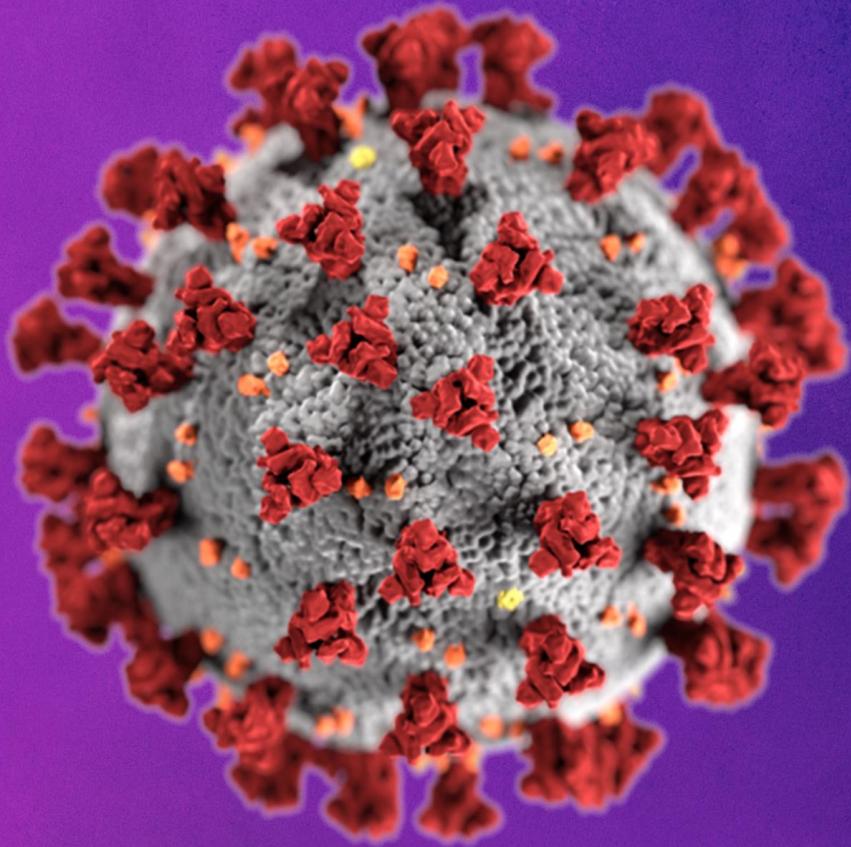




COVID-19

report 2: FEAR & RESPONSE

3.17.20



As the Coronavirus news continues to mount, mass panic has begun to set in. Store shelves are wiped clean of supplies & food, group gatherings have been discouraged or outlawed entirely, and mandatory restaurant closures have been begun.

A wave of fear has arrived, but how will consumers respond?

Here are highlights from Datassential's latest wave of Coronavirus research, fielded March 13-14 with 1,000 US consumers.

KEY EVENTS SINCE THE LAST FIELDING ON MARCH 10

March 11

President Trump addresses the nation from Oval Office, calls for new travel restrictions
WHO declares COVID-19 a global pandemic
Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson test positive for coronavirus while in Australia
NBA suspends remainder of season indefinitely
McDonald's offers to pay quarantined workers at company-owned restaurants

March 12

NYSE temporarily halts trading after the S&P 500 falls more than 7% in a short period
Prominent Seattle chef Tom Douglas announces he will close 12 of his 13 restaurants
Walt Disney World officially closes

March 13

NY governor Andrew Cuomo requires public venues across state to cut capacity by half
Italy reports huge jump in Covid-19 cases to more than 21,000
Governor Cuomo announces New York's first death from COVID-19
Apple closes all stores around the world outside of China

March 14

All Momofuku restaurants in New York, Washington D.C., and Los Angeles closed
As of March 14, there are 2,816 cases in the US, with 58 reported deaths

Note: this research was fielded prior to the mandatory restaurant closures in Illinois, Washington, Los Angeles, and other major areas. Consumer sentiment for the period following those events will be captured in the next edition of this report series.

