adopted these methods of reducing the amount of sodium in their diet.



Limiting Sodium Intake

TO LIMIT MY SODIUM INTAKE, I...



Q36. Below we have listed some of the common ways to lower the amount of sodium in your diet. In the past **month**, to what extent have you personally done any of the following, regardless of whether or not you are trying to limit your sodium? Base: Total (n=4073)

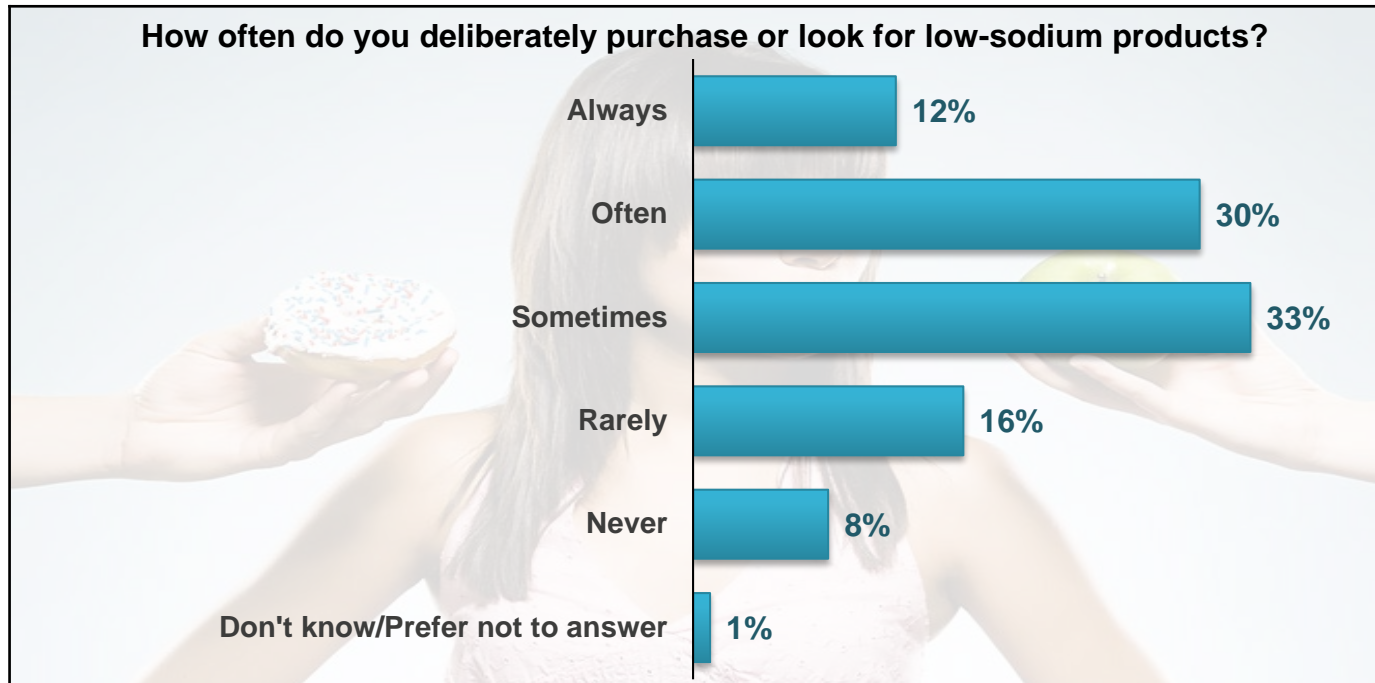
Limiting Sodium Intake

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As Canadians age they are more likely to seek out low-sodium goods.

PURCHASING LOW-SODIUM PRODUCTS

Forty-two percent of Canadians report that they *always* or *often* look for low-sodium products, with another third indicating that they *sometimes* do so (33%). Women are inclined to search out low-sodium goods more frequently than men (46% vs. 38% respectively). Interestingly, those with children are *less* likely to look for sodium reduced options – only 37% *often* or *always* do so compared to 44% of those without children. Students are the least likely to look for or purchase low/reduced sodium products with 35% saying they rarely/never do so. As Canadian age, their preference shifts gradually towards low-sodium products, with those belonging to the 65+ age group being the most likely to *always* or *often* purchase these products (60%), a trend which is also highly reflected amongst retired Canadians (59%).



Q34. How often, if at all, do you deliberately purchase or look for low or sodium reduced products? Base: Total (n=4073)

