

Free-from/Ingredients to Avoid - US - 2022

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This report looks at the following areas:

- Consumer eating habits, use of nutritional labels, and attitudes toward ingredients.
- Sought out, avoided and awareness of ingredients
- Interest in emerging ingredients
- Label and ingredient attitudes and behaviors
- Reasons for ingredient avoidance

The share of new product introductions featuring broader health-related ingredient and formulation claims have seen a slow, perhaps temporary, decline. Still, consumers are still looking for cues from brands that demonstrate cleaner, more wholesome qualities. With the costs of goods and services universally higher, and consumers pressured to make budgetary choices, BFY efforts may take a back seat. Yet, health and perceptions of food and drink value are inherently connected suggesting that there may be no better time to reinforce “what’s good” is worth the investment.

Yet, the barrage of information from both credible sources and “loud voices” is likely compounding the matter of whether particular foods, drinks and, therefore, ingredients contribute or detract from health. Despite recent updates to nutrition facts labels, consumers are still looking for more clarity that brands can provide, albeit perhaps away from the label.

Consumer confusion – in labels, ingredients and health, even among well-known ingredients is somewhat divisive: while many of the usual high-profile suspects like pesticides, sugar, HFCS and sodium are widely avoided, about a quarter or more take no official stance on these often-demonized ingredients, neither seeking out or avoiding.

The evolving ideals of typical health suggest the need for reframing: older consumers equate health ideals with limiting the bad, and younger consumers want to add the good. Fulfilling both can be powerful. Technology can play a



“While labels can be an effective tool for brands to differentiate their products nutritionally, they can also be a portal to additional information and ingredient education.”

– Mimi Bonnett – Senior Director – Food, Drink, Flavors and Ingredients

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clear role in addressing consumer questions as well as working toward streamlined communications on packaging, avoiding claim creep that can be counterproductive.

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