



SOCIETY FOR NUTRITION EDUCATION AND BEHAVIOR
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DISRUPT DEMENTIA *with nutrition*

Keeping Our Brains Young In Our Older Years

Alexandra Lewin-Zwerdling, PhD, MPA
International Food Information Council, GCBH Liaison

Olivia Okereke, MD, MS
Massachusetts General Hospital, GCBH Issue Expert

Sarah Lenz Lock, JD
AARP & Executive Dir. GCBH



INTRODUCTION

Alexandra Lewin-Zwerdling, PhD, MPA
International Food Information Council

OUR BRAINS AS WE AGE

Physical Changes

Cognitive Changes

Contributing Factors

Protective Factors

OUR BRAINS AND NUTRITION

Diet impacts brain health.

What is good for the heart is good for the brain.

Long-term healthy eating habits promote good brain health.

Discussion of Brain Food: GOBH Recommendations on Nourishing Your Brain Health

Olivia I. Okereke, MD, SM

Director of Geriatric Psychiatry
Massachusetts General Hospital

EATING HABITS TO IMPROVE OR ADOPT

1



A VARIETY OF FOODS

2



**FRESH WHOLE FRUIT
AND VEGETABLES**

3



CONSUME MORE FISH

4



HEALTHY FATS

GOBH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BRAIN HEALTH

A. Encourage:

- Berries (not juice)
- Fresh vegetables (in particular leafy greens)
- Healthy fats (such as those found in oils including extra virgin olive oil)
- Nuts (a high calorie food, so limited to a moderate amount)
- Fish and seafood

A. Include:

- Beans and other legumes,
- Fruits (in addition to berries, previously mentioned),
- Low fat dairy, such as yogurt
- Poultry
- Grains

A. Limit:

- Fried food
- Pastries
- Processed foods
- Red meat
- Red meat products
- Whole fat dairy such as cheese and butter
- Salt

EATING HABITS TO LIMIT OR AVOID

1



**EXCESSIVE WESTERN
DIET**

2



**SATURATED AND
TRANS FATS**

3



**OVER CONSUMPTION
OF ALCOHOL**

4



SALT

1



**PACKAGED &
PROCESSED FOODS**

2



DON'T START DRINKING

3



CHOCOLATE

**EATING HABITS
TO APPROACH
WITH CAUTION**

DIETARY PATTERNS

No single food is key
to good brain
health...

The Mediterranean Diet

Nordic Diet

**DASH (Dietary
Approaches to Stop
Hypertension) Diet**



Okinawan Diet

**MIND (Mediterranean – Dash
Intervention for
Neurodegenerative Delay) diet**

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR SUCCESS

**MONITOR
PORTIONS**

Water is preferable to most sodas, fruit juices, and other high calorie drinks due to these beverages possessing high sugar and fat content.



PRACTICAL TIPS TO PONDER

There are similarities between the diet recommended here for reducing risks for cognitive decline as a person ages and diets that are often recommended for several **other chronic health problems**.

Just as **nutritional needs** during childhood **are distinct**, so too are the needs of people in **later life**.



Physical activity has been shown to improve cognition in adults and is important to **promote healthy aging**.



A number of studies have linked **obesity in midlife** with an **increased risk for** future **cognitive decline**.



As people age, their ability to perceive **thirst** diminishes.



PRACTICAL TIPS SUMMARY

HEALTH TIPS



Eat nutritious foods in sensible portion sizes



Add lemon, spices & herbs instead of salt



Seek out green leafy vegetables & berries



Rinse canned foods to remove excess salt & sugar



Cooking at home results in better diet quality



+ DRINK MORE **WATER**
NOT SODA

+ EAT **TORTILLA CHIPS + SALSA**



NOT CHEESE DIP

+ COOK WITH **OLIVE OIL**



NOT BUTTER

+ EAT **SALAD**



NOT FRENCH FRIES

+ EAT MORE **FISH**
NOT RED MEAT



1

- Use substitutions
- Calories ≠ Quality

2

- Consider: Type vs. Total
- Sources: Plant vs. Animal

3

- Use color
- Healthy plate is varied

OPPORTUNITIES IN HEALTHY BRAIN AGING

WHAT TO DO NOW

Diet and Lifestyle Strategies for Healthy Brain Aging - *TRANSLATION:*

- ❖ *Get at least 5 servings of whole fruits & vegetables a day*
- ❖ *Choose more fish and seafood, reduce red meat intake*
- ❖ *Consume heart-healthy fats*
- ❖ *Eat more whole grains and nuts; lay off sweets, excess salt*
- ❖ *Follow light alcohol intake only (but don't start if not already drinking)*
- ❖ *Adhere to Mediterranean or other brain-healthy diet pattern*
- ❖ *Stay physically and mentally active*
- ❖ *Get adequate sleep and rest, hydration*