Limiting Sodium Intake

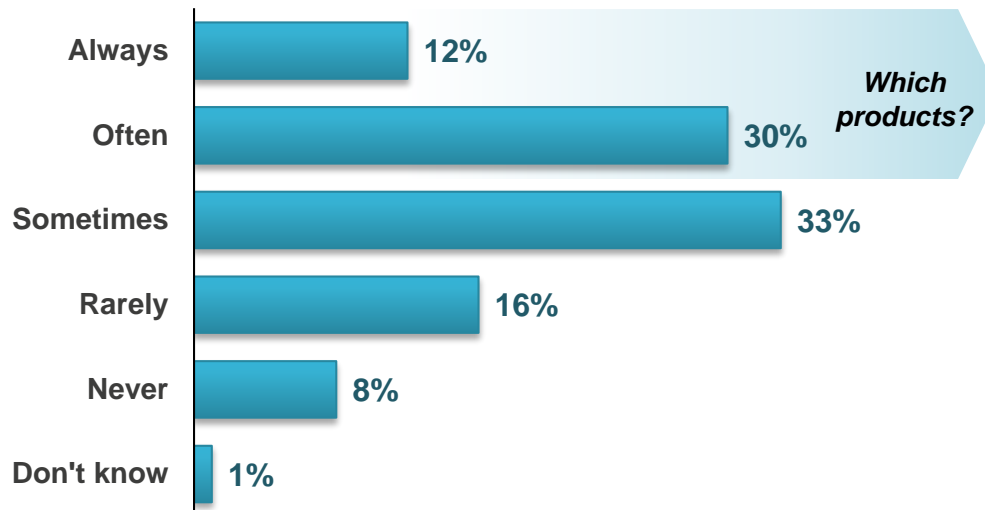
57

PURCHASING LOW-SODIUM ITEMS

Soups, crackers, canned vegetables are all popular low-sodium choices

Among those who always or often purchase soups, 65% purchase the low-sodium options as often as possible. Low-sodium crackers, canned vegetables and vegetable juices are also popular choices among those who purchase each type of product. In virtually every product category, those over the age of 55 are more likely than younger age groups to purchase the low-sodium variety. In most cases, this trend also applies to women and retired Canadians, many of whom are more likely than men to purchase a low-sodium option. In many cases, those with children are only likely to purchase the low-sodium option sometimes, while those without purchase these products more often. Those who are single have a greater tendency to avoid low sodium options than their non-single counterparts.

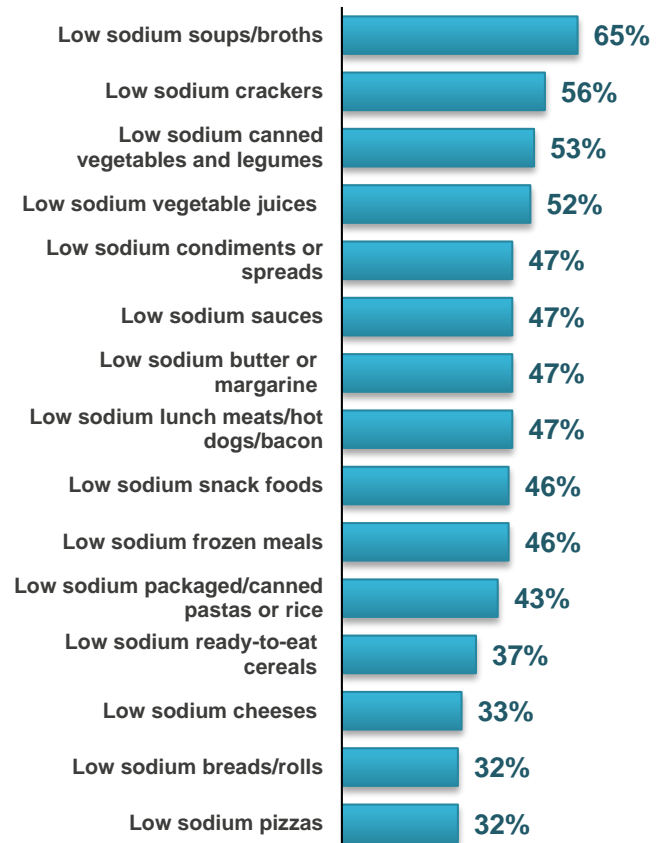
How often do you deliberately purchase or look for low-sodium products?



Q34. How often, if at all, do you deliberately purchase or look for low or sodium reduced products? Base: Total (n=4073)

Which low-sodium products do you purchase?

% Who often or always purchase among those who purchase each product



Q35. To what extent do you or a member of your household purchase or look for these lower sodium choices? Base sizes vary.

Limiting Sodium Intake

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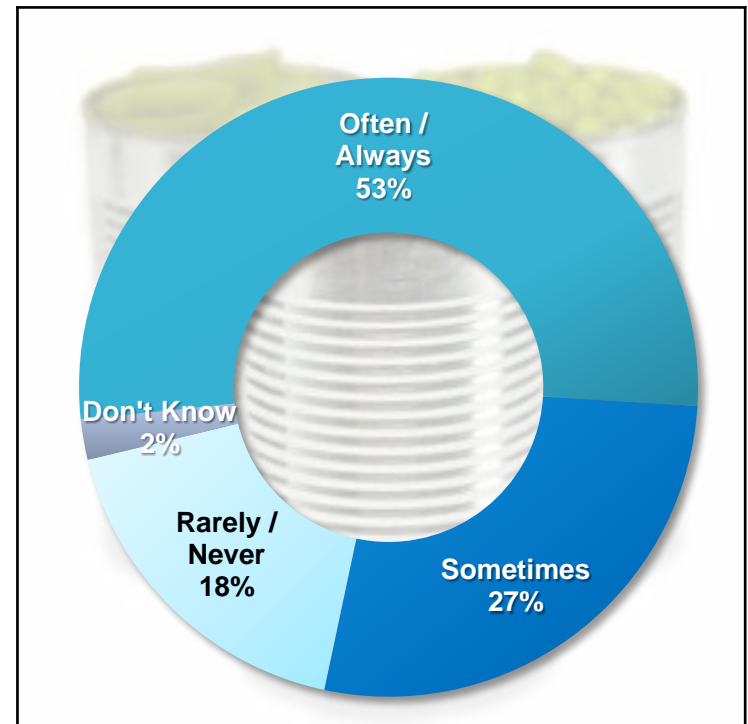
PURCHASING LOW-SODIUM CANNED GOODS

The majority of Canadians *always or often* purchase low-sodium canned goods.

