In a 2021 survey, 1,500 U.S. consumers were asked about their understanding of and feelings towards sugar and sweeteners, with particular attention to how the COVID-19 Pandemic has impacted them. Comparisons to previous surveys included where data are available.

### Majority of Consumers Believe Sugar is Natural

80% of survey participants agree that "real sugar" is naturally occurring. The majority of respondents also agree with these statements:

- Sugar is easy to identify on ingredient lists
- Sugar comes from plants
- Sugar is natural
- Sugar plays a role in a balanced diet
- Sugar helps food taste good
- Food with sugar is a treat and makes me happy

In 2018, only 29% of consumers categorized “table sugar” as naturally occurring. This increased to 54% in 2021, suggesting people are more familiar with sugar’s origin.

### Consumers Are Reading Packages

80% of consumers report they regularly or sometimes read the nutrition information on the front or the back of packages.

- 80% use nutrition claims on the front of packages
- 80% use the Nutrition Facts label
- 79% use the ingredients list

### For Many Popular Products, Consumers Say It’s a Priority to Avoid Artificial Sweeteners

82% of consumers avoid artificial sweeteners in children’s cereal.

### Consumers Are Confused About How Much Sugar Can Be Included in a Balanced Diet

- 75% say it’s important to know the dietary recommendations for daily sugar intake.
- However, 3 in 4 consumers think they can have fewer than 40 grams per day.
- 40% of consumers are more confident about managing their sugar intake when they learn about the recommendations.

### The Current Dietary Guidelines for Americans

The current dietary guidelines for Americans recommends limiting added sugars to less than 10% of total calories per day. For a 2000-calorie diet, this equals 50 grams or 12 teaspoons.

### For Many Popular Products, Consumers Say It’s a Priority to Avoid Artificial Sweeteners

- 82% of consumers avoid artificial sweeteners in children’s cereal.

### More Than 70% of Consumers Say It’s a Priority to Avoid Artificial Sweeteners in These Products:

- Yogurt
- Canned fruit
- Peanut butter
- Bread

### Consumers Are Overconfident When It Comes to Sweeteners

- 53% are confident they can identify sweeteners within ingredient lists.
- 47% are confident they can identify if a sweetener is naturally occurring or if it’s artificial.

However, when presented with a list of food additives, fewer than 4 in 10 correctly identified those that might be used as sweetening ingredients.

### Consumers Prefer Sugar to Artificial Sweeteners

Consumers rank sugar higher than artificial sweeteners on almost all of the attributes they identify as important for foods and beverages they purchase.
Consumers use variety of tactics to reduce sugar.

Nearly 3 in 4 consumers monitor their intake of sugar or added sugars. When presented with four approaches to reducing sugar or added sugars intake, choosing to consume the regular product less often was the most popular among survey participants.

Future health concerns most common reason for limiting sugar.

Weight concerns previously ranked the highest. This shift could be an effect of the pandemic.