IT IS NEVER TOO LATE

MyPlate for Older Adults

Fruits & Vegetables

Whole fruits and vegetables are rich in important nutrients and fiber. Choose fruits and vegetables with deeply colored flesh. Choose canned varieties that are packed in their own juices or low-sodium.

Healthy Oils

Liquid vegetable oils and soft margarines provide important fatty acids and some fat-soluble vitamins.

Herbs & Spices

Use a variety of herbs and spices to enhance flavor of foods and reduce the need to add salt.



Fluids

Drink plenty of fluids. Fluids can come from water, tea, coffee, soups, and fruits and vegetables.

Grains

Whole grain and fortified foods are good sources of fiber and B vitamins.

Dairy

Fat-free and low-fat milk, cheeses and yogurts provide protein, calcium and other important nutrients.

Protein

Protein rich foods provide many important nutrients. Choose a variety including nuts, beans, fish, lean meat and poultry.



Remember to Stay Active!

Tufts
UNIVERSITY

HEAN MAYER
WAZDA
NUTRITION
RESEARCH
CENTRE
AGAC

HNRCA

AARP Foundation

"...increasing fruit intake by just 1 serving per day has the estimated potential to reduce cardiovascular mortality risk by 8%, the equivalent of 60,000 fewer deaths annually in the United States and 1.6 million deaths globally..."

"...adults age 50 and older who get the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables in a typical day report significantly better brain health compared to those who do not..."





SURVEY RESULTS

Sarah Lenz Lock, JD

Senior Vice President, AARP Policy & Brain Health
Executive Director, Global Council on Brain Health

SURVEY OBJECTIVES

To characterize the eating habits of adults age 40 and older.

To understand adults' willingness to eat a healthier diet and the barriers preventing them from healthy eating.

To explore the relationship between brain health & eating habits.

MAJOR TAKEAWAYS

MOST ADULTS 40+ ARE NOT GETTING PROPER NUTRITION

- Six out of 10 do not consume the USDA's recommended amounts of fruits, vegetables;
- More do not consume the recommended amount of dairy, grains, and protein;
- Virtually no one consumes the dietary recommendations in all five food groups; and
- One-third (1/3) do not meet the dietary recommendations in any food group.

MAJOR TAKEAWAYS

MOST ADULTS 40+ SAY THEY WOULD GET PROPER NUTRITION IF...

- They were aware that it could reduce their risk of cognitive decline, heart disease, or diabetes;
- It was more affordable to do so;
- They had access to healthier options; and
- It was recommended by their doctor/health care provider.

MAJOR TAKEAWAYS

MENTAL WELLBEING AND BRAIN HEALTH

- Adults who eat at least the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables report better brain health and have higher average mental well-being scores.
- Adults age 40+ who eat fish/seafood in a typical week but not red meat report better brain health and higher average mental wellbeing scores compared to individuals who eat read meat but not fish/seafood in a typical week.
- Individuals who follow some of the eating patterns included in the Mediterranean diet report better brain health and high mental well-being scores.
- Women eat better than men.

MAJOR TAKEAWAYS

WILLINGNESS TO CHANGE

- The majority say they are confident they can eat a healthier diet and intend to do so.
- Large majorities of adults say they would be likely to eat a healthy diet knowing it may reduce their risk of cognitive decline/dementia, diabetes, and heart disease.
- Most adults say they are likely to change their diet in specific ways knowing it is good for their brain (eat more fish/seafood, limit red meat, limit whole-fat dairy)

