



# NSF INTERNATIONAL CONSUMER PRODUCT CONCERNS SURVEY

**NSF INTERNATIONAL**

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April 2019

## Methodology

- NSF International commissioned Ipsos, an independent research firm, to field an online survey among a nationally representative sample of 1,000 adults ages 18 and older residing in the continental United States.
- The survey was fielded between February 20 - March 1, 2019.
- The margin of error for the sample of 1,000 is +/- 3.0 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

**Note:** All base sizes throughout report are as indicated in the methodology, unless noted otherwise in a specific graph.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



**PRODUCT SAFETY IS  
A CONCERN BUT  
ACTION ISN'T BEING  
TAKEN**

Americans are concerned about product safety but aren't doing their due diligence to research claims. While they find claims to be useful, they aren't very trusting of them.



**SAFETY IS TOP  
PRIORITY FOR  
HOME/CLEANING  
PRODUCTS, OVER  
COST**

When it comes to products used in homes, safety is a top priority—but Americans don't go the extra mile to learn more. Many don't usually look at claims and a handful didn't know they existed.



**FOOD QUALITY  
IS PRIORITIZED  
OVER SAFETY**

Majority of Americans prioritize food quality over safety but aren't doing their homework with regard to certifications and compliance with standards.



**DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS  
CAUSE MORE  
CONCERN AMONG  
YOUNGER  
GENERATIONS**

Fewer Americans are concerned that dietary supplements are harmful to them or their families. However, younger generations are honing in on supplements are crafted.



**MISPERCEPTION  
AROUND QUALITY  
STANDARDS MAY  
CAUSE LOW CONCERN  
FOR PERSONAL CARE  
PRODUCT SAFETY**

Personal care products' safety is a concern but not a top priority, which may be in part due to misperceptions that all personal care products are held to equally strict quality & safety standards.



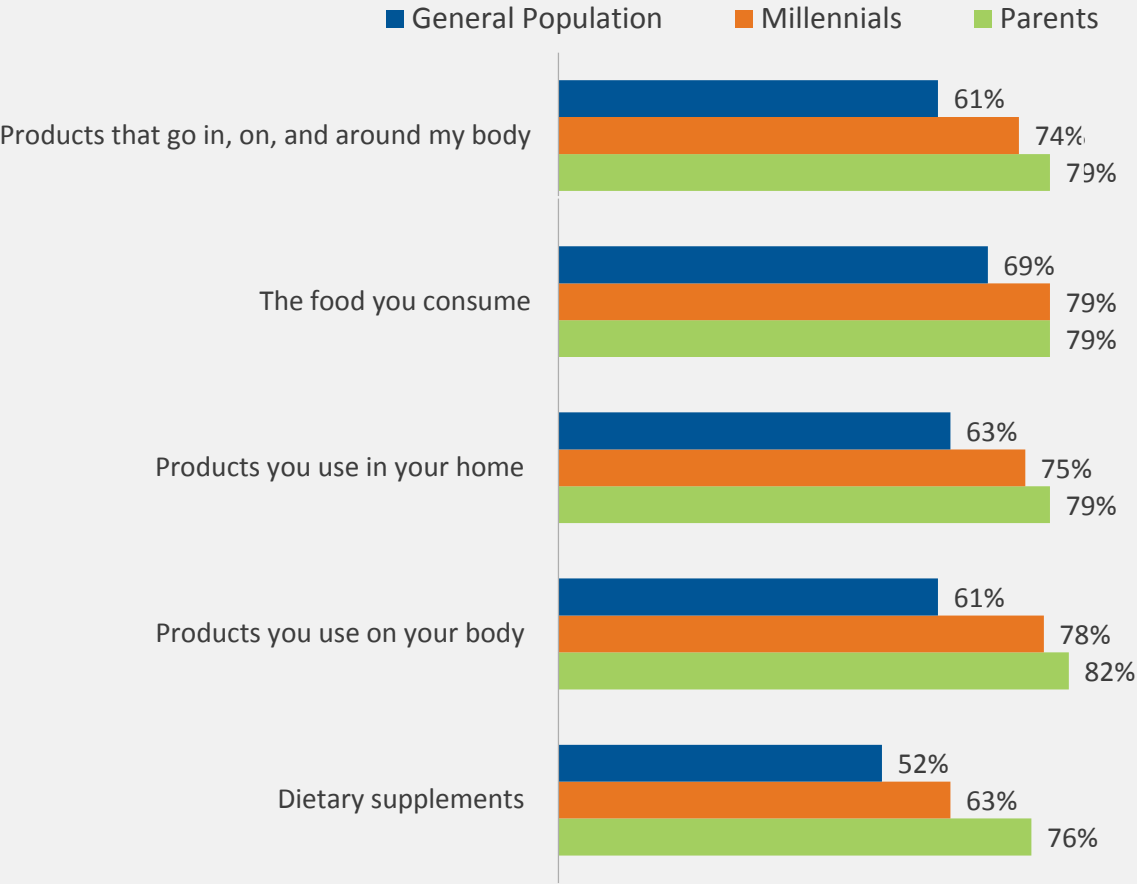
TREND 1: PRODUCT SAFETY IS A CONCERN BUT ACTION ISN'T BEING TAKEN



The majority of Americans (61%) are concerned about what they put in, on & around their bodies

How concerned are you about \_\_\_\_ being harmful to you/your family?

(Top 2 Box: Percent “Very Concerned” and “Somewhat Concerned”)



Parents and Millennials have much greater concern over the safety of products they consume, use on their bodies and use in their homes:

- 79% of parents are concerned, compared to 55% of non-parents.
- 74% of Millennials are concerned, compared to 64% of Gen X and 53% of Boomers.

Q1. How concerned are you about \_\_\_\_ being harmful to you/your family? Base: Total (n=1000), Millennials (n=252), Gen X (n=292), Boomers (n=307), Parents (n=272)