As is the case with other product categories, older Canadians and women are the most likely to purchase low-sodium canned goods. Fifty-five percent of women say that they *always or often* purchase low-sodium canned goods. Older Canadians over the age of 55 and retirees are also the most likely to purchase these types of products; 59% *always or often* purchase low-sodium canned goods. Conversely, 23% of 18 to 24 years *rarely or never* purchase these types of products, a proportion that is greater than any other age group.

Canadians with a college education or higher were also more likely than those without to often or always select these options when available (52% vs. 46% respectively).

When available, how often do you purchase low-sodium canned foods?



Barriers to a Low Sodium Diet

Barriers to a Low Sodium Diet

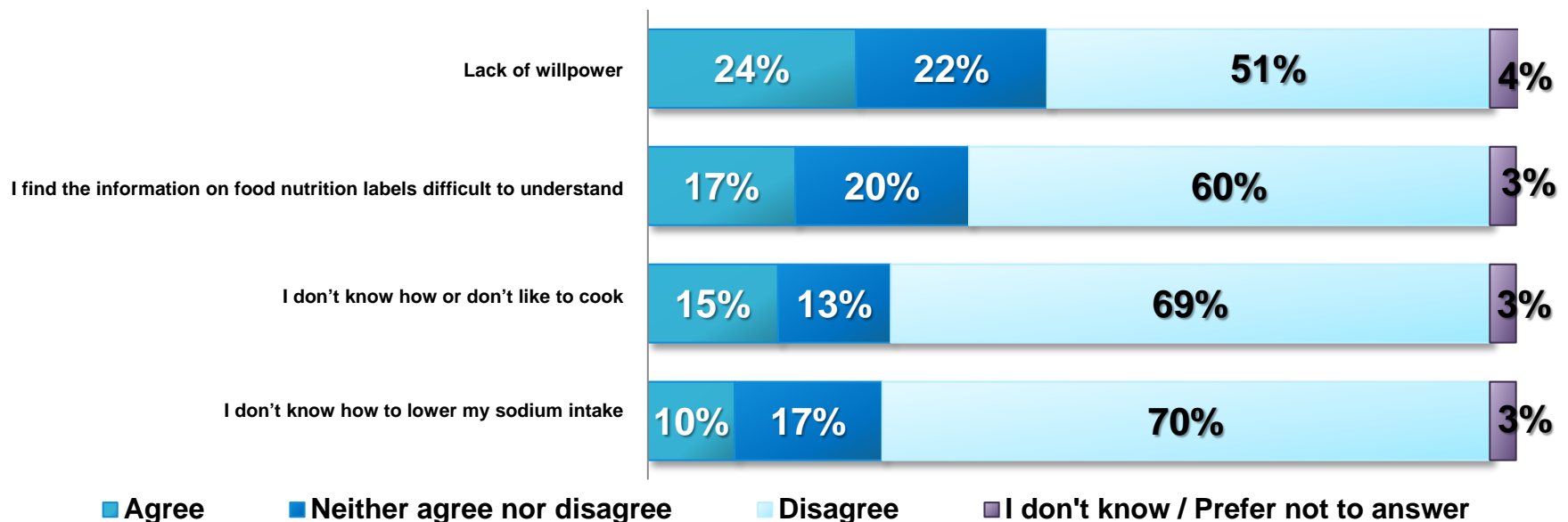
60

PERSONAL BARRIERS

One in four identify a lack of willpower as an obstacle preventing them from reducing their sodium intake.

A lack of willpower is still the most commonly acknowledged personal obstacle that Canadians face when attempting to reduce their sodium intake. Older Canadians over the age of 55 are the most likely to highlight the second most commonly mentioned personal barrier on the list, with 22% from this age group saying that the information on food nutrition labels is difficult to understand. Residents of Quebec, on the other hand, make up a disproportionately high percentage of those who say that they do not have the knowledge necessary to lower their sodium intake (15%). Young Canadians between the ages of 18 and 24 are also more apt to fall into this category (16%). A quarter of students admit that not knowing how or not liking to cook as their main obstacle in lowering their sodium intake.

How much do you agree that the following are obstacles to you personally in lowering your sodium intake?



Q27. Several factors make lowering the amount of sodium in your diet difficult. Please tell us the extent to which you agree or disagree that the following are obstacles, to you personally, in lowering your sodium intake. Base: Total (n=4073)