BARRIERS TO HEALTHY EATING

Costs

Identity





Tastes

Doctors

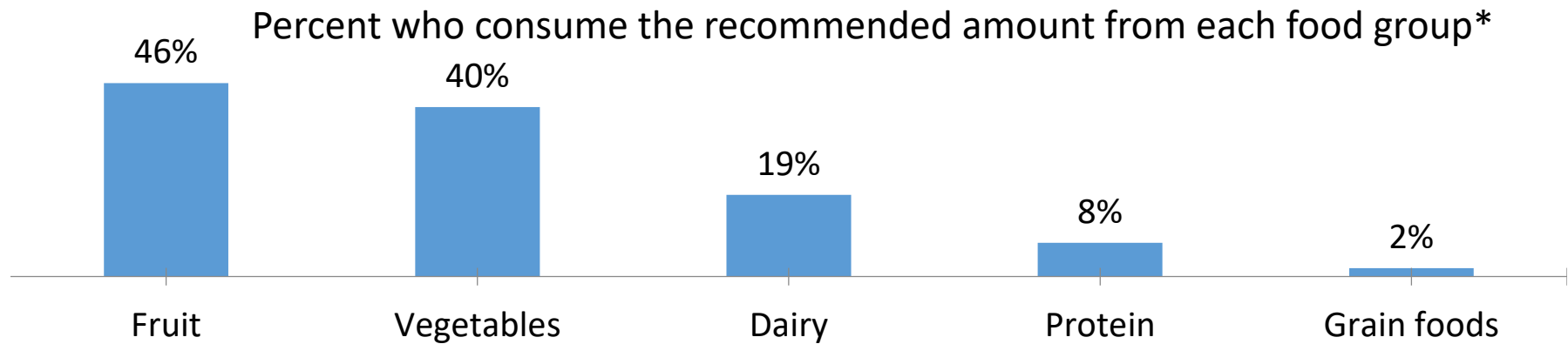
DIETARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Adults age 40+, on average, are more likely to consume enough fruits and vegetables but not enough dairy, protein, or grains.

What should people eat?*

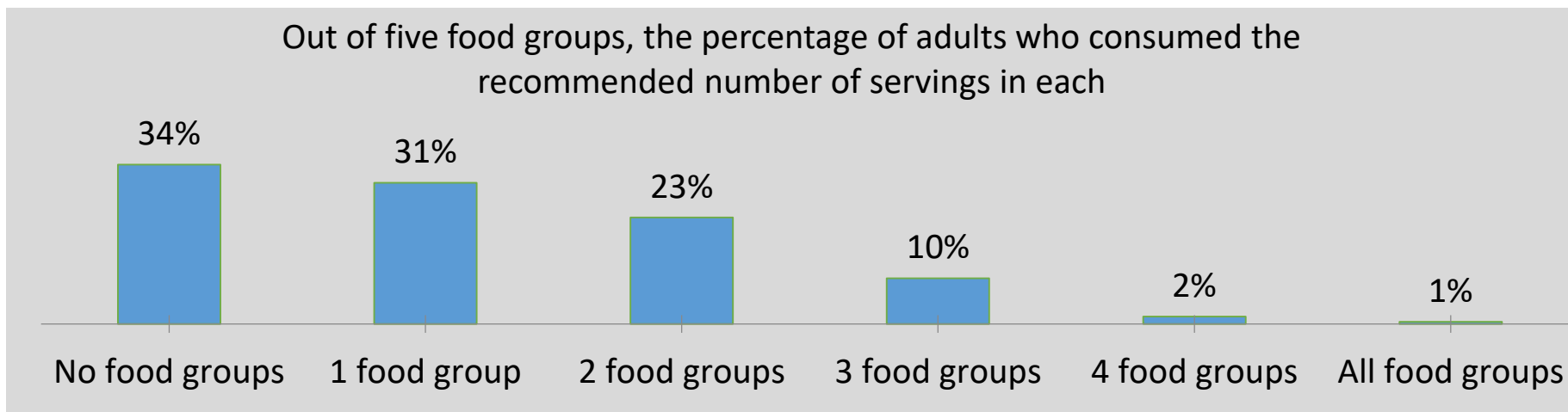
				
1.5-2 cups per day	2-3 cups per day	3 cups per day	5-6 servings day	5-7 servings per day

* From: <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/> (Amount varies by age and gender)



MOST ADULTS AREN'T MEETING HEALTHY EATING GUIDELINES

Virtually no one consumes the dietary recommendations in all five food groups and one-third (34%) of adults age 40 and older do not meet the dietary recommendations in any of the food groups.