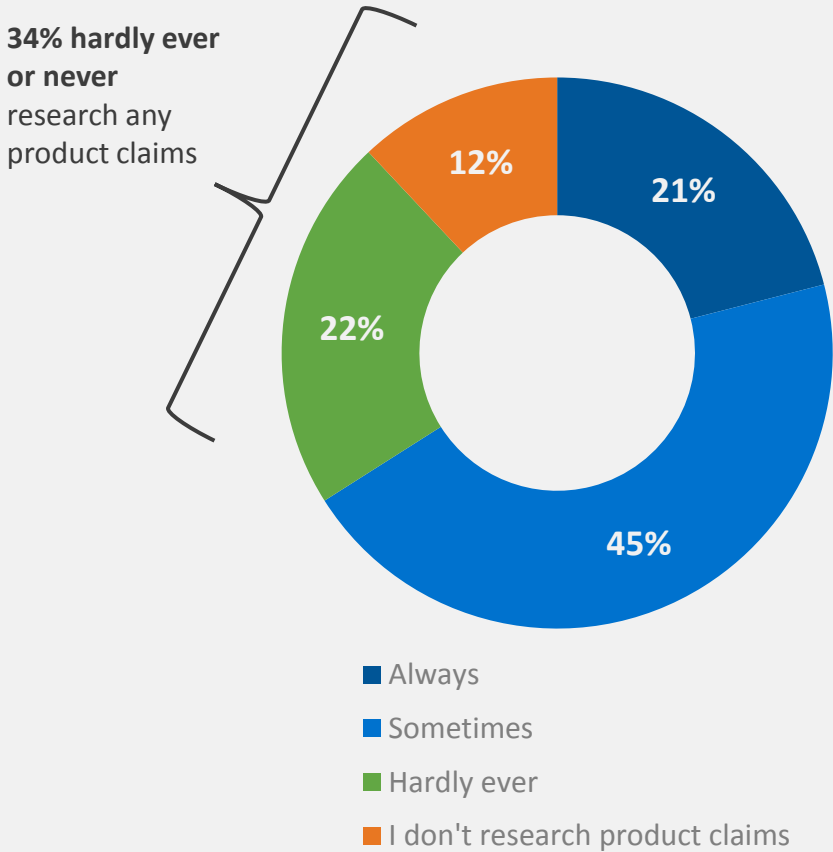
Q3. How concerned are you about the products you use in your home (i.e., cleaning products, air fresheners, etc.) being harmful to you/your family? Base: Total (n=1000), Millennials (n=252), Gen X (n=292), Boomers (n=307), Parents (n=272)

TREND 1: PRODUCT SAFETY IS A CONCERN BUT ACTION ISN'T BEING TAKEN

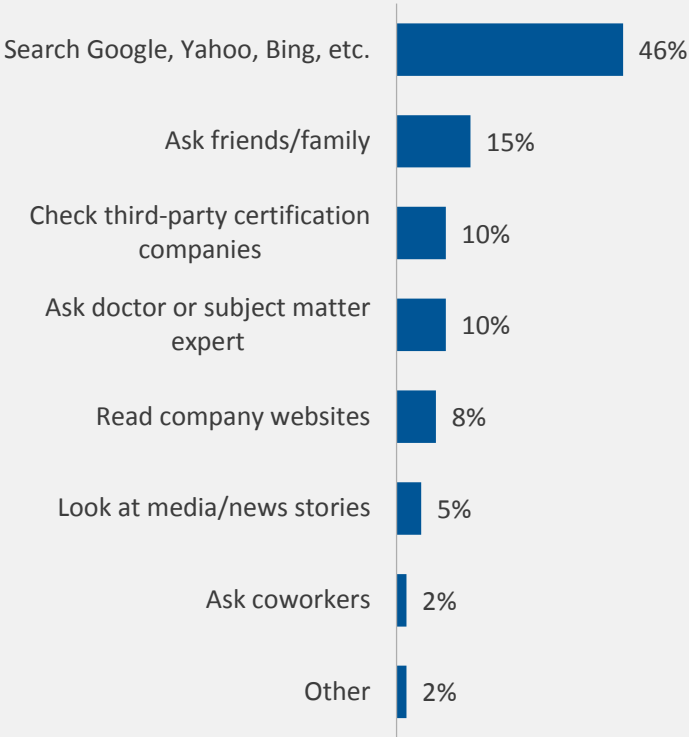


However, despite their concern, many don't actually do research on product claims. When they do, most use online search engines followed by asking friends/family

How often do you research claims on the items/products that you purchase?



Which of the following, if any, are you most likely to do when researching claims made on items/products you purchase?



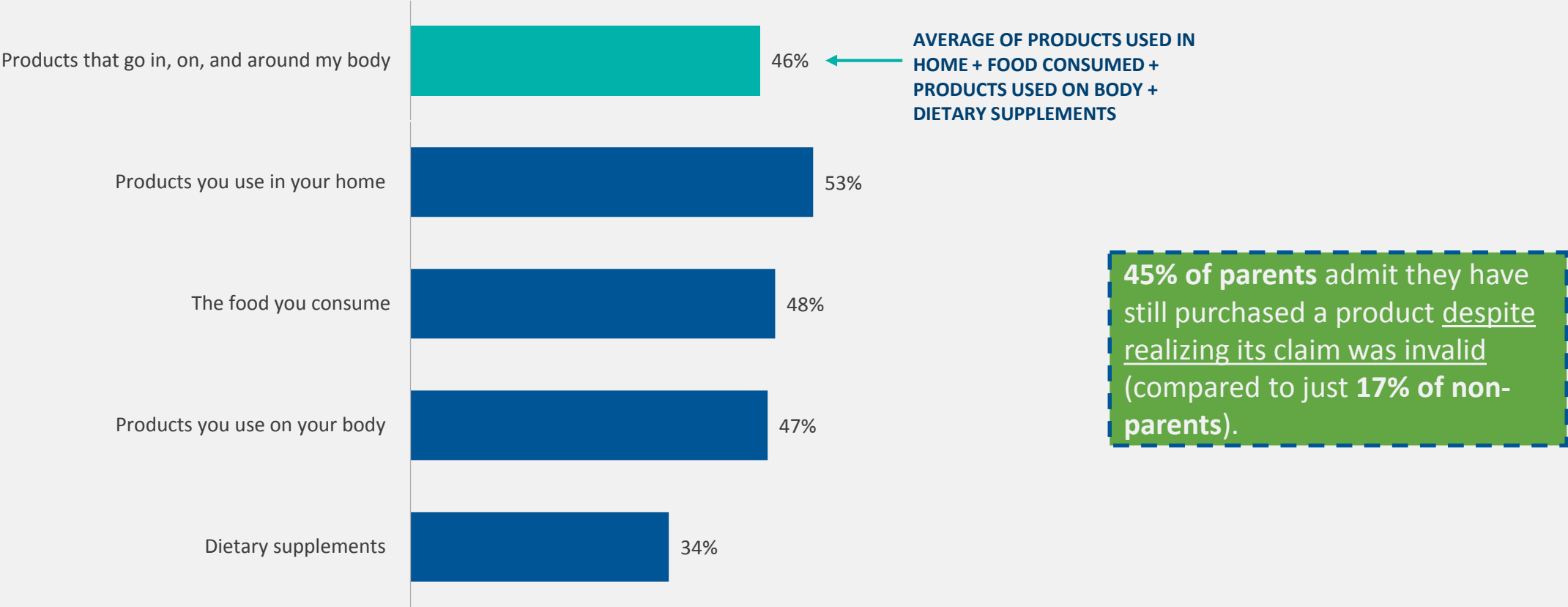
Q11. How often do you research claims on the items/products that you purchase within the following categories?  
Base: Total (n=1000)  
Q12. Which of the following, if any, are you most likely to do when researching claims made on items/products you purchase? Select one. Base: Those who research claims (n=941)

TREND 1: PRODUCT SAFETY IS A CONCERN BUT ACTION ISN'T BEING TAKEN



Half of Americans have purchased a product despite being unsure of the validity of the claims being made

Which of the following items you have ever purchased despite being unsure of the validity of the claims made on a product?