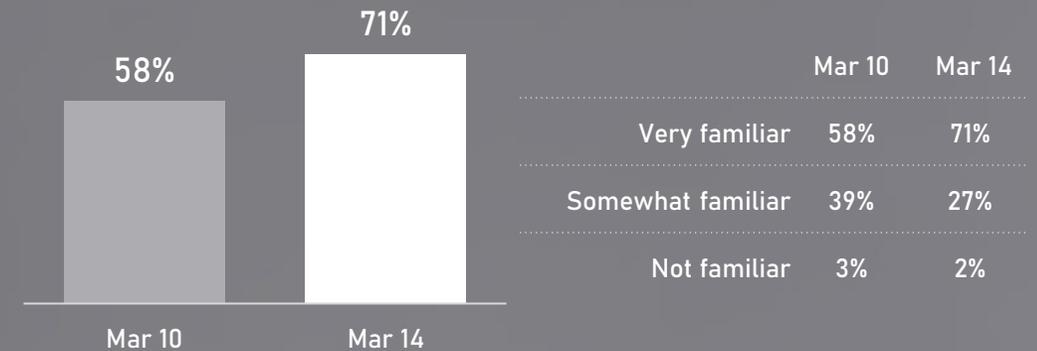


Concern has risen significantly in just 4 days.

With the accelerating cycle of Coronavirus news, 71% of Americans now consider themselves “very familiar” with the situation – a massive jump of 13 points in just half a week.

Personal concern for exposure is also up 8 points. As of this past weekend, 49% of consumers are very concerned about the risk, and are “hugely worried about my own personal health and plan to do whatever I can”.

