# Diet & Health under COVID-19

Pippa Bailey, Susan Purcell, Javier Calvar & Alex Baverstock

January 2021

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Q1. Personal changes since the COVID-19 pandemic began Globally, three-quarters of respondents reported changes to their weight, exercise, alcohol consumption or smoking since the pandemic began, with weight gain being more widely seen.

- With the exception of Malaysia, Hong Kong and China, all countries showed a net reported weight gain (more people reporting gaining weight than losing weight). The biggest net weight gains are in Brazil and Chile.
- There is polarisation across the countries in terms of whether they have increased or decreased exercise overall. China and Hong Kong show the biggest net reported increase in exercise (more people reporting doing more exercise than doing less exercise), while Italy and Japan show the largest net reported decrease.

Globally, similar proportions of people say that they have consumed more alcohol or less alcohol, and have taken up or given up smoking, since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

- Australia and the United States had the greatest proportion of people who said they have increased their alcohol consumption since the COVID-19 pandemic began (21% and 20% respectively)
- The largest net reported decrease in alcohol consumption (more people reporting drinking more alcohol than drinking less alcohol) is in South Africa and China.
- India shows the largest net reported decrease of people smoking (more reporting giving up smoking than starting).

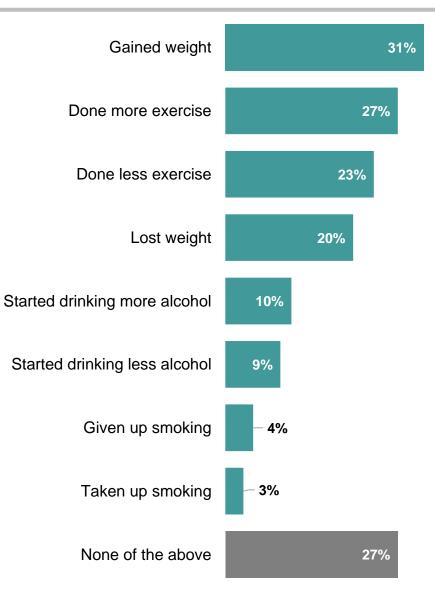


Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, which of the following, if any, have you personally done?

Globally, three-quarters of adults reported changes to their weight, exercise, alcohol consumption and/or smoking since the pandemic began.

Around half reported a weight change since the beginning of the pandemic, more likely to be having gained weight than lost weight.

#### **Global totals**



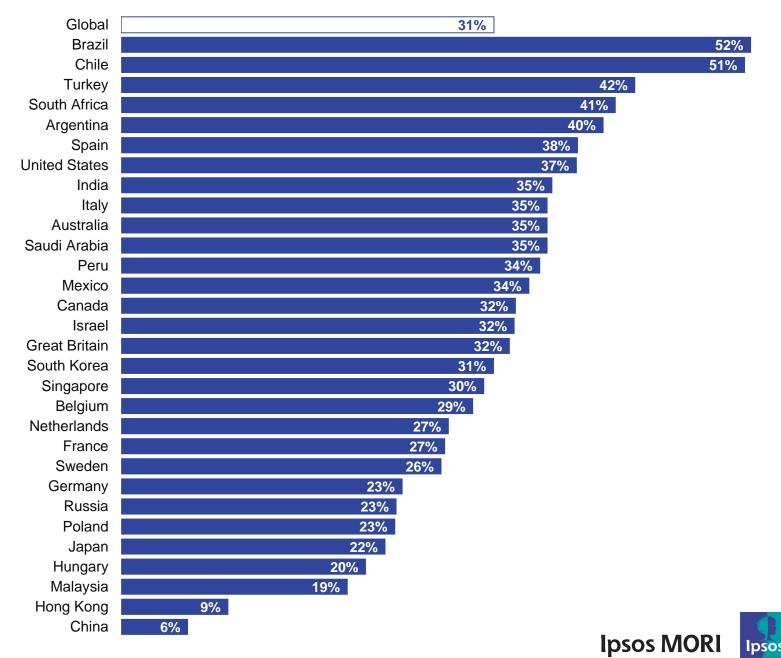


## **WEIGHT GAIN**

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, which of the following, if any, have you personally done?