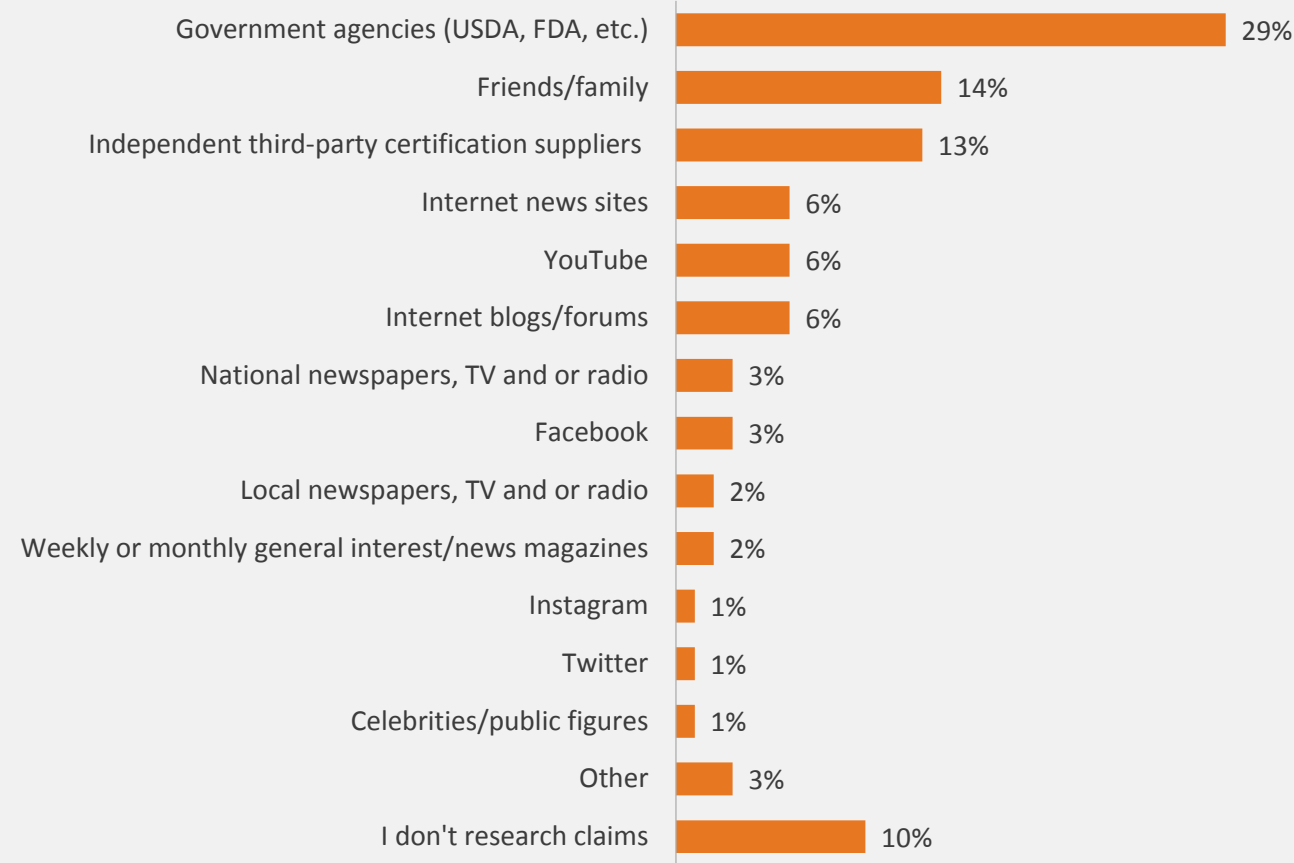
Q14. Please select which of the following items you have ever purchased despite being unsure of the validity of the claims made on a product? Base: Total (n=1000) Parents (n=272), Non-parents (n=728)  
Q15. Have you ever learned a claim on a product was invalid and still purchased the product? Base: Total (n=1000), Parents (n=272), Non-parents (n=728)

TREND 1: PRODUCT SAFETY IS A CONCERN BUT ACTION ISN'T BEING TAKEN



51% of Americans find claims to be very informative and useful, yet few are trusting. Social channels, new sites, and blogs are the least trusted sources

What source do you trust most when researching claims?



Men are also more likely to trust endorsed social media and celebrity claims:

- 44% of men trust claims endorsed on social media, vs. 31% of women
- 39% of men trust claims made by influencers/celebrity endorsements, vs. 26% of women

Q9. Which statement most aligns with your opinion about claims made on products that you purchase? I find claims to be very informative and useful  
Q13. What source do you trust most when researching claims about \_\_\_\_?  
Q7. How much, if at all, do you trust the following claims related to \_\_\_\_? Base: Total (n=1000), Men (n=482), Women (n=518)