very familiar with Coronavirus



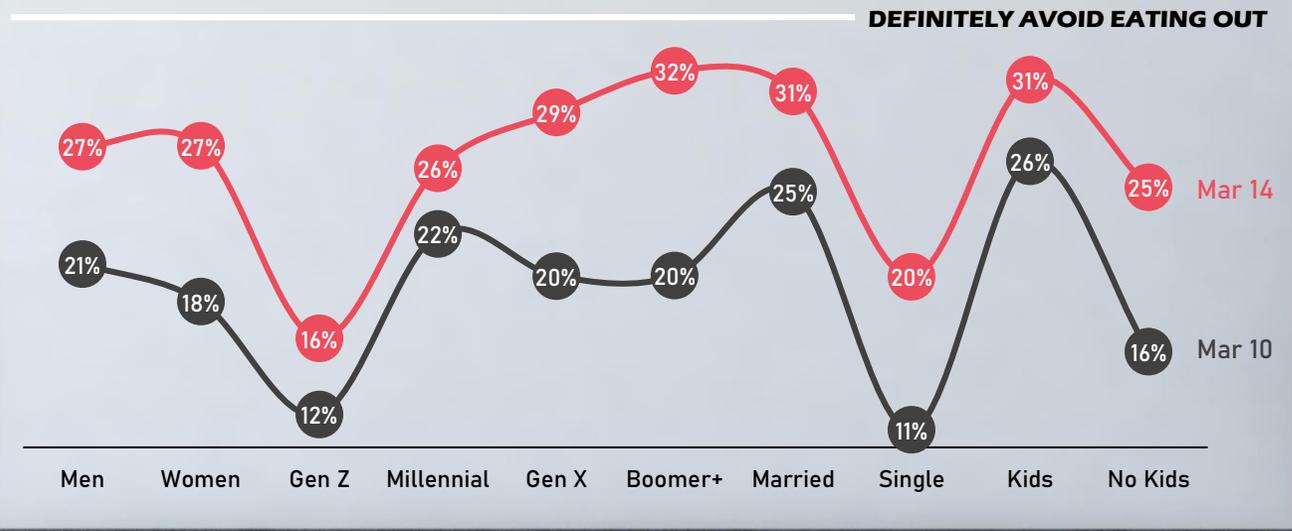
very concerned with Coronavirus

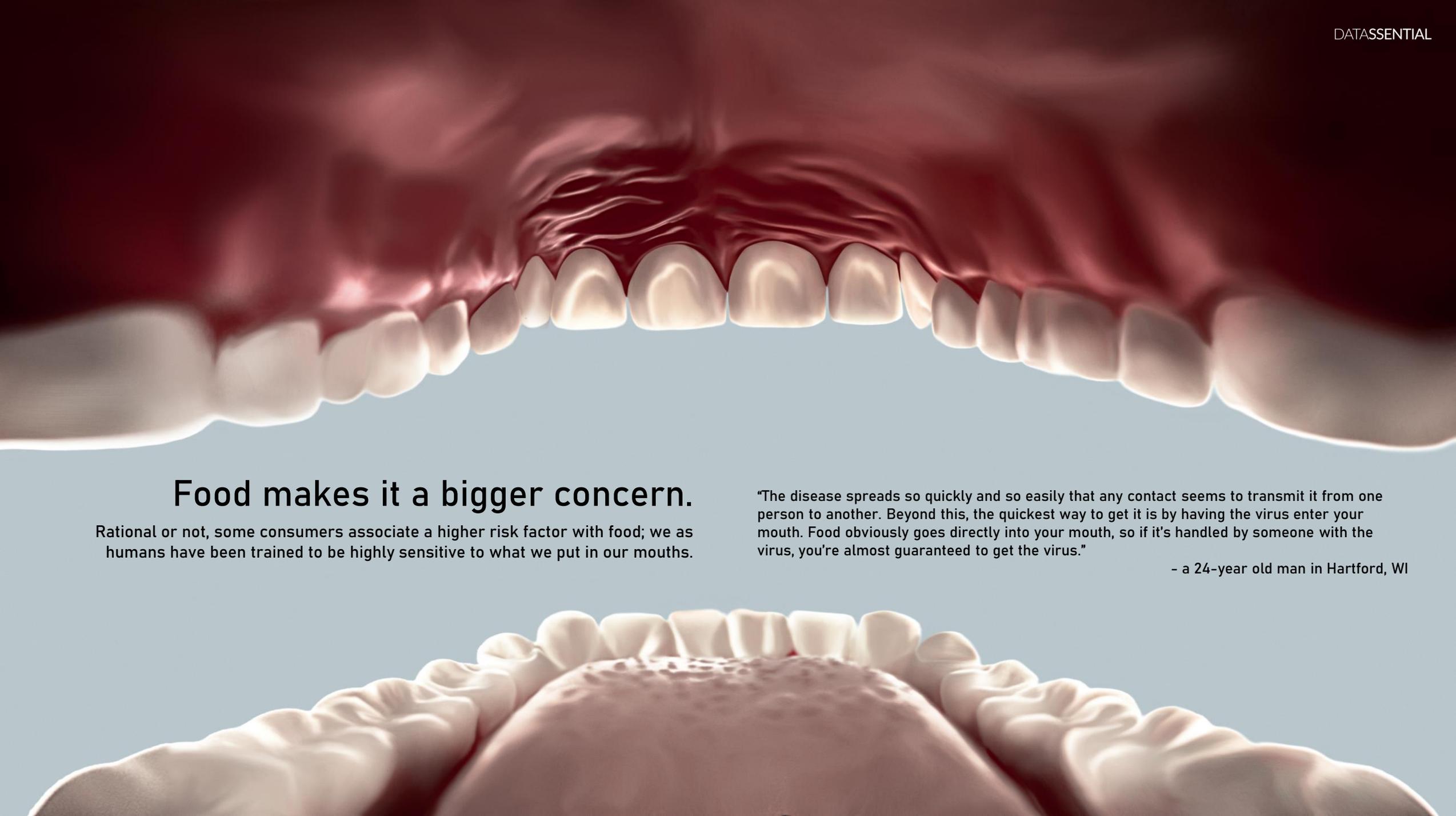




Two-thirds are concerned about eating at restaurants.

A clear majority of Americans today have grown fearful of restaurants, and 27% now definitely avoid eating out entirely, a jump of 8% in just 4 days. The increased fear persists across demographic groups, with particularly large spikes among Boomers (+12%) and Gen X (+9%). Moreover, the concern has now spilled over beyond just parents; restaurant avoidance has now spiked aggressively among single adults and those without kids. Consumers feel it's not just about protecting your family anymore — it's also about protecting yourself.





Food makes it a bigger concern.

Rational or not, some consumers associate a higher risk factor with food; we as humans have been trained to be highly sensitive to what we put in our mouths.

“The disease spreads so quickly and so easily that any contact seems to transmit it from one person to another. Beyond this, the quickest way to get it is by having the virus enter your mouth. Food obviously goes directly into your mouth, so if it’s handled by someone with the virus, you’re almost guaranteed to get the virus.”