Barriers to a Low Sodium Diet

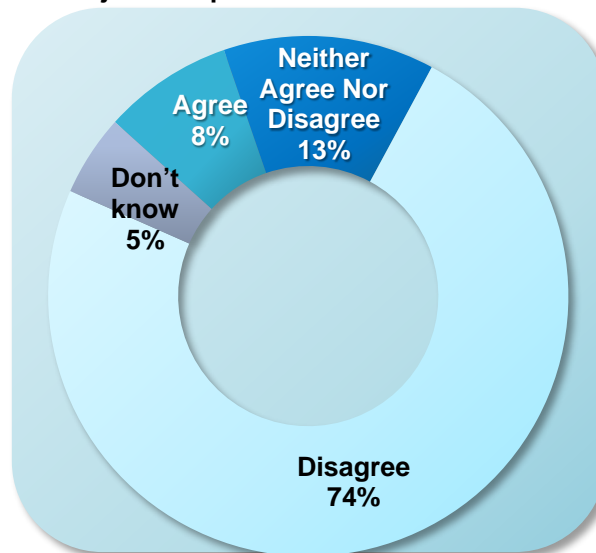
61

SOCIAL BARRIERS

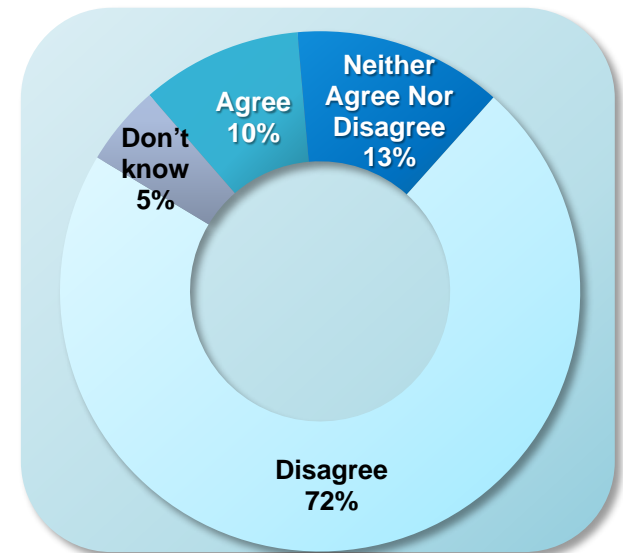
Young Canadians encounter social barriers to reducing their sodium intake to a greater extent than their older counterparts.

Overall, only one in ten agree that a lack of support from friends and family makes reducing their sodium intake difficult, however this issue is much more prevalent among young Canadians than it is among those over the age of 25 (19% of 18 to 24 year olds agree). Fewer than one in ten agree that there is only one person in their household that wants to lower the amount of sodium they consume – Canadians do not commonly identify this problem as a major barrier to reducing their intake.

“Only one person in my household wants to/needs to lower their sodium intake. It’s too much trouble for just one person to eat lower sodium”



“A lack of support from my family/friends makes reducing sodium difficult”



Barriers to a Low Sodium Diet

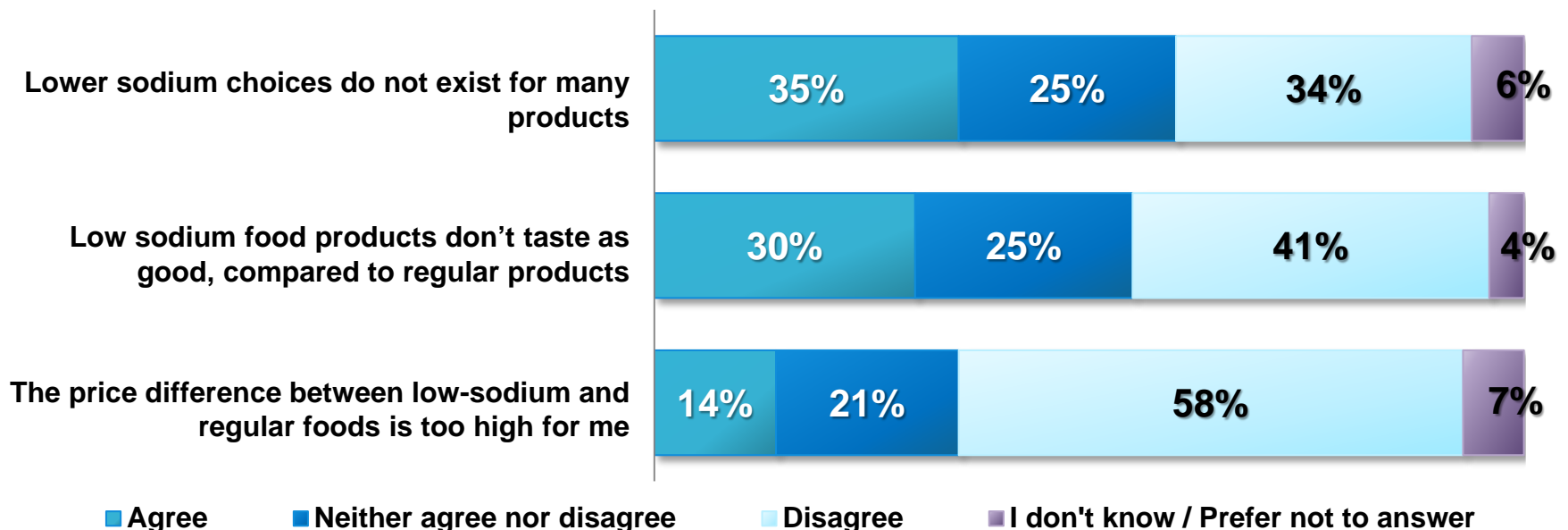
62

BARRIERS AT THE GROCERY STORE

Lack of selection is a prominent obstacle, while price is not a prohibitive barrier for most.

More than a third of Canadians find that many products in the grocery store do not have a low-sodium alternative, which prevents them from effectively lowering their sodium intake. Canadians over the age of 55 are particularly likely to experience this dilemma at the grocery store – 43% from this age group, and retirees, have encountered this problem. About a third of Canadians (30%) agree that they find it difficult to lower their sodium intake because low-sodium version of many products do not carry the same flavour and taste as the standard version. Cost, on the other hand, is not prohibitive to most Canadians, only one in six (14%) indicate that the higher price-point of low-sodium products constitutes a barrier to reducing the amount of salt in their diet, a figure that is higher among Canadians with an income below \$40K/year (20%).

How much do you agree that the following are obstacles to you personally in lowering your sodium intake?