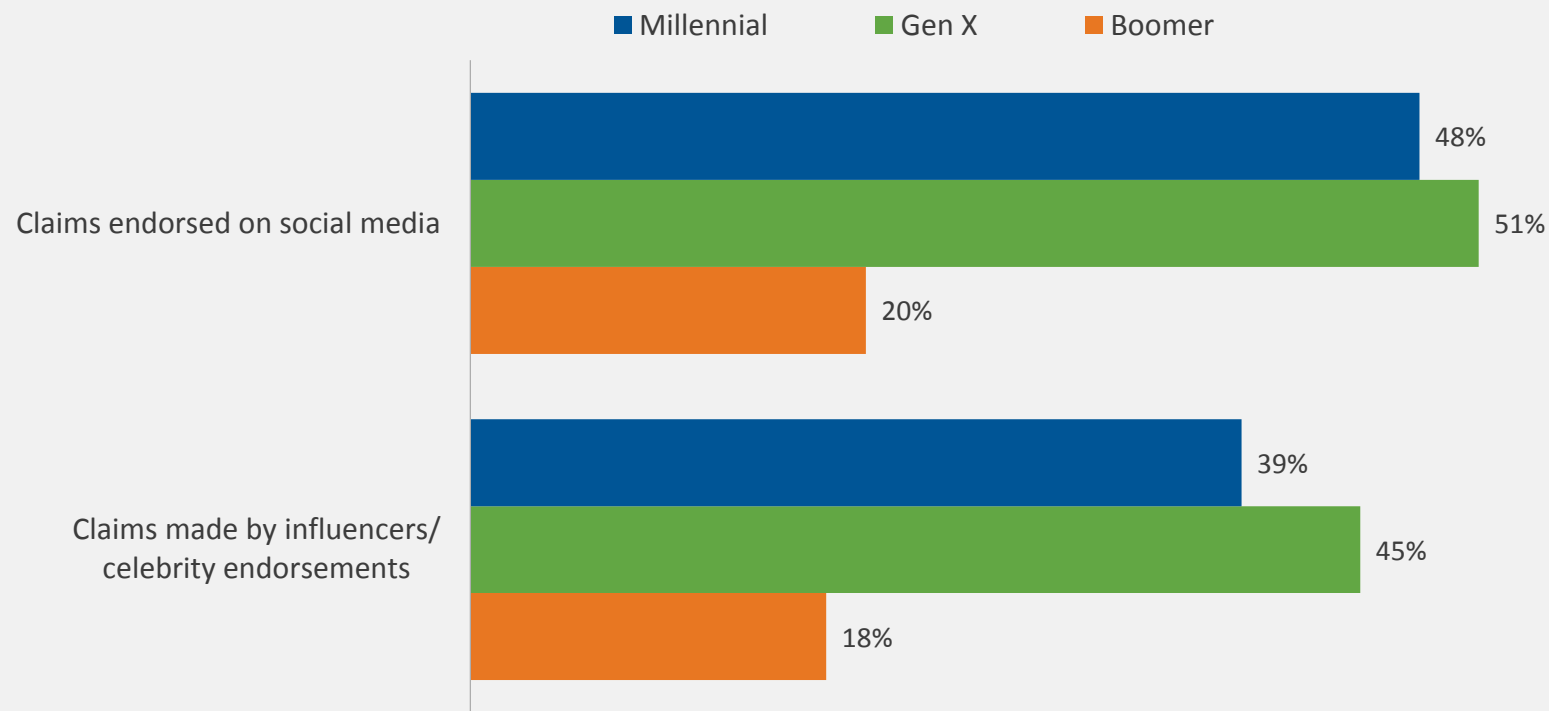
TREND 1: PRODUCT SAFETY IS A CONCERN BUT ACTION ISN'T BEING TAKEN



*Though Millennials have much greater concern over product safety, younger generations are more trusting of claims that are endorsed on social media and by influencers/celebrities*

How much, if at all, do you trust the following claims?

(Top 2 Box: Percent “Completely Trust” and “Somewhat Trust”)

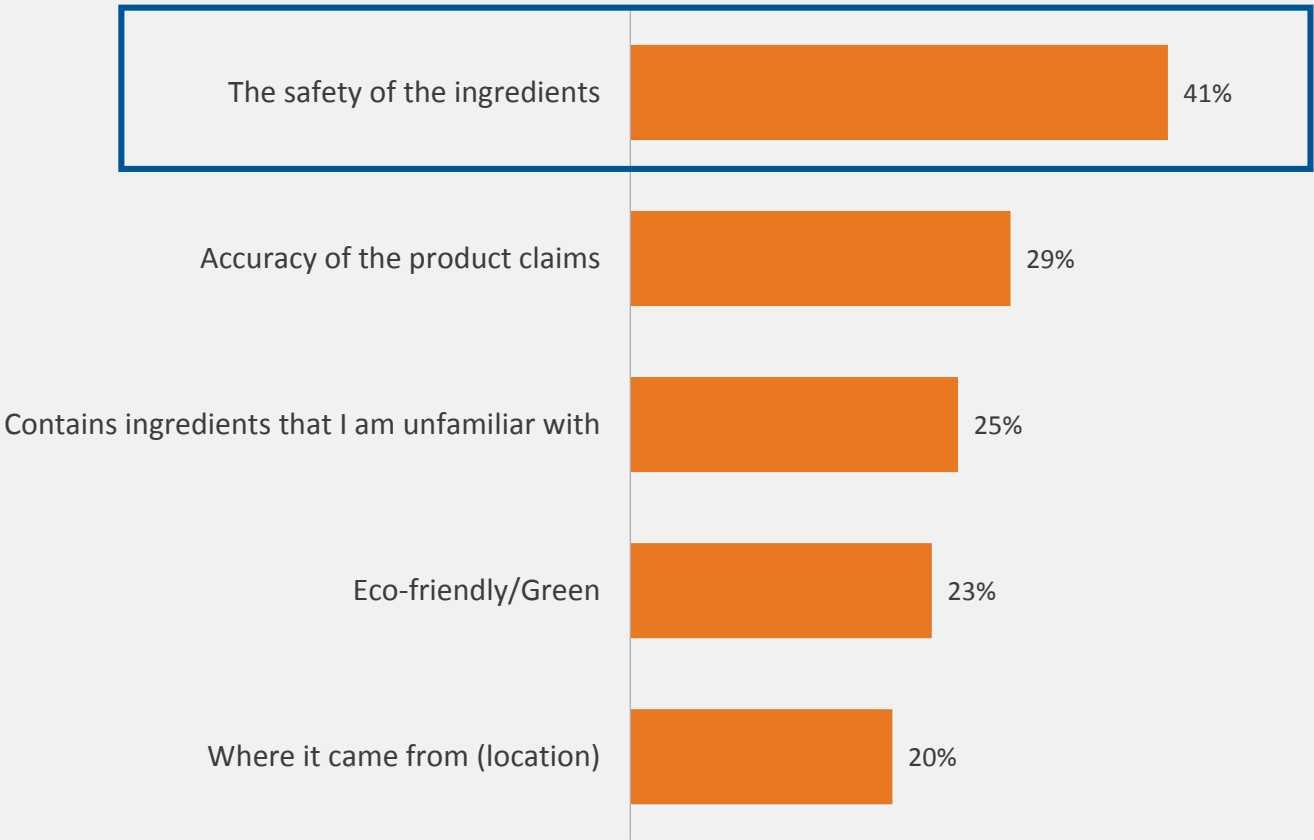


TREND 2: SAFETY IS TOP PRIORITY FOR HOME/CLEANING PRODUCTS, OVER COST



When it comes to products used in the home, 41% are very concerned about the safety of cleaning product ingredients

When thinking about cleaning products, how concerned are you about the following factors?  
(Top Box: Percent “Very Concerned”)



Parents (91%) are more likely to think it's important for the products used in their homes to **comply with strict standards** to ensure they are not harmful to them and their families (vs. 85% of non-parents)

