

## New Yorkers Support Added Sugar Warnings on Chain Restaurant Menu

*Statewide Survey Shows More than Three-Quarters of New Yorkers Support Warnings on Chain Restaurant Menu Items with More than a Day's Worth of Added Sugars*

New Yorkers returning to restaurants after the pandemic are eager to know which chain restaurant menu items have more than a day's worth of added sugars, according to a new survey published by Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI).

The survey, fielded April 6 to 11, 2021 by Caravan/Engine Insights, found that more than three-quarters of New York state residents (78 percent) support government-required warnings, like the triangles below, on chain restaurant menu items with more than a day's worth of added sugars, with consistently high support across demographic groups.



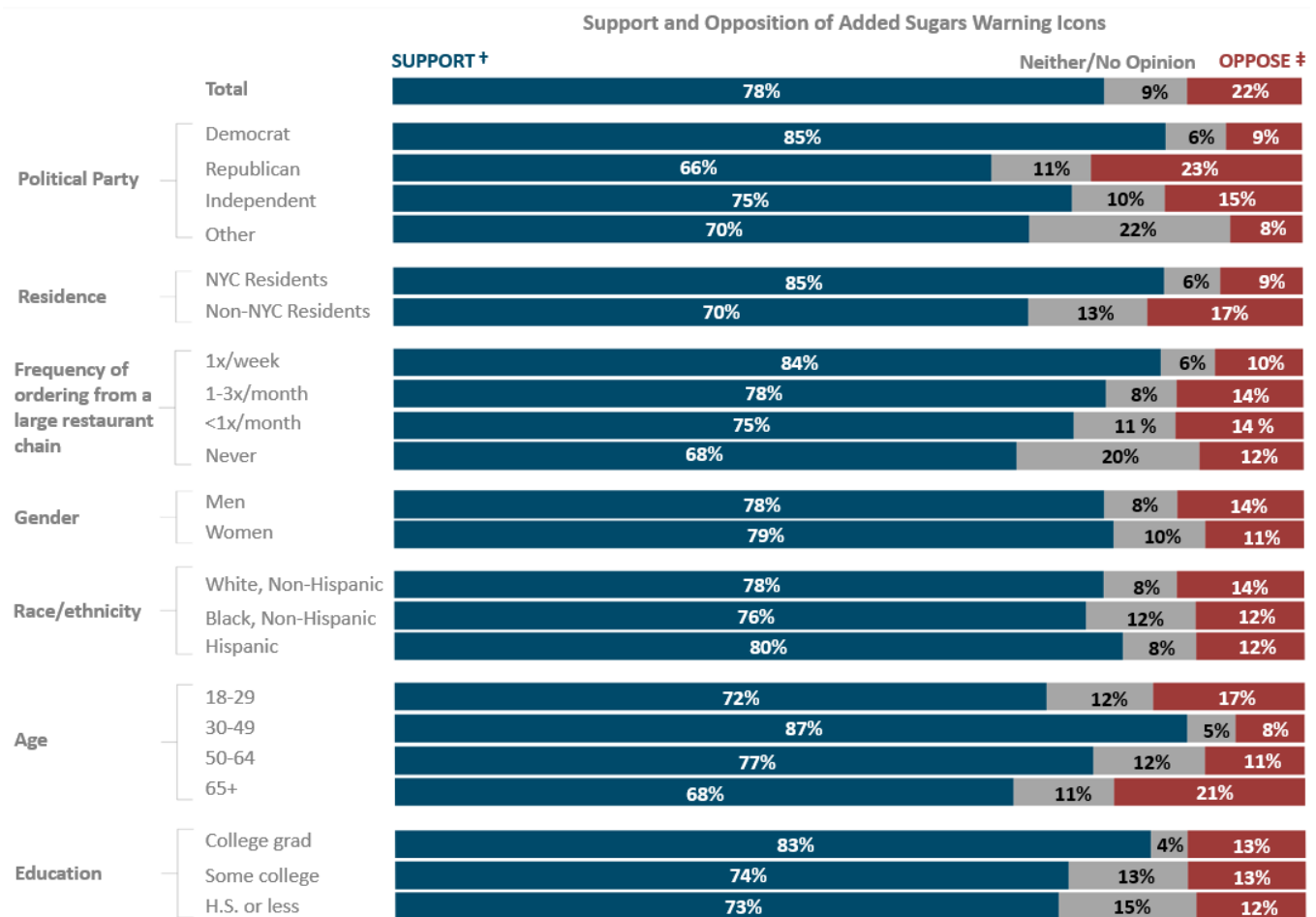
Question: Which of these best describes how you feel about the state of New York requiring a warning icon, like the triangle below, that will appear next to food and beverage menu items that have more than a day's worth of added sugars at large restaurant chains (for example, McDonald's, Starbucks, Applebee's, etc.)? "Support" includes respondents who answered "Somewhat support" or "Strongly support."