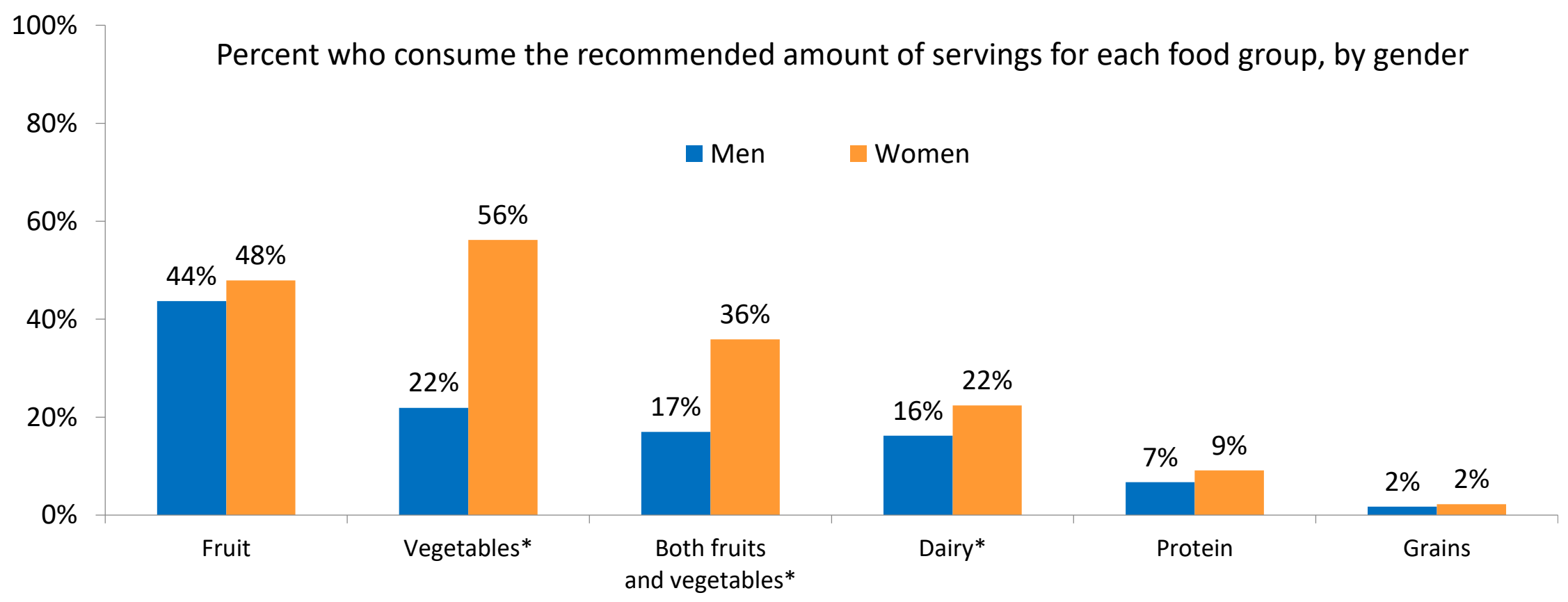
Food group	Percent who consumed no servings to six or more servings per day, by food group						
	None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six or more
Fruits	14%	40%	27%	13%	4%	1%	1%
Vegetables	7%	32%	35%	17%	5%	2%	2%
Grain foods	8%	33%	31%	18%	6%	2%	2%
Protein	1%	20%	34%	24%	10%	5%	6%
Dairy	10%	40%	30%	13%	3%	2%	2%

Q6 to Q10 About how many servings of [fruits, vegetables, grain foods, protein, dairy] do you eat in a typical day?