- a 24-year old man in Hartford, WI

“The cleanliness of the employees and safety of the food. Lots of businesses are training employees on food and health safety measures like (washing hands properly and often, sanitizing surfaces, etc). I make sure to heat items I take home to eat from restaurants. I go to restaurants I trust the most.”

- a 44-year old woman in Minneapolis, MN

“Restaurant staff coughing and sneezing on food, not washing their hands, and seeing the tightest tables. Eating utensils and condiments should be washed after the tables been turned over.”

- a 66-year old woman in Bethel, CT

“In America, sick pay is not available to most part-time minimum-wage employees; and most employers are very discouraging of taking days off. This means most minimum-wage workers will not get tested or take the day off if they get Coronavirus.”

- a 30-year old woman in Washington City, OR

“My concern would be the cooks, servers and the rest of the staff. I would love to see a sign on a family restaurant that I am supposed to go to tomorrow. The sign should say something like, “We deep clean every day.” Not sure if that will help give me more confidence or not.”

- an 83-year old man in Skokie, IL

“I’m worried about the workers possibly being infected or incoming customers being infected. The environment inside the restaurant could also be infected. There’s too many risks and we don’t know if the workers are always taking the necessary precautions to prevent infection.”

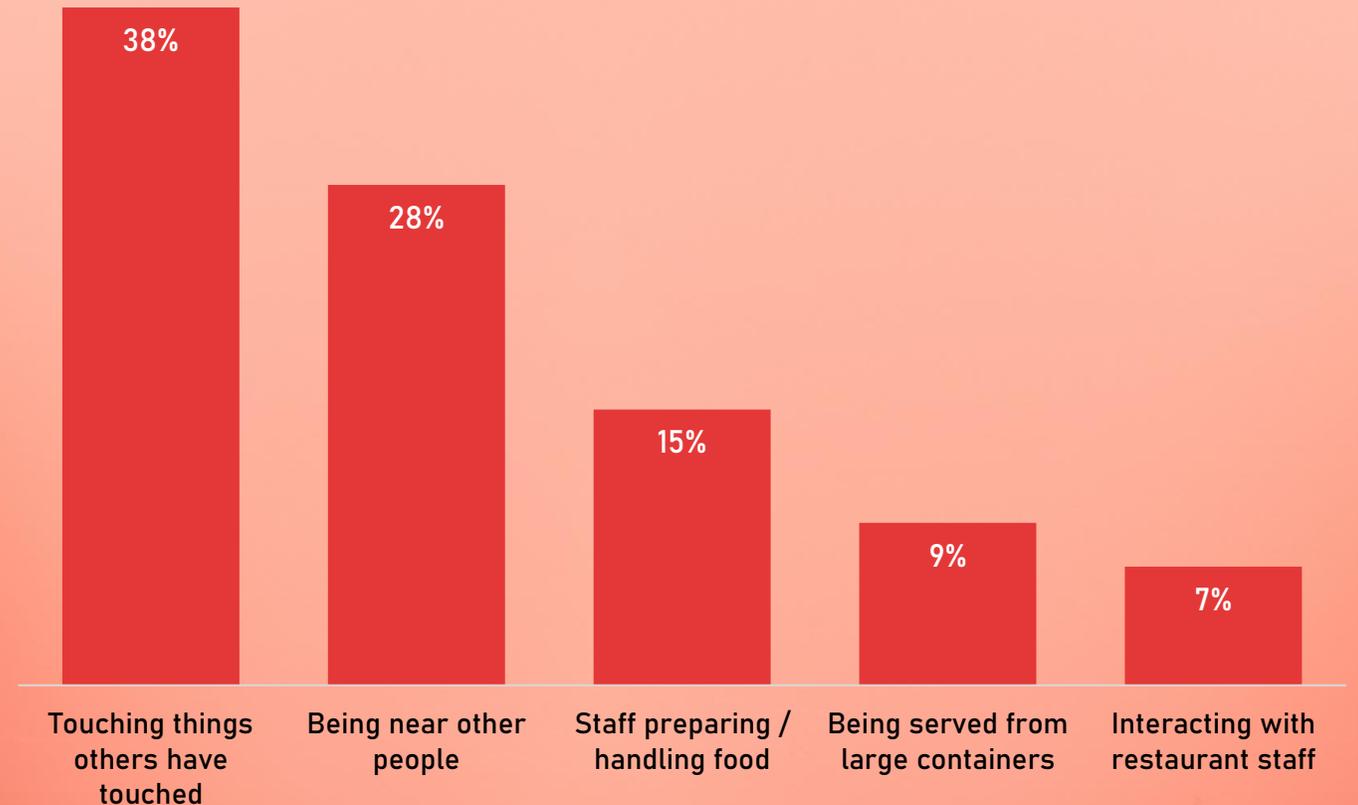
- a 21-year old man in Los Angeles, CA



Hands off!