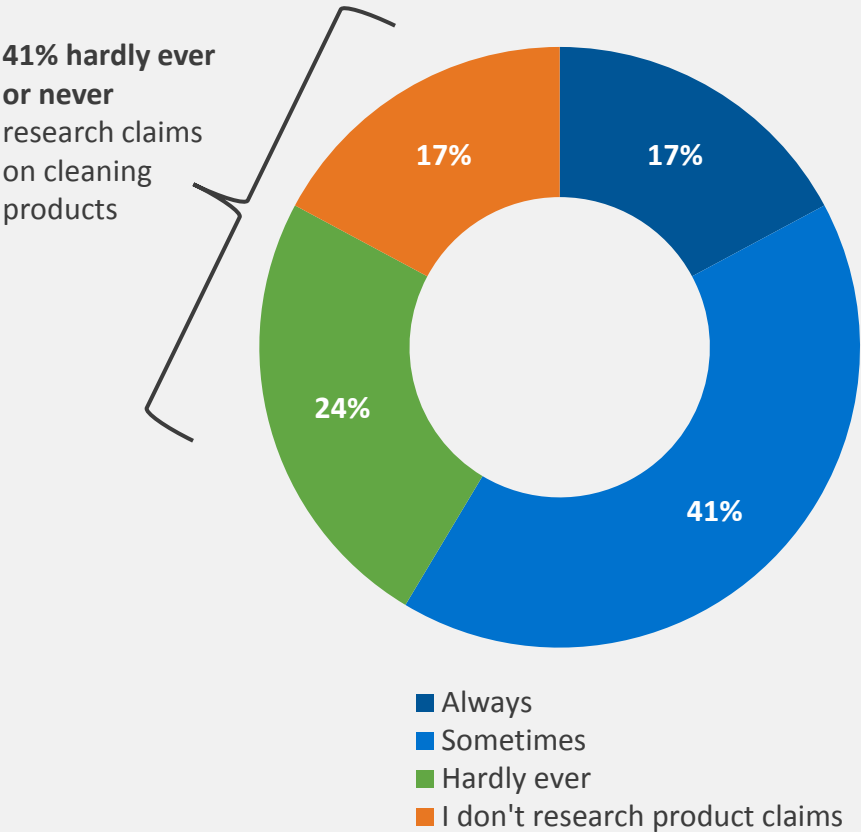
Q3. How concerned are you about the products you use in your home (i.e., cleaning products, air fresheners, etc.) being harmful to you/your family?  
Q4. How important is it for the products you use in your home to comply with strict standards to ensure they are not harmful to you/your family?  
Base: Total (n=1000), Parents (n=272), Non-parents (n=728)

TREND 2: SAFETY IS TOP PRIORITY FOR HOME/CLEANING PRODUCTS, OVER COST



However, two in five don't go the extra mile to learn more about product claims on home/ cleaning products, and half aren't even aware that home/cleaning products could receive safety certifications

How often do you look at claims on cleaning products?



83%

agree they are more likely to trust a cleaning product with a certification

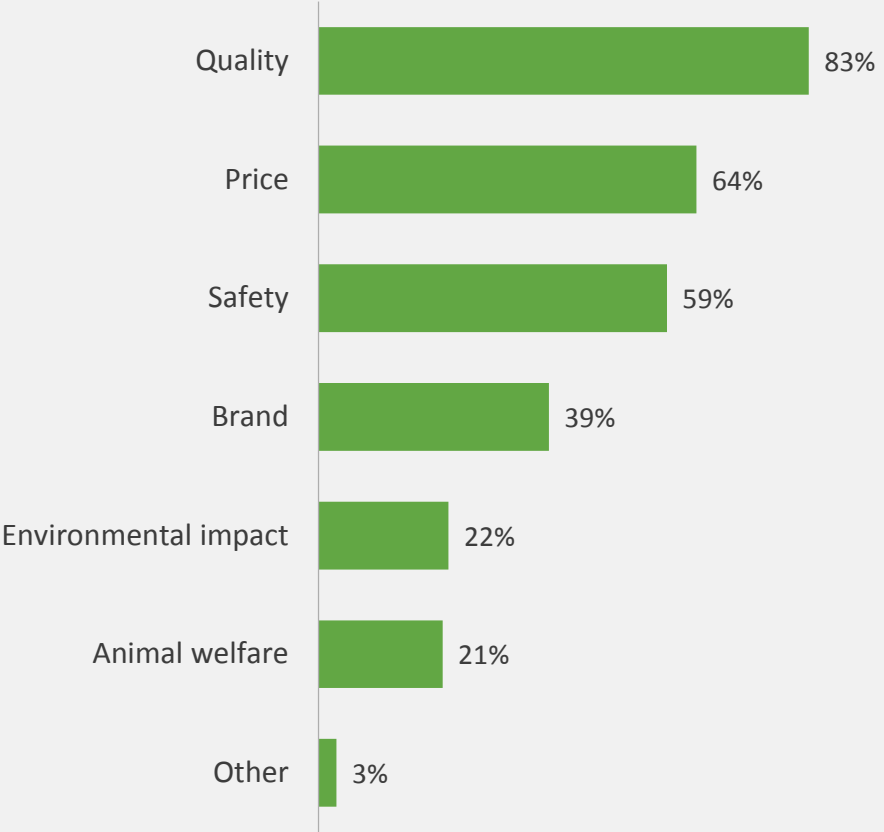
47%

didn't realize cleaning products could be certified for environmental and human safety



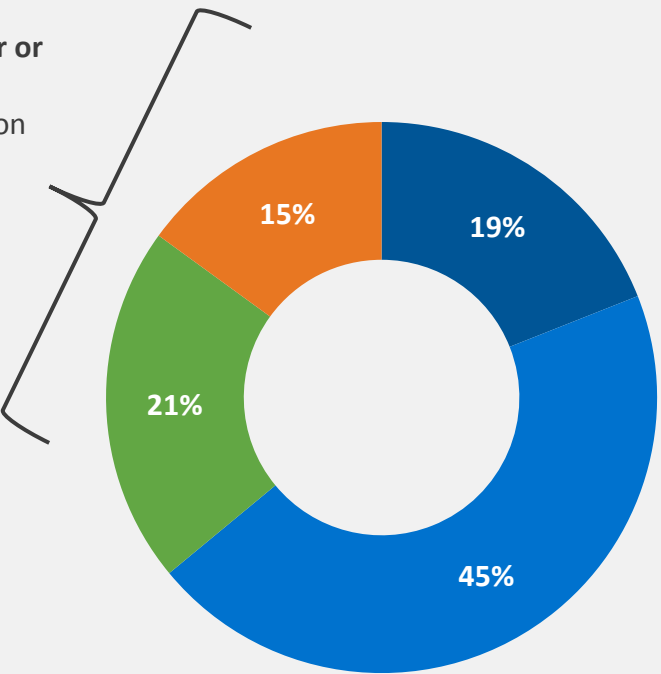
*When purchasing food, quality trumps safety in purchase decisions, and over a third never even look at the claims made on food items*

What are the most important factors you consider when purchasing food?



How often do you look at claims on food products?

36% hardly ever or never research product claims on food products



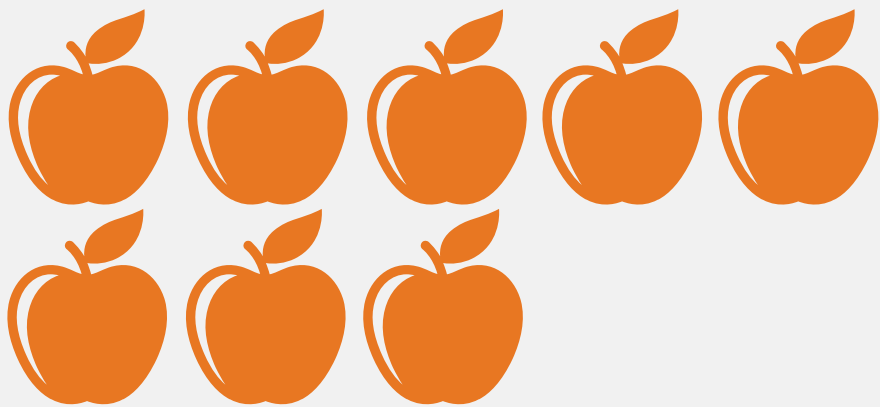
- Always
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- I don't research product claims



