

# 2011 IFIC FOUNDATION FOOD & HEALTH SURVEY

## *Key Summary Findings*



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# HEALTHY WEIGHT & ACTIVE LIFESTYLES





# Overall Health: Health Status and Diet

# Overall Health

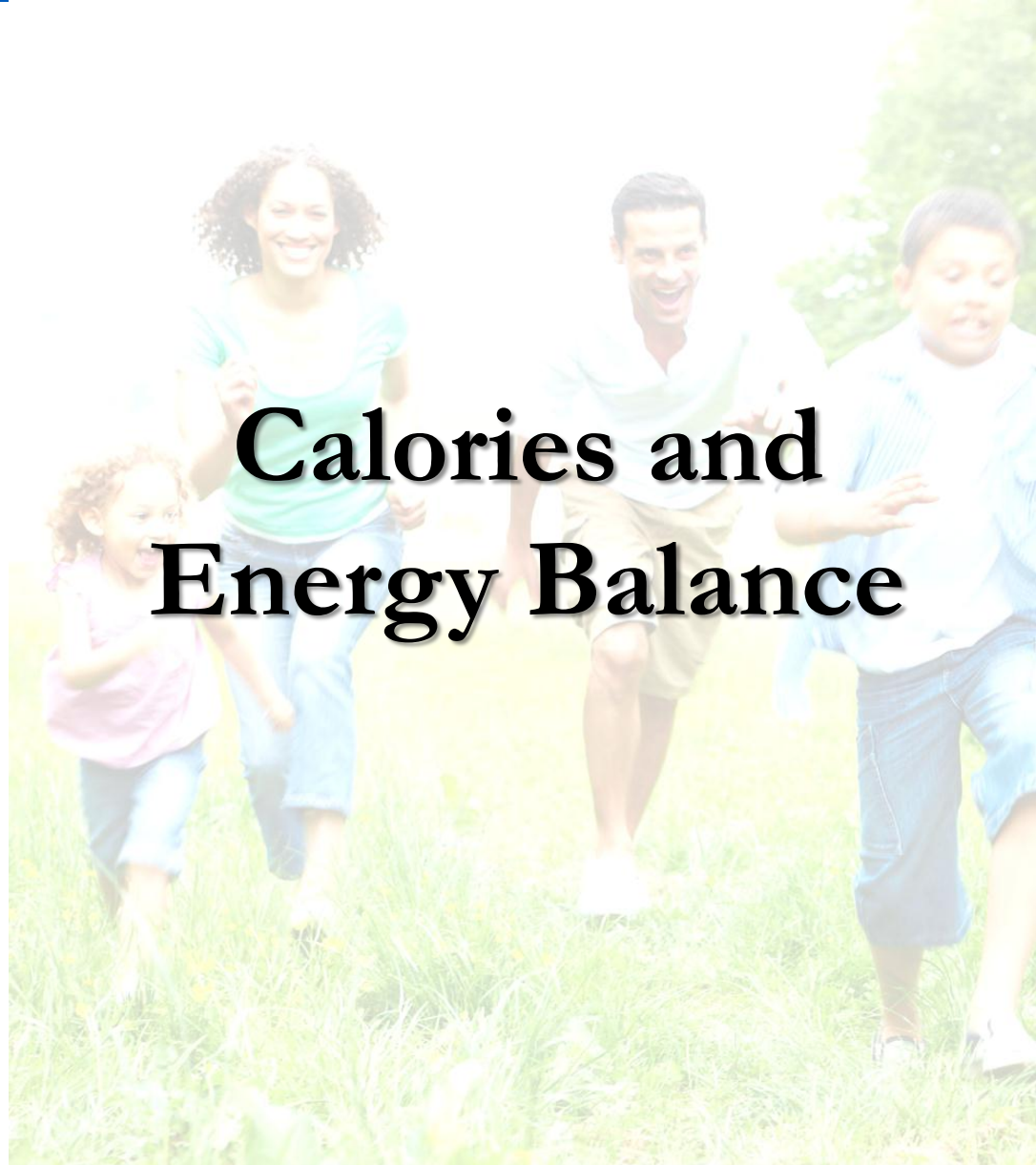
- Compared to previous years, more Americans (approximately half) perceive their overall diet as “somewhat” healthful.
- While a majority of Americans are still making changes in their diet, fewer Americans report making dietary changes in 2011 (59% compared to 64% in 2010).
- Of the Americans who have made dietary changes, Americans continue to turn to family and friends for support (36%). However, just as many say they have not turned to any resource in order to help them achieve dietary changes (36%).



# Weight Management

# Weight Management

- Americans' concern with their weight continues to decline, still the majority of Americans are concerned with their weight status (57% are concerned).
- The majority of Americans consider themselves overweight or obese (58%) and the majority of Americans is trying to lose or maintain weight (69%).
- The disparity observed between American's perception of their weight status and their calculated BMI continues (1 in 5 Americans with a BMI in the overweight range consider themselves as "ideal" or "underweight").
- 56% of Americans credit weight loss as a top driver for improving the healthfulness of their diet.
- The majority of Americans who report attempting to lose or maintain weight are not seeking support from others to help manage their weight.
- Appearance and health problems are more likely to motivate Americans to take action regarding their weight.
- About 4 in 10 Americans weigh themselves at least once a week; 1 in 10 never weigh themselves.