Q27. Several factors make lowering the amount of sodium in your diet difficult. Please tell us the extent to which you agree or disagree that the following are obstacles, to you personally, in lowering your sodium intake. Base: Total (n=4073)

Barriers to a Low Sodium Diet

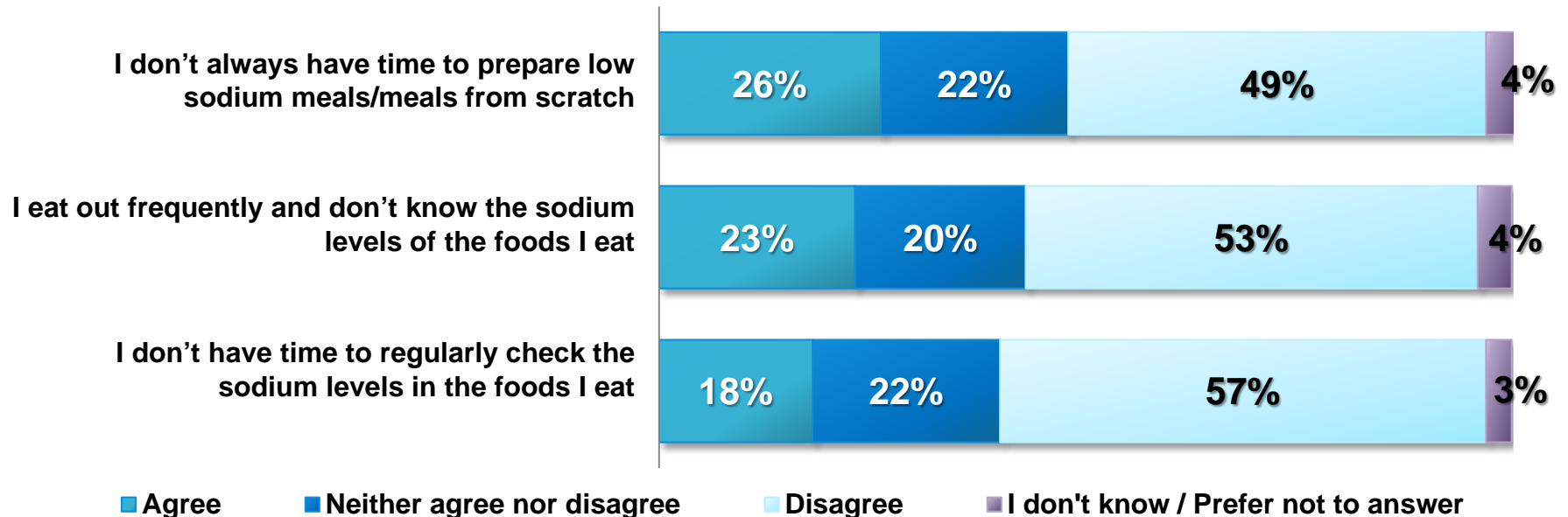
63

TIME CONSTRAINTS

Young Canadians identify time constraints as a barrier to reducing sodium more regularly than other age groups.

One in four Canadians feel that they do not have the time in their day to prepare meals from scratch so that they can monitor the sodium content it contains. This problem arises more frequently for young Canadians between the ages of 18 and 24 than it does among other age groups (27% agree) as well as students and workers (29% and 33% respectively). Similarly, young people make up a disproportionate number of the one in four who say that they eat out frequently, and as a result do not know the sodium levels of the food that they consume. Twenty-seven percent of those between the ages of 18 and 34 encounter this problem. While overall, only one in five say that they lack the time to regularly check the sodium levels of the foods they consume, residents of Quebec identify this barrier more often than other parts of Canada (27% agree) along with 28% of students. Not surprisingly, students, workers, and those who are single, all of whom eat away from home the most, are the most likely to agree that they eat out frequently and don't know the sodium levels of the foods they eat.

How much do you agree that the following are obstacles to you personally in lowering your sodium intake?