Many assume that food products already adhere to strict quality & safety standards, which may account for 53% of Americans who don't check that their food adheres to such standards

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(Top Box: Percent "Strongly Agree" and "Somewhat Agree")



**81%** say they **assume food products** they use **adhere to strict quality and safety standards**



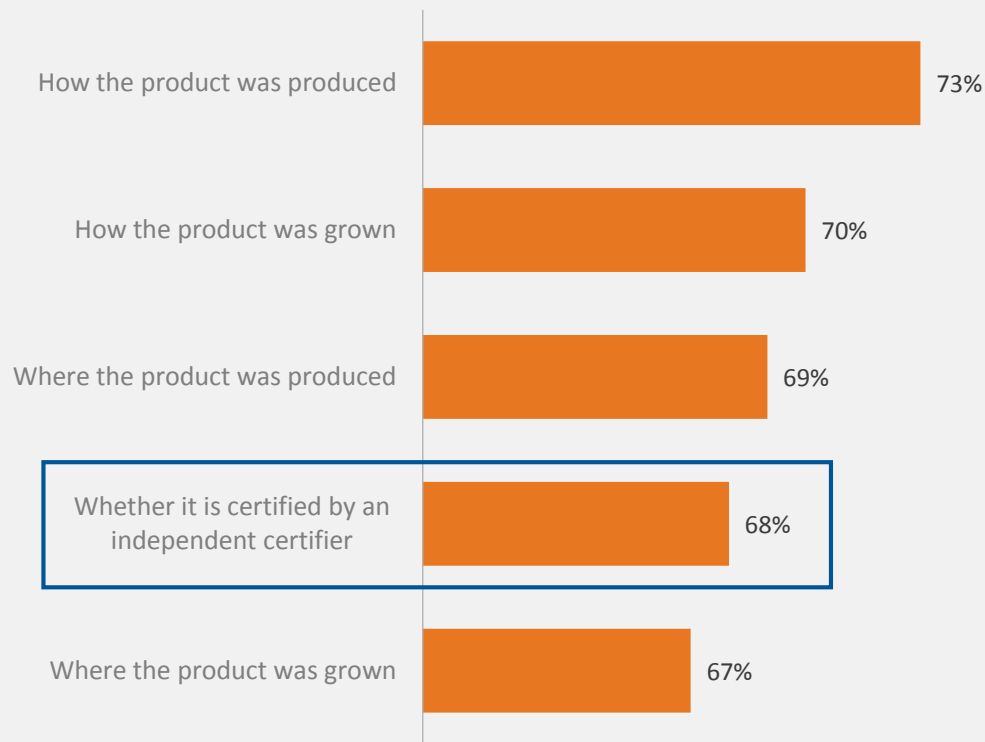
**53%** do not check to see if food products are **verified as adhering to strict quality and safety standards**



*The majority are concerned about whether non-GMO/organic/gluten-free food is certified, yet most are overwhelmed and confused by food certifications, to the point of ignoring them*

**When thinking about foods that are non-GMO, organic and/or gluten-free, how concerned are you about the following?**

(Top Box: Percent “Very Concerned” and “Somewhat Concerned”)



**75%** say there are **so many food certifications** that they **lose track of what they mean**

**48%** have **purchased food items** despite being **unsure of the validity of claims** made on the product



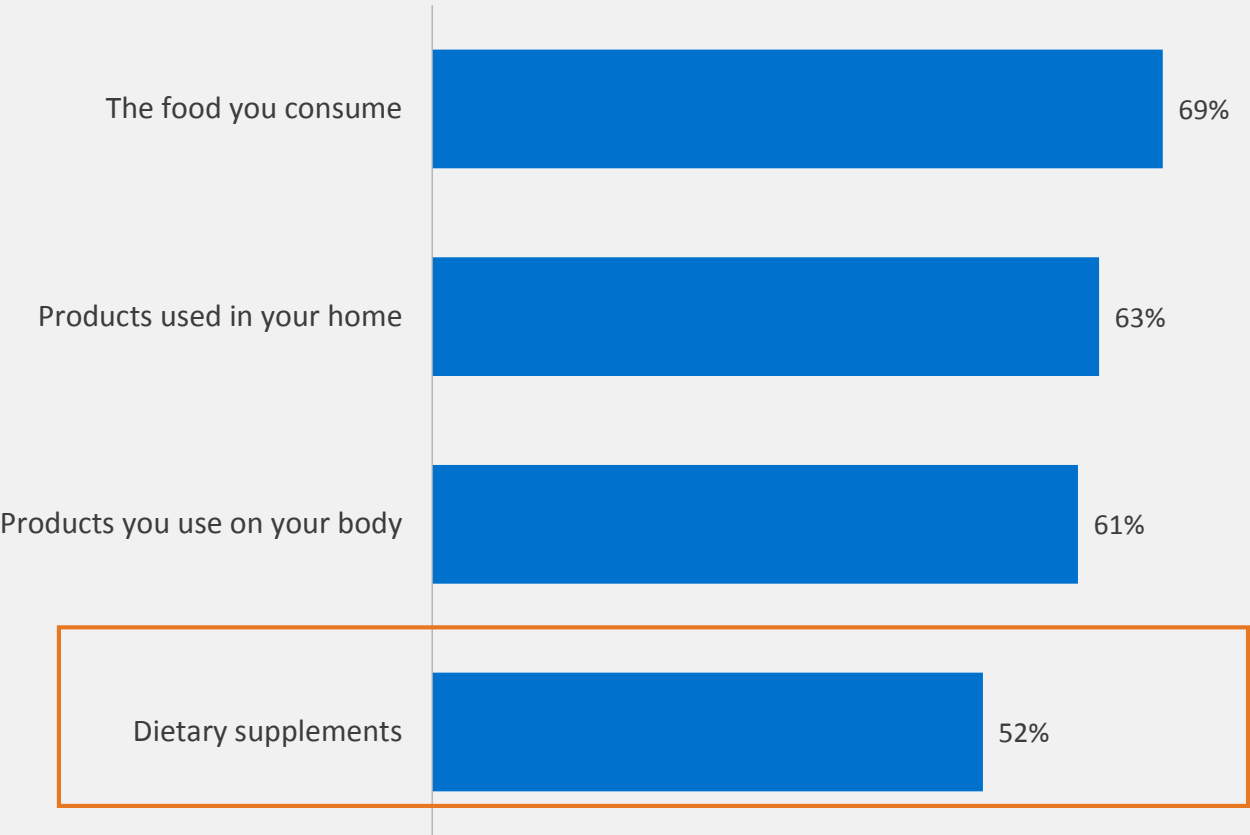
TREND 4: DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS CAUSE MORE CONCERN  
AMONG YOUNGER GENERATIONS



*While most Americans are hyper focused on whether food products are harmful to them or their families, fewer are concerned that dietary supplements are*

How concerned are you about \_\_\_\_ being harmful to you/your family?

