

[Gallup](#) has done a fascinating series of surveys recently on fast food and diet. Here are some highlights:

What we eat? About 30% of Americans have fast food at least once a week, while another 30% say they have it once or twice a month. Interestingly, about half of Americans think fast food isn't really good for you, with another 25% thinking it's "not good at all." Americans earning \$75,000 per year are more likely to eat fast food than those earning under \$20,000 (by about ten percentage points).

What do we drink? Half of Americans say they have at least one soft drink per day, with about 10% having three or more. Of those who drink alcohol, about 20% drink liquor, while the others are evenly split between beer and wine.

What do we know about our foods? About 70% of Americans say they often look at food labels on packaged foods. Only about 40% look at the nutrition information that has to be posted in chain restaurants. Gender, education, and age are all related to how much attention people pay to nutrition information. Women, college graduates, and people over 30 are the most likely to pay attention.

What's the role of government? There's a mixed picture here. About two-thirds of adults (and three-quarters of parents of public school children) favor banning unhealthy foods in schools. But Americans are strongly against banning giant-size soft drinks. Whites, conservatives, and Republicans are overwhelmingly opposed; margins are closer among other groups. However, 80% say that obesity is a serious problem in our society. (Obesity is also an environmental problem: most of the foods that contribute to obesity also have large environmental footprints.) Views about the seriousness of the problem don't vary between Democrats and Republicans, but as you might expect, there are diametrically opposing views about whether the federal government should get involved. Since Independents support government action, there is majority support for federal action, but not by a huge margin.

All of this is self-reported, but at the least, the results tell us what Americans want to think about themselves or want others to think about them.