Note: Examples of servings were provided for each food group

WOMEN FOLLOW HEALTHY EATING GUIDELINES MORE OFTEN THAN MEN

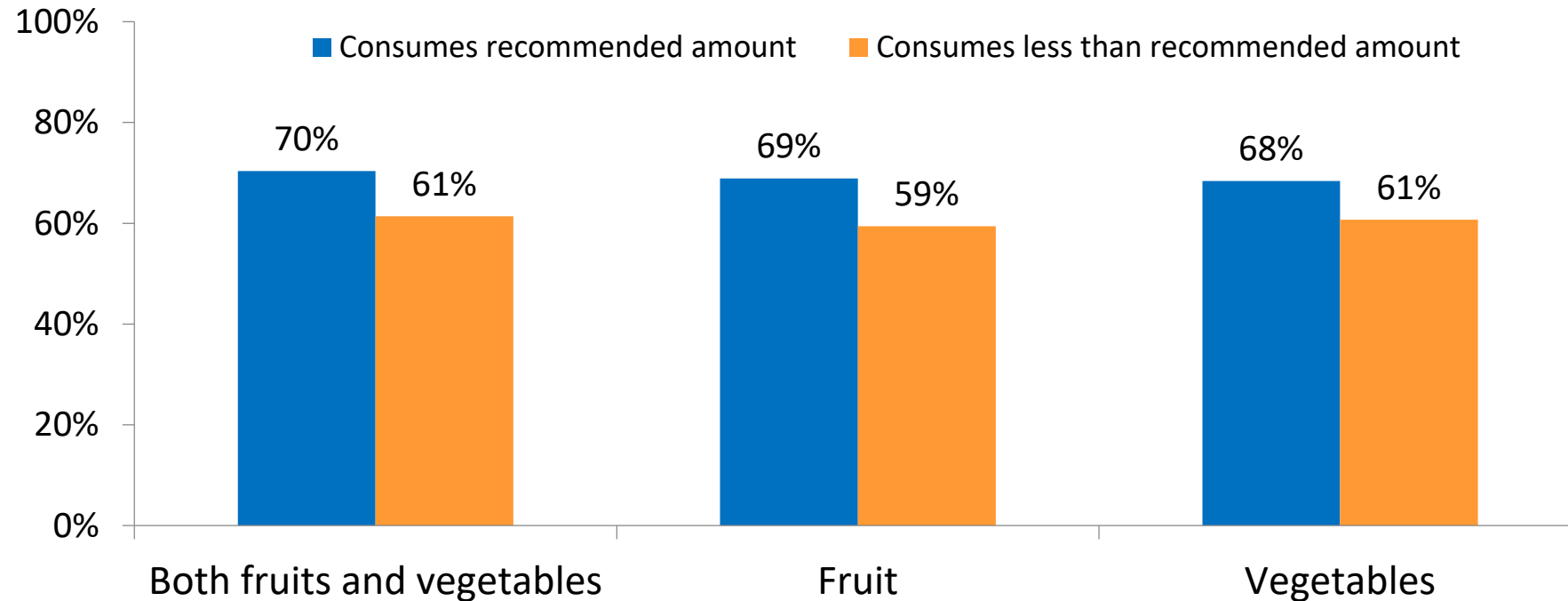
More than twice as many women than men consume the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables combined and vegetables alone. Women are also more likely to consume the recommended amount of dairy foods.



*Statistically significant difference.

MORE F&V = SELF REPORTED BETTER BRAIN HEALTH

Percent who rate their brain health as “excellent” or “very good,” by the consumption of recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables



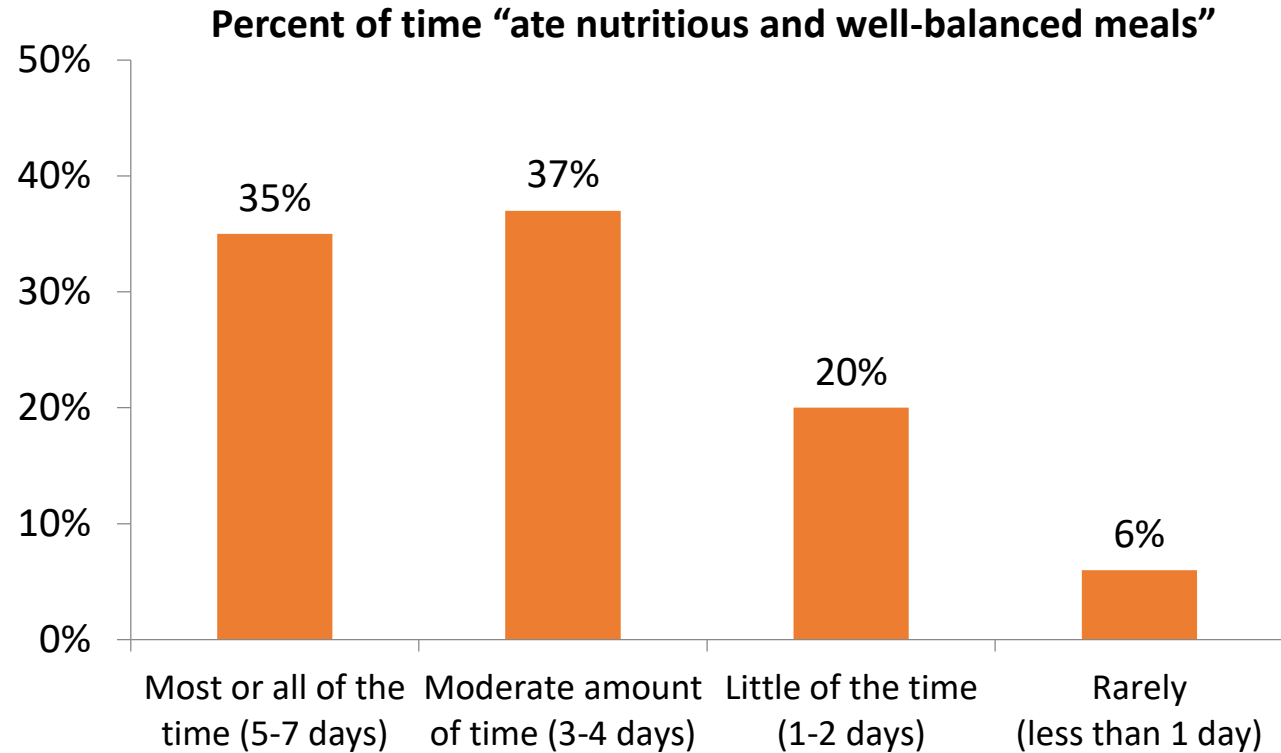
Adults age 40 and older who eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables report better brain health.