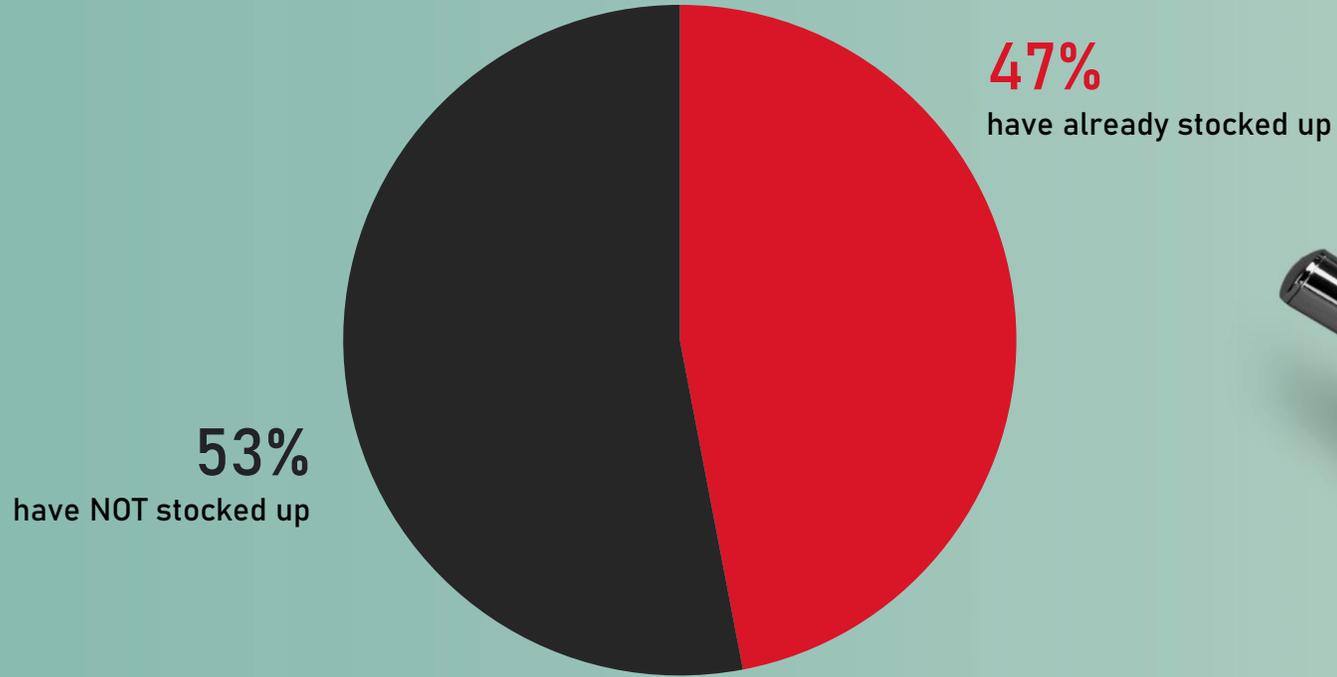
When it comes to restaurants, people are most freaked out about touching shared objects – countertops, napkin dispensers, chairs, cash, and countless other surfaces that may feel almost unavoidable.

Restaurants should look to shift to a touch-free environment; eliminate as many contact points as possible, while also using gloves and other protective measures to minimize the potential for transmission.