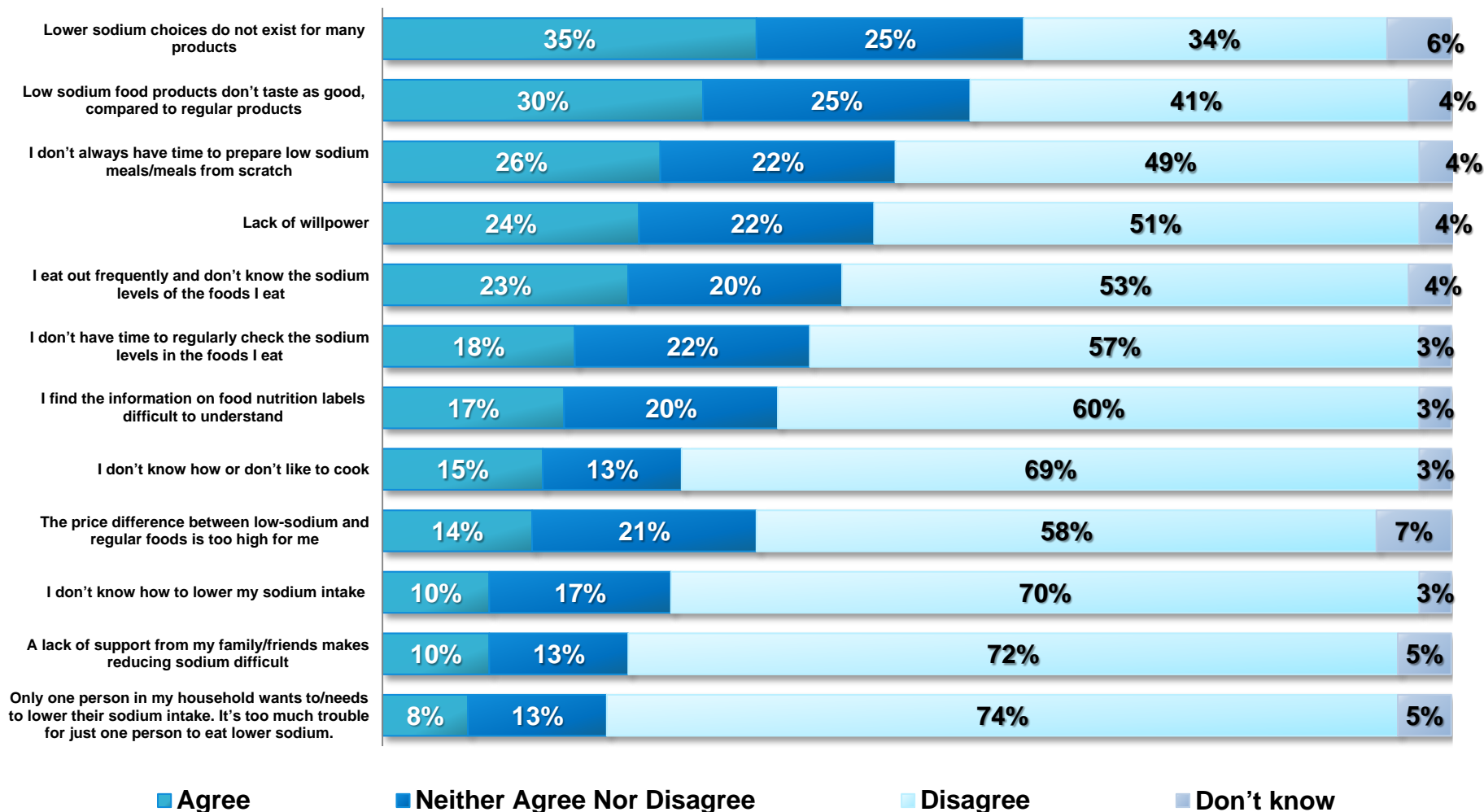


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Barriers to a Low Sodium Diet



SUMMARY



Q27. Several factors make lowering the amount of sodium in your diet difficult. Please tell us the extent to which you agree or disagree that the following are obstacles, to you personally, in lowering your sodium intake. Base: Total (n=4073)

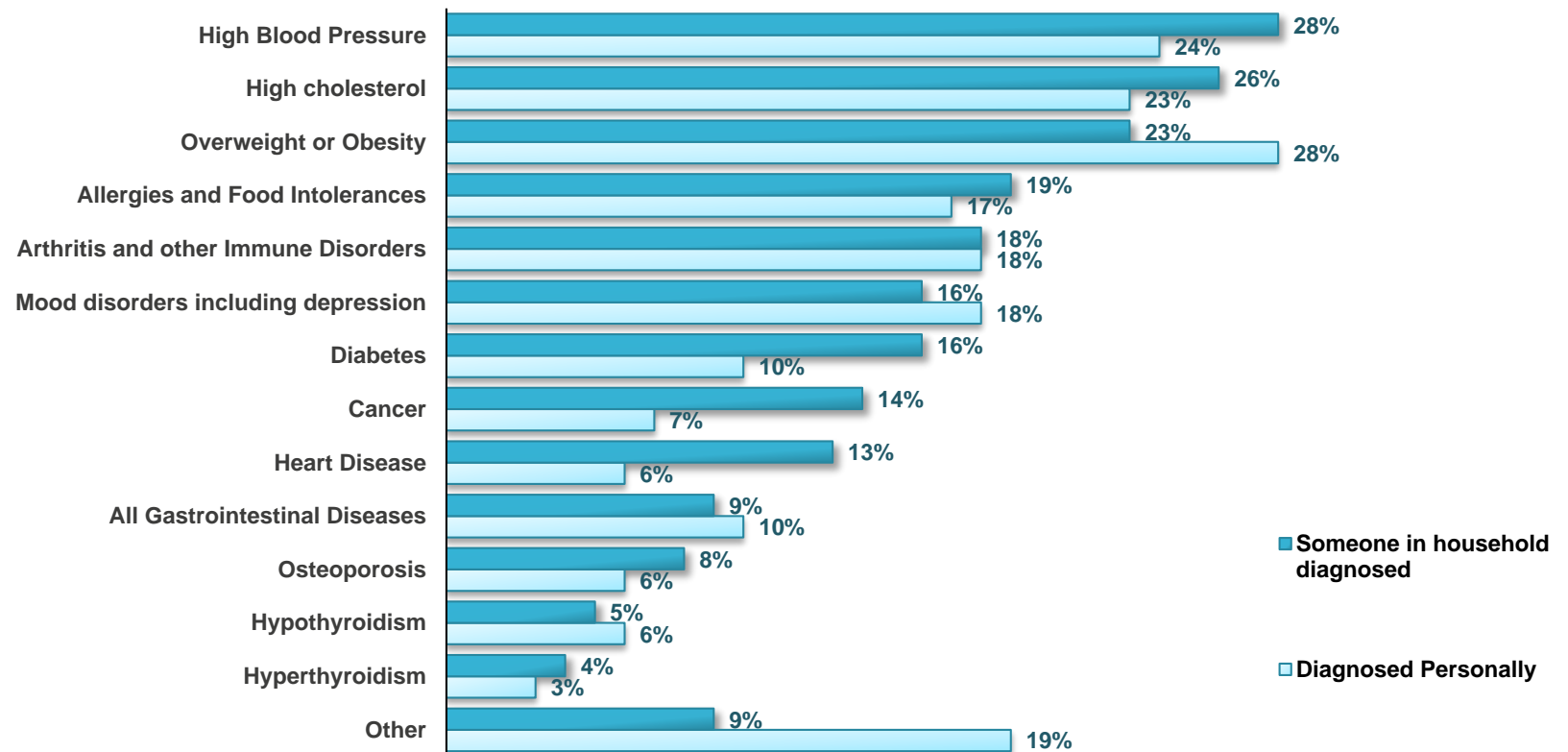
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DIAGNOSED ILLNESSES