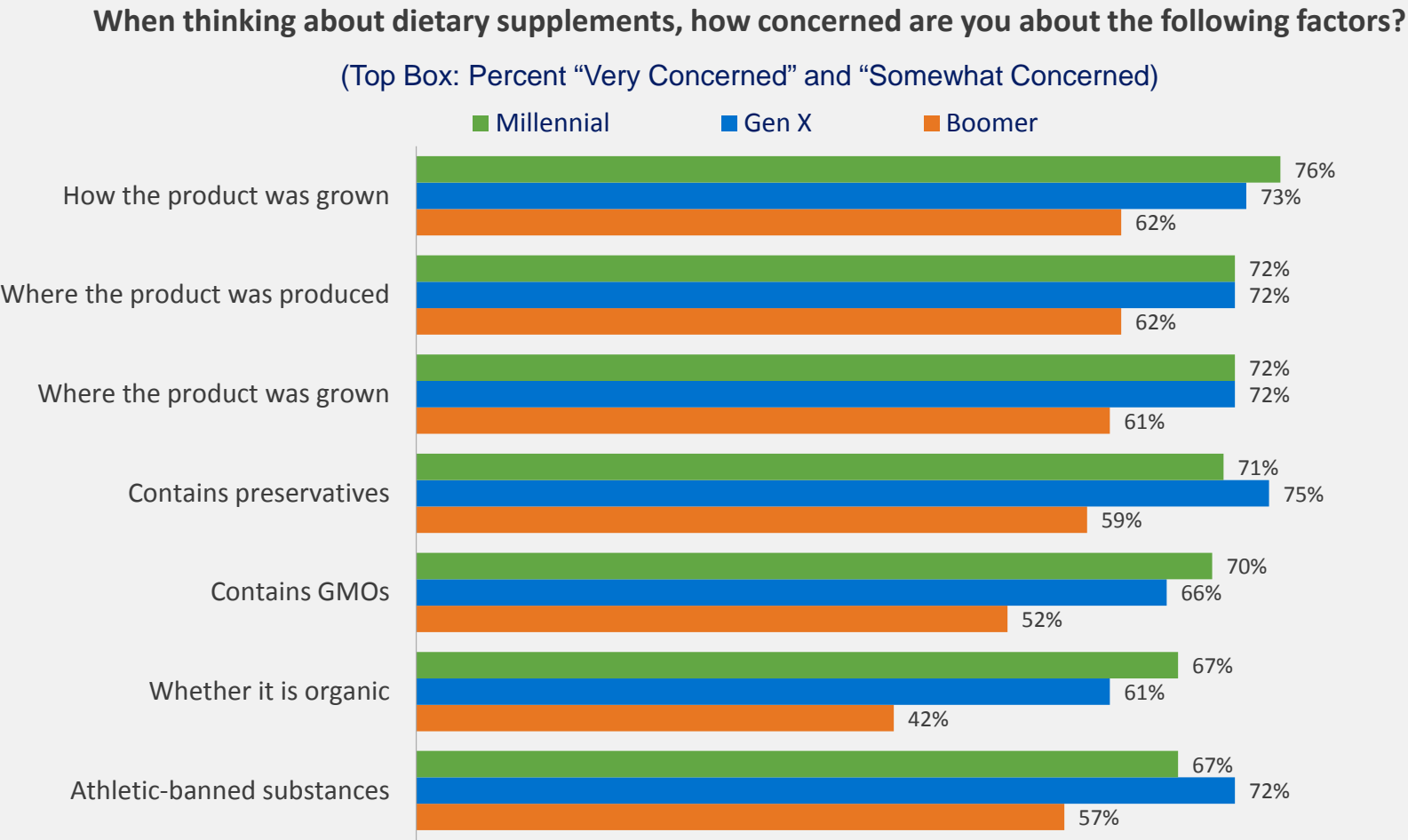
(Top Box: Percent “Very Concerned” and “Somewhat Concerned”)



TREND 4: DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS CAUSE MORE CONCERN  
AMONG YOUNGER GENERATIONS



*Millennials & Gen Xers have more concerns than Boomers over dietary supplements, including whether they are organic, contain preservatives, and how they were produced*



TREND 5: MISPERCEPTION AROUND QUALITY STANDARDS MAY CAUSE LOW CONCERN FOR PERSONAL CARE PRODUCT SAFETY



Majority of Americans (85%) are concerned about the safety of the ingredients in personal care products but only 58% list safety among the most important factors when purchasing them

When thinking about personal care items how concerned are you about the following factors?  
(Top Box: Percent “Very Concerned” and “Somewhat Concerned”)