Q6/Q7 About how many servings of (fruits/vegetables) do you eat in a typical day? (None, One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six or more)

Results are statistically significant.

MOST EAT WELL 4 OR FEWER DAYS OF THE WEEK

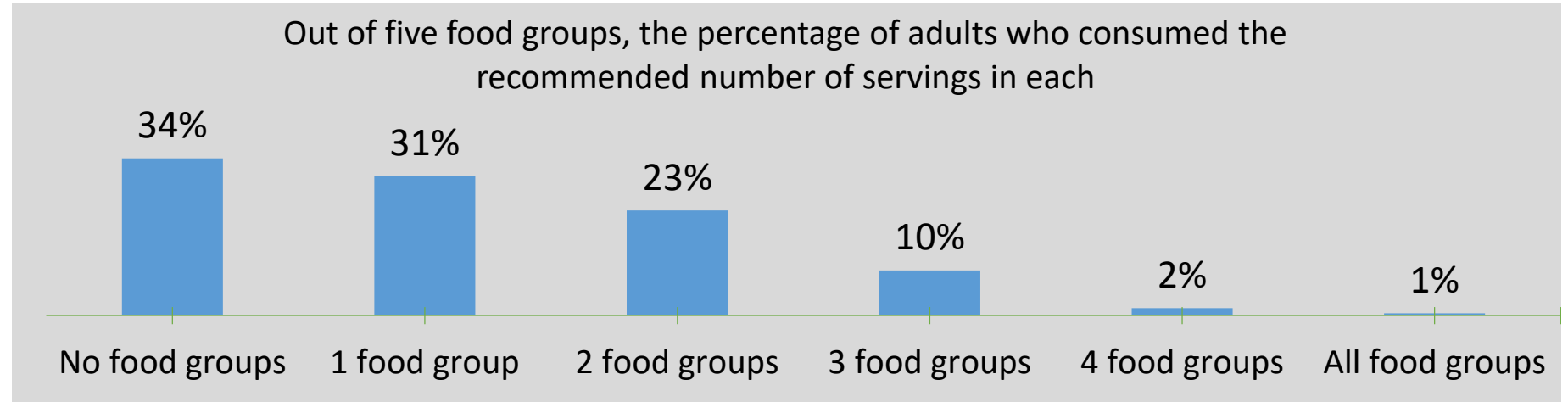
More than six in 10 (63%) adults age 40 and older eat poorly saying that they “ate nutritious and well-balanced meals” three or four days per week or less often. While about one-third (35%) ate nutritiously “most or all of the time,” significantly more adults age 65+ ate well.



Significantly more adults age 65 and older said they ate nutritiously 5-7 days per week compared to adults age 40-54 (44% vs. 28%).

LOTS OF ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

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Grain foods	8%	33%	31%	18%	6%	2%	2%
Protein	1%	20%	34%	24%	10%	5%	6%
Dairy	10%	40%	30%	13%	3%	2%	2%

Q6 to Q10 About how many servings of [fruits, vegetables, grain foods, protein, dairy] do you eat in a typical day?

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@SarahLenzlock

slock@narp.org

www.GlobalCouncilonBrainHealth.org

www.narp.org/GCBH



THANK YOU!