In New York City, where sodium (salt) warning icons are already required on restaurant menus, the City Council is considering a bill sponsored by Councilmember Mark Levine (Int. 1326), that would require similar warning icons for added sugars. Support for the warnings is even higher among New York City residents (85 percent) than in other parts of the state.

New Yorkers responding to the survey also struggled to correctly identify menu items with more than 50 grams of added sugars, the Daily Value set by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for a 2,000-calorie diet. On average, New Yorkers correctly identified only 49% of McDonald's menu items with more than a day's worth of added sugars.

## Support for Menu Warnings is Consistently High Across Demographic Groups

Support for menu warnings is consistently high across demographic groups, with more than three quarters saying they either “support” or “strongly support” the policy across gender and racial/ethnic groups. All age groups also support the policy by a clear majority, with adults aged 30-49 showing the highest support (87 percent) and adults 65 and older showing the lowest (68 percent).



‡ “Oppose” includes responses of “strongly oppose” and “somewhat oppose”

† “Support” includes responses of “strongly support” and “somewhat support”

Across political parties, the strongest support is among Democrats (85 percent) followed by Independent/Other (75 percent). Yet even among Republicans, the group with the lowest support, two thirds (66 percent) still support the government requiring added sugar warnings on chain restaurant menus.

Support for sugar warnings is even higher in New York City, which became the first city in the United States to adopt sodium warnings on chain restaurant menus in 2015. Among city

residents, 85 percent support requiring icons for added sugars, compared to 70 percent among state residents living outside the city.

Frequent customers of restaurant chains are also more likely to show support for the policy than those who order from chains less often. New Yorkers who order from restaurant chains more than 1 time a week express the highest level of support (84 percent), while those who never eat at chains expressed the lowest (68 percent).

### *New Yorkers Struggle to Correctly Identify High-Sugar Items on Restaurant Menus*

The survey also found that New Yorkers struggle when asked to identify which menu items have more than a day's worth of added sugars. The Daily Value for added sugars is 50 grams per day based on a standard 2,000-calorie diet, or about 12 teaspoons of added sugars per day.

When asked to select which food and drink items among 6 McDonald's menu items contained more than a day's worth of added sugars (>50 grams), respondents identified only 49% of the items correctly on average, or about half.



*For more information, please contact the Center for Science in the Public Interest at [policy@cspinet.org](mailto:policy@cspinet.org).*

# Appendix

## Survey Methodology:

This Caravan survey was conducted by Engine Insights using a sample of 1,006 residents in New York 18 years of age and older. Respondents were selected from a dataset of participants who have volunteered to participate in Engine Insights online surveys and polls. Participants were targeted to be representative of the U.S. Census for New York State by gender, age, income, and race/ethnicity at the state level.

The survey was fielded on April 6-11, 2021. Survey respondents were presented with an online survey that included questions related to support for menu icons and questions testing the participant's ability to correctly identify items high in added sugars.

The Margin of Error for this sample size (1,006) is +/- 3.09% at the 95% confidence level.

### Script of Survey Questions

1. On average, how often do you order food or beverages from a large restaurant chain (for example, McDonald's, Starbucks, Applebee's, etc.)? [Select one answer]
  - Never
  - Less than 1 time per month
  - 1-3 times per month
  - At least 1 time per week
2. Which of these best describes how you feel about the state of New York requiring a warning icon, like the triangle below, that will appear next to food and beverage menu items that have more than a day's worth of added sugars at large restaurant chains (for example, McDonald's, Starbucks, Applebee's, etc.)? [Select one answer]
  - Strongly support
  - Somewhat support
  - Somewhat oppose
  - Strongly oppose
  - Neither/no opinion

## COCA-COLA



Item exceeds the total daily recommended limit for added sugars (50g) based on a 2,000-calorie diet. The U.S. Dietary Guidelines advises limiting added sugars.

3. Added sugars are sugars that are added to foods and drinks during processing. Nutrition experts recommend limiting consumption of added sugars to 50 grams per day based on a standard 2,000-calorie diet. That equals about 12 teaspoons of added sugars per day.

Based on your own understanding and without checking another source, look at the McDonald's menu items below and select any that have 50 grams or more of added sugar (you may select multiple items). [Select as many as apply]

- Baked Apple Pie (<50g)
- Vanilla cone (<50g)
- Extra Value Meal / Combo meal with medium Sprite (>50g)
- Large Diet Coke (<50g)
- Chocolate Chip Cookie (<50g)
- Medium Fanta (>50g)
- None of the above