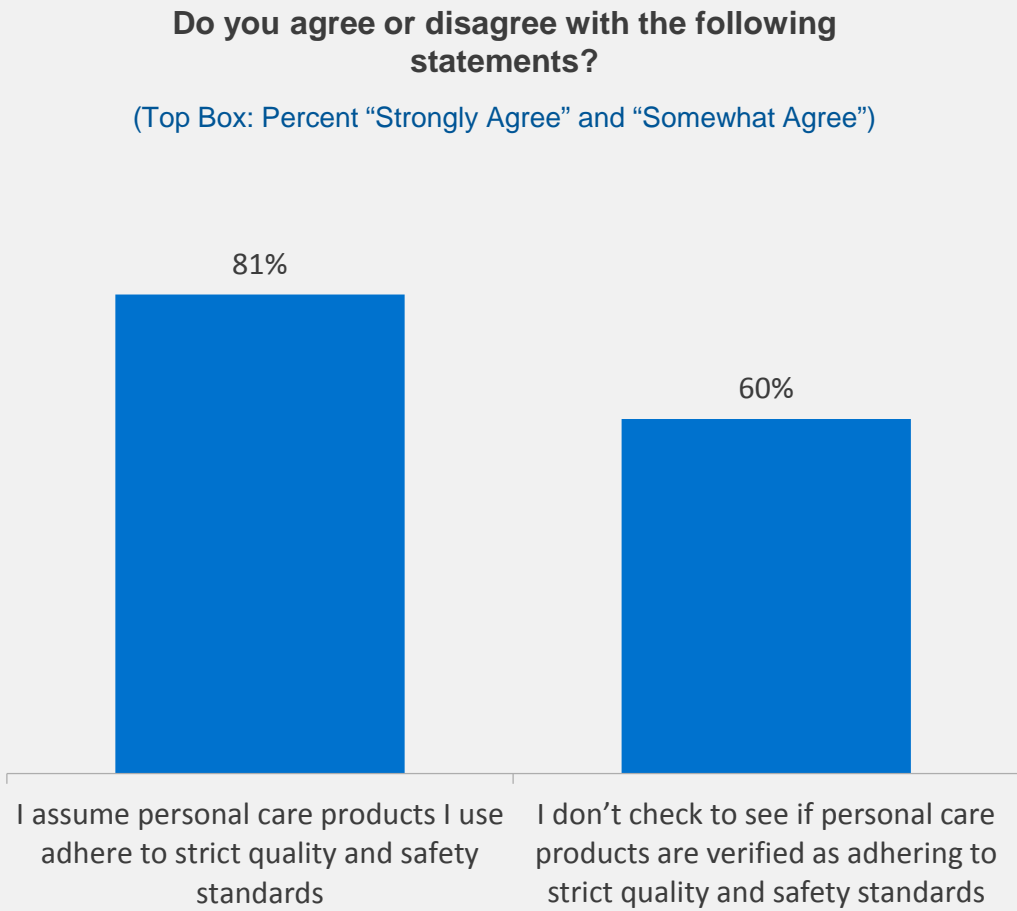
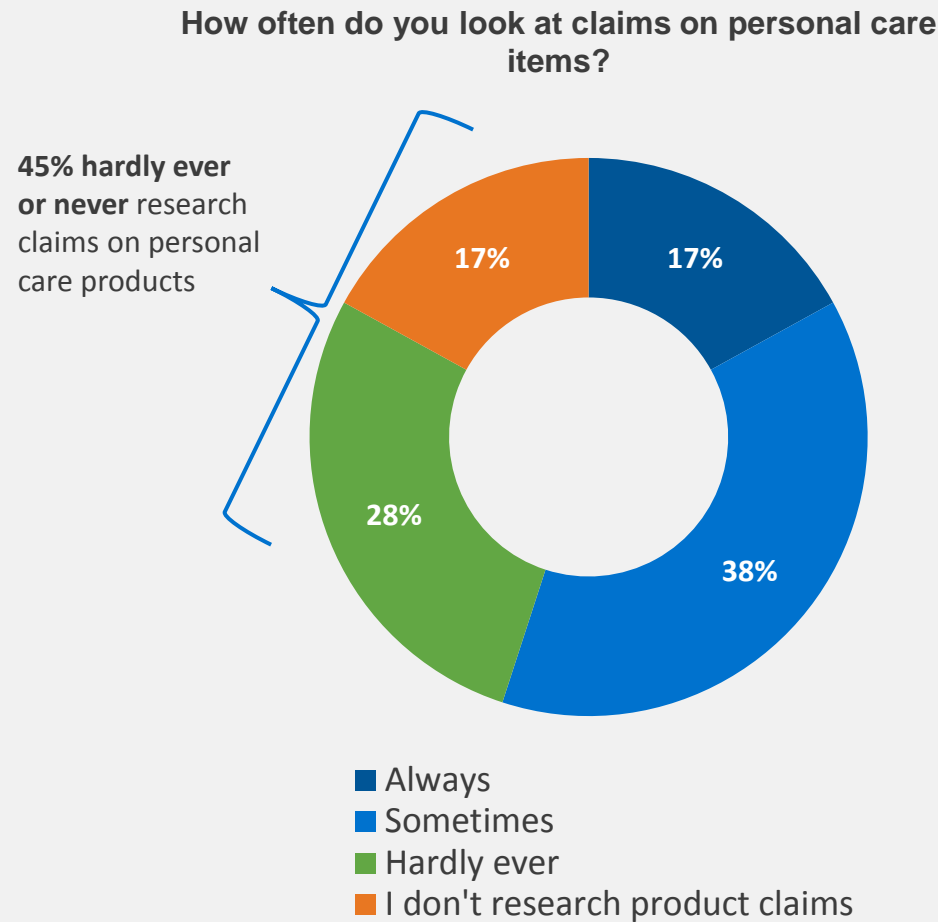
What are the most important factors you consider when purchasing the products you use on your body?



TREND 5: MISPERCEPTION AROUND QUALITY STANDARDS MAY CAUSE LOW CONCERN FOR PERSONAL CARE PRODUCT SAFETY



Nearly half (45%) of Americans hardly ever or never look at claims on personal care products and automatically assume that all personal care products are safe



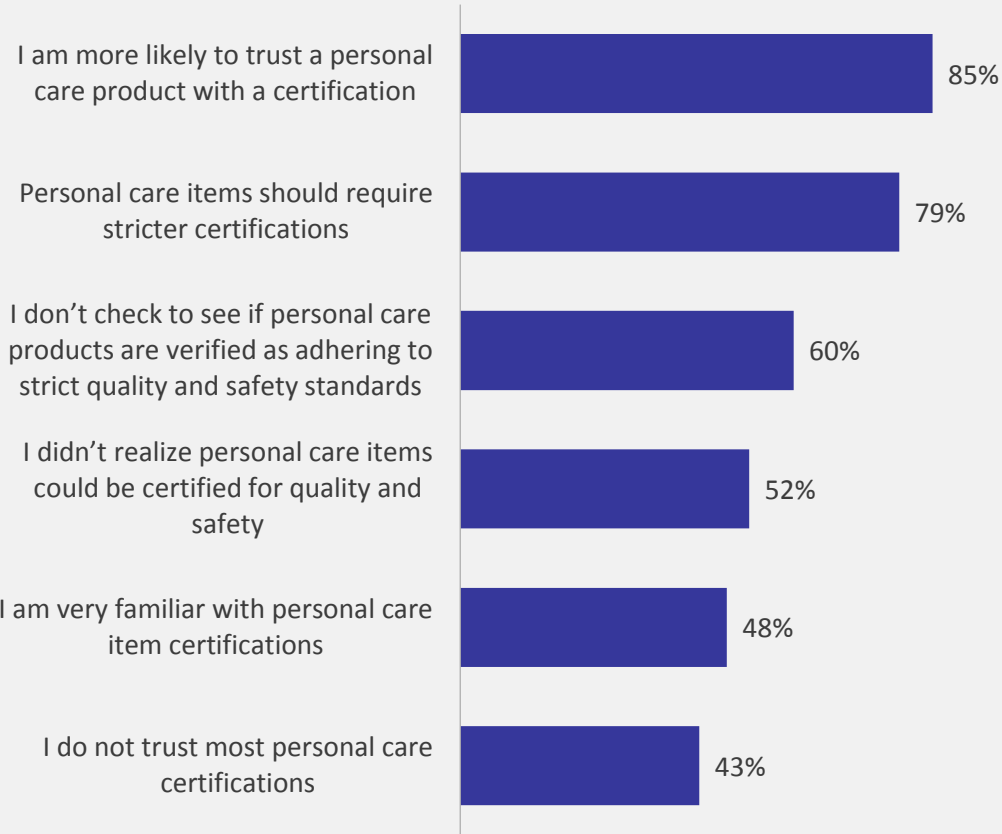
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Misperceptions may be partly due to the fact that 60% of Americans do not check if personal care items adhere to standards and half do not know they could be certified in the first place

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about personal care item certifications?

(Top Box: Percent “Strongly Agree” and “Somewhat Agree”)



33% trust a sale representative recommending a personal care product without looking at the label

*Independent organizations have Americans’ trust when it comes to product claims. While few trust claims made by influencers/celebrity endorsements, NSF has an opportunity to leverage social media to educate consumers and become a trusted third-party source*

How much, if at all, do you trust the following claims related to...?