# Calories and Energy Balance

# Calories and Energy Balance

- Similar to last year, 9% of Americans can accurately estimate the number of calories they should consume in a day.
- Most Americans do not regularly keep track of calories consumed versus calories burned, and 69% do not make an effort to balance the two, a significant increase from 2010.
- Among Americans who report trying to lose or maintain weight, 70% believe both physical activity and monitoring food and beverage consumption are equally important in weight management.
- Only 54% report actually implementing both strategies.





# Physical Activity

- More Americans this year report that their physical activity levels are sedentary (43 percent compared to 37 percent in 2010).
- A large majority of Americans (82%) are not meeting the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' *Physical Activity Guidelines*.
- Of those that are active, slightly more than half (59 percent) do not include any strength training.
- Americans express indifference about their physical activity level, with equal numbers being dissatisfied and satisfied.

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# DIETARY COMPONENTS



# Dietary Components

- Functional Foods** • 88% of Americans believe that fortified foods and foods with added health benefits have at least some impact on overall health.
- Dietary Fats** • Americans remain confused and concerned about the types of dietary fats they consume.
  - Although half of Americans agree that moderate amounts of sugar can be part of a healthful diet, more than half of Americans are trying to limit their consumption of sugars.
- Sweeteners**
  - Approximately one-third believe low-calorie sweeteners can be an option for people with diabetes (34%), and can play a role in weight loss or weight management (29%).
- Protein** • Nearly two-thirds of Americans acknowledge that protein helps build muscle and a similar percent know that protein is found in animal sources; yet less than half of Americans are aware that protein can also be found in plant sources such as soy products, beans, nuts and seeds.
- Sodium** • There has been no change in Americans' concern about sodium in their diet; 53% of Americans say they are concerned with their sodium intake equal to 2010.
- Caffeine** • As in 2010, the majority of Americans (69%) say they consume caffeine in moderation.
- Food Colors** • Only 18% of consumers know that most government and health officials say there is no link between food colors and hyperactivity in children, but more than half (56%) understand that both natural and artificial colors must appear on the food label.

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# FOOD TECHNOLOGY AND SUSTAINABILITY



# Food Technology and Sustainability

- 58% of Americans have read or heard at least “a little” about sustainability in food production.
- More than half (52%) say sustainability is important in making food and beverage choices.
  - Feeding a growing global population and reducing pesticide use were consumers’ top ranked aspects of sustainability.
- About four in 10 Americans (43%) believe that advances in modern food technology (ex. plant/livestock breeding, crop protection and biotechnology) have or will provide benefits for them or their families.
- Six out of 10 Americans (61%) believe they have benefitted from modern food production and processing.
  - The top perceived benefits of modern food production are improved food safety (29%) and prolonged freshness (22%)

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# FOOD SAFETY



# Food Safety

- Confidence in the safety of the U.S. food supply has remained steady over the past 4 years with one-half of Americans (50%) being confident in the safety of U.S. food supply
- 61% of Americans believe imported food is less safe than food produced in the U.S., citing less regulation as the top reason.
- Foodborne illness from bacteria remains the most important food safety issue (50%). Additional responses included “chemicals in food,” but when asked for examples, consumers have difficulty identifying specific chemicals of concern.
- Although eight in 10 Americans report following general and basic safe food handling practices, the numbers continue to decline, for example washing hands with soap and water before handling food (79% in 2011; 89% in 2010; 92% in 2008).
- Three-fourths of Americans get their food safety information from a media source.
- Americans trust the media, government agencies, health professionals and food labels to deliver adequate food safety information.



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# INFORMATION SOURCES AND INFLUENCES



# Information Sources and Influences

- Although taste remains the top consideration (87%), 79% of consumers say price impacts their decision when deciding which foods and beverages to purchase, a 6% increase from 2010 and a noteworthy 15% increase from 2006.
- 63% of Americans would rather hear what *to* eat instead of what *not* to eat (7% increase from 2009).
- American's awareness of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* has increased (81% compared to 71% in 2010).
- Still, 95% could not name another “healthy living” initiative beyond the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* or MyPyramid.
- When seeking nutrition information, Americans continue to actively use the Nutrition Facts panel on food and beverage packages.
- Americans are looking most often to calories, fat, sodium, and sugars when looking at the Nutrition Facts panel.

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# RESTAURANTS/ MEAL OCCASIONS



# Restaurants and Eating Occasions

- Taste and price are the most important factors for Americans when deciding what to order in a restaurant.
- When deciding what item to order in a restaurant, overall healthfulness was ranked higher than calories.
- Seven in 10 Americans believe that calories on menus would help them in some way with selecting foods that are more healthful as well as make informed decisions about their diet.
- On average, Americans eat about 8 meals (7.91 mean meals a week) with their family each week, approximately one meal a day.