Canadians most likely to know someone or have been diagnosed themselves with high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or obesity.



Q37. Have you ever been diagnosed by a medical professional (e.g. doctor or nurse) with the following diseases or conditions? / Q38. Has anyone in your household ever been diagnosed by a medical professional (e.g. doctor or nurse) with the following diseases or conditions? Base for both: Total (n=4073)

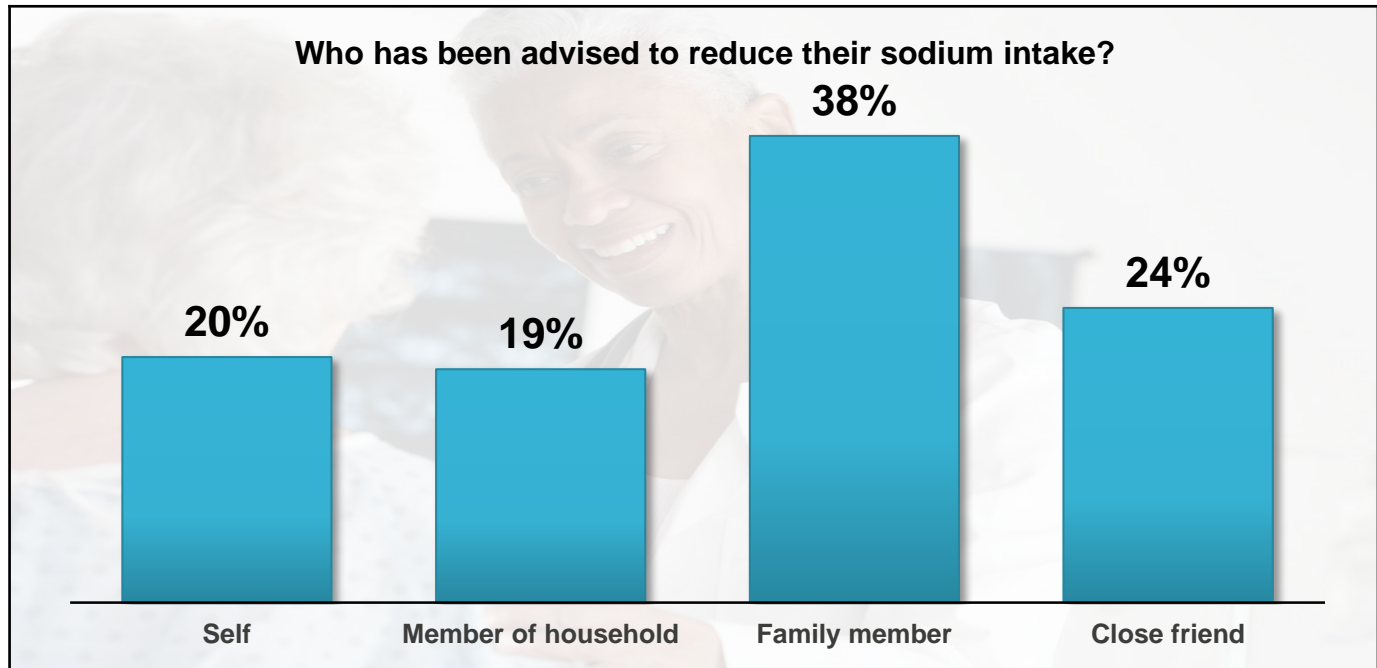
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ADVISED TO REDUCE SODIUM INTAKE

Two in five Canadians know a family member who has been advised to reduce their sodium intake.

One in five Canadians have been advised by a healthcare professional to lower the amount of sodium in their diet. Men in particular have been told to cut back by a medical professional (22% compared to 18% of women). Two in five know a family member who has been told to reduce their sodium intake, and one in four can say the same about a close friend. At over two thirds, retired Canadians have the greatest tendency to be advised by a medical professional to reduce sodium intake, whereas students are the least likely (6%). Unsurprisingly, the probability of knowing someone who has been advised to cut back on their salt intake increases with age. Those who are single have a much lower tendency to be advised to lower their sodium intake (13% vs. 23% of non-single Canadians).