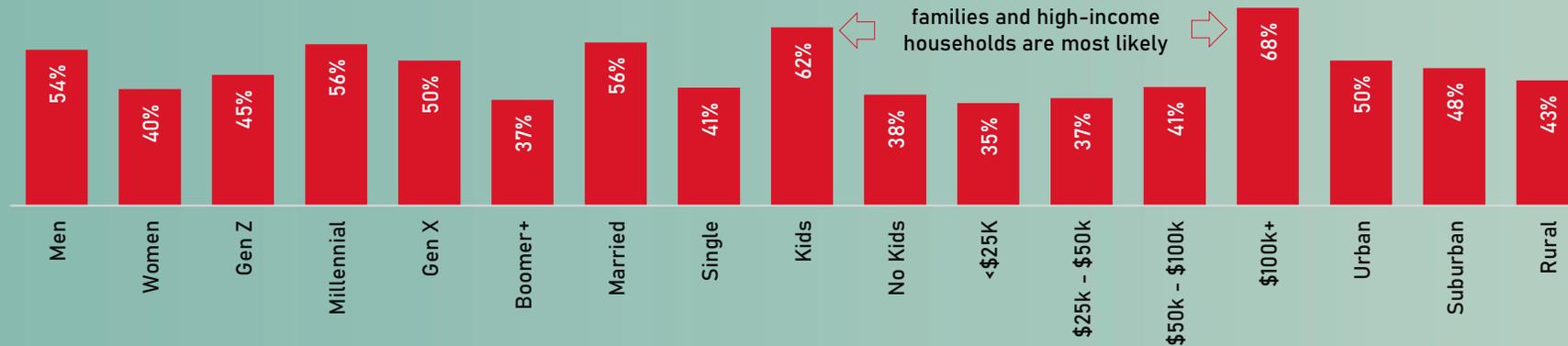


Nearly half have already stocked up.

Consumers are already preparing to hunker down. Specifically in response to COVID-19, 47% have already stocked up on supplies for their household by March 14. Their mindset is clear – we're getting ready to survive at home.

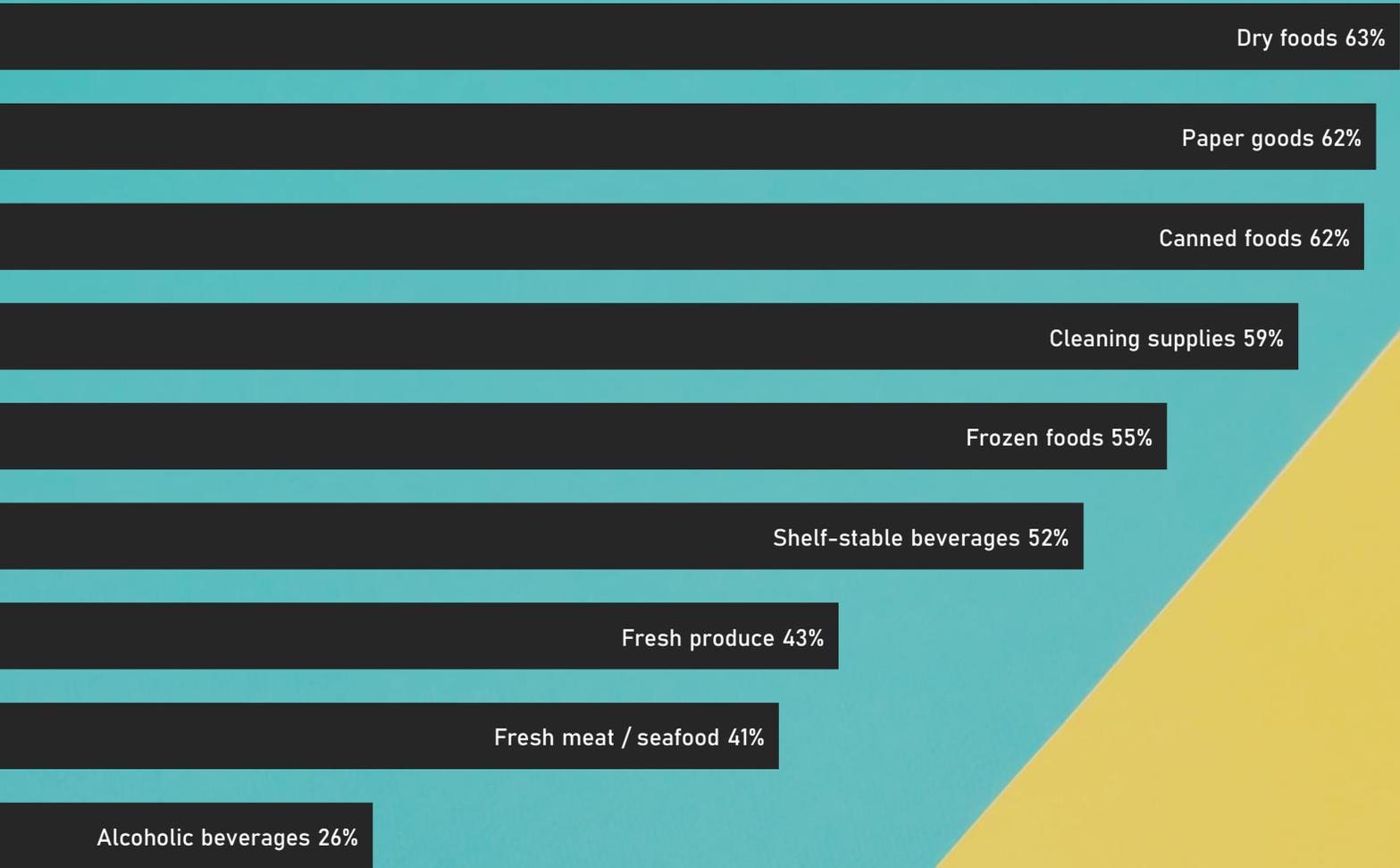


who has already stocked up?



Everything but alcohol.

People are stocking up on just about everything – with dry foods (cereals, chips, dry pasta, etc.) leading the pack alongside paper goods (towels, toilet paper, etc.), and canned foods. There's a run on multiple categories, leading to a string of single-day sales records at many grocery locations.



[of those who have already stocked up]
what have you stocked up on since learning about COVID-19?

Everything's at least a little risky to consumers.

People perceive risk in all manners of acquiring food, including a range of methods that result in food being brought back to their home. Meal kits are generally thought to be the safest solution – but even they are deemed too risky by 19% of consumers, with only a minority (38%) believing them to be not risky at all.

Regardless of how the food is offered, consumers want additional reassurances to mitigate the perceived risk. Whether it's wiping down surfaces visibly and frequently or posting the specific safety measures in place, businesses will have to prove to customers that they offer a safe environment.



How risky do you consider each of the following ways to get food as it relates to Coronavirus?

	Not Risky	Somewhat Risky	Too Risky
Meal kit	38%	44%	19%
Takeout	28%	55%	17%
Drive thru	27%	56%	17%
Grocery meat & seafood counter	26%	55%	19%
Restaurant delivery	26%	55%	20%
Grocery bakery counter	25%	56%	19%
Grocery deli counter	24%	56%	20%
Cafeteria line	17%	47%	36%
Self-serve food bar at grocery store	16%	43%	41%
Self-serve salad bar at restaurant	15%	41%	43%

AS REPORTED BY THE FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY OF IRELAND

<https://www.fsai.ie/faq/coronavirus.html>

Can COVID-19 (coronavirus) be passed on through food?

Experience with SARS and MERS suggest that people are not infected with the virus through food. So, it is unlikely the virus is passed on through food and there is no evidence yet of this happening with COVID-19 (coronavirus) to date.

Coronaviruses need a host (animal or human) to grow in and cannot grow in food. Thorough cooking is expected to kill the virus because we know that a heat treatment of at least 30min at 60°C is effective with SARS.

NOTE: the above is excerpted from the public website indicated and Datassential has not verified the scientific accuracy of the statement. We are presenting it here as an example of information in the public domain and encourage you to do your own additional research to determine appropriate food safety procedures. We do not make any warranties about the completeness, reliability, or accuracy of this information. Any action you take upon this information is strictly at your own risk.

Cooking with heat builds confidence.

62% of consumers believe that cooking food kills Coronavirus, agreeing that "Coronavirus can not be contracted through food that has been thoroughly cooked".



HOTSHOT REPORT

Get additional consumer and operator detail in Datassential's future COVID-19 reports, available for download soon.



Help us help you.

As the Coronavirus situation continues to evolve rapidly, just tell us what you want to know. If it's something that benefits the food industry, we'll do our best to incorporate it into an upcoming report and provide the results to everyone for free.

And if you have a need that's specific to your company or brand, we would love to design a custom research solution for you.

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