Q40. Have you, a member of your household, family member, or close friend ever been advised by a medical professional (e.g. doctor or nurse) to reduce their sodium intake? Base: Total (n=4073)

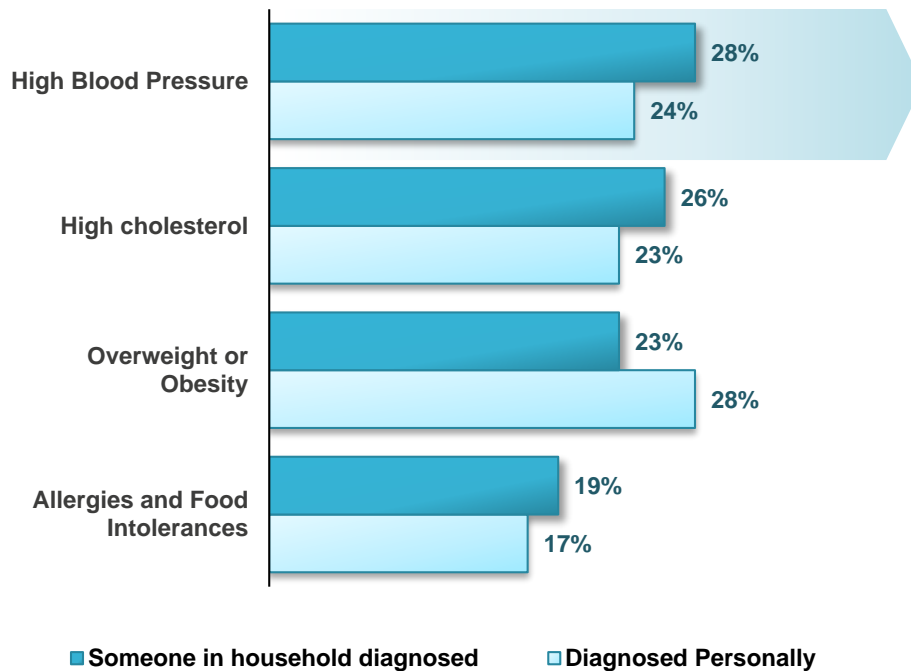
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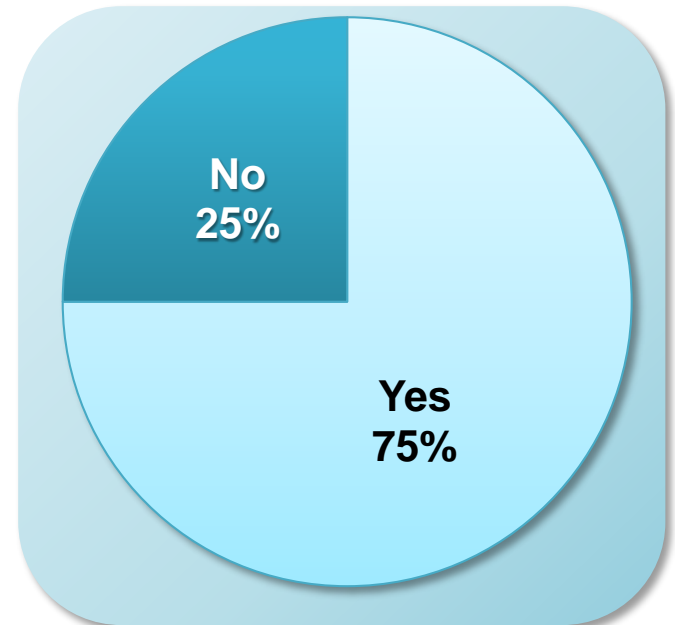
PRESCRIPTION DRUGS FOR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

The majority of those who have been diagnosed with high blood pressure use prescription drugs to treat it.

Have you or anyone in your household been diagnosed with the following illnesses?



Do you currently use prescription drugs to treat high blood pressure?



Q37. Have you ever been diagnosed by a medical professional (e.g. doctor or nurse) with the following diseases or conditions? / Q38. Has anyone in your household ever been diagnosed by a medical professional (e.g. doctor or nurse) with the following diseases or conditions? Base: Total (n=4073) Q39. Do you currently use prescription drugs to treat high blood pressure? Base: Those diagnosed with high blood pressure (n=4073).

Profile of Respondents



Gender	Total
Male	48%
Female	52%

Age	Total
18-24	12%
25-34	16%
35-44	20%
45-54	20%
55-64	15%
65-74	13%
75+	3%



Province	Total
Alberta	10%
Manitoba	4%
New Brunswick	2%
British Columbia	13%
Quebec	24%
Prince Edward Island	1%
Saskatchewan	3%
Newfoundland and Labrador	1%
Ontario	38%
Nova Scotia	3%



Income	Total
\$19,999 or less	7%
Between \$20,000 and \$39,999	14%
Between \$40,000 and \$59,999	16%
Between \$60,000 and \$79,999	15%
Between \$80,000 and \$99,999	12%
\$100,000 or more	19%

Education	Total
High School, general or professional (8 to 12 years)	23%
College pre-university, technical training, certificate	30%
University certificates and diplomas	8%
University Bachelor's degree (including classical studies)	26%
University Master's degree	10%
University Doctorate (PhD)	2%
I don't know / I prefer not answering	1%

Marital Status	Total
Single	27%
Married or living together	60%
Widowed	3%
Separated	2%
Divorced	7%

Children	Total
I have children under the age of 18 living with me	23%
I have children 18 or older living with me	8%
I have children both under the age of 18 and 18 or older living with me	3%
I don't have any children living me	64%

Employment	Total
Working full time	42%
Working part time	9%
Self-employed or business owner	8%
Student	8%
Homemaker	6%
Unemployed	4%
Retired	22%

Approximately how much of your household's monthly food shopping do you do?	Total
0%	3%
1-25%	11%
26-50%	14%
51-75%	15%
76-100%	57%

Approximately how much of the cooking in your household do you do?	Total
0%	3%
1-25%	17%
26-50%	15%
51-75%	16%
76-100%	49%

Do you consider the needs of a person with a disease or medical condition when shopping for foods?		Total
Yes		38%
No		62%