Those in South America (e.g. Brazil Chile) are the most likely to say they have gained weight since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Those in South East Asia (e.g. Malaysia, Hong Kong, China) are least likely to say they have gained weight since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.



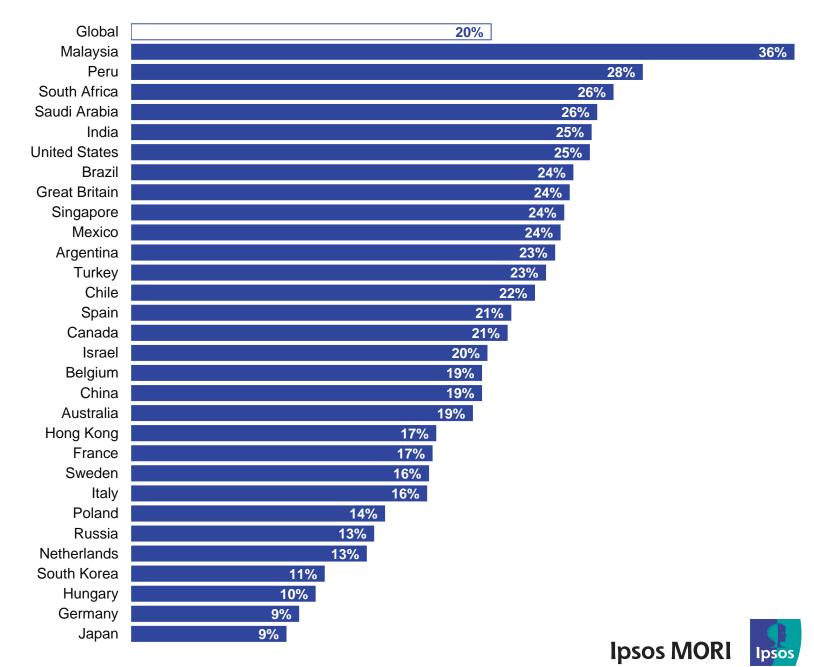




## WEIGHT LOSS

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, which of the following, if any, have you personally done?

Those in Malaysia are the most likely to report weight loss.

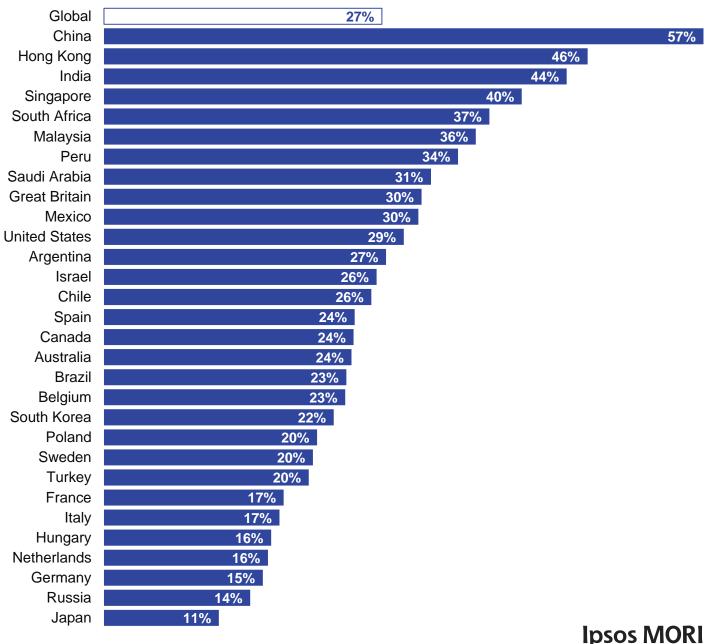




#### EXERCISE INCREASE

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, which of the following, if any, have you personally done?

Those in South / South East Asia (e.g. China, Hong Kong, India and Singapore) are more likely to say they have done more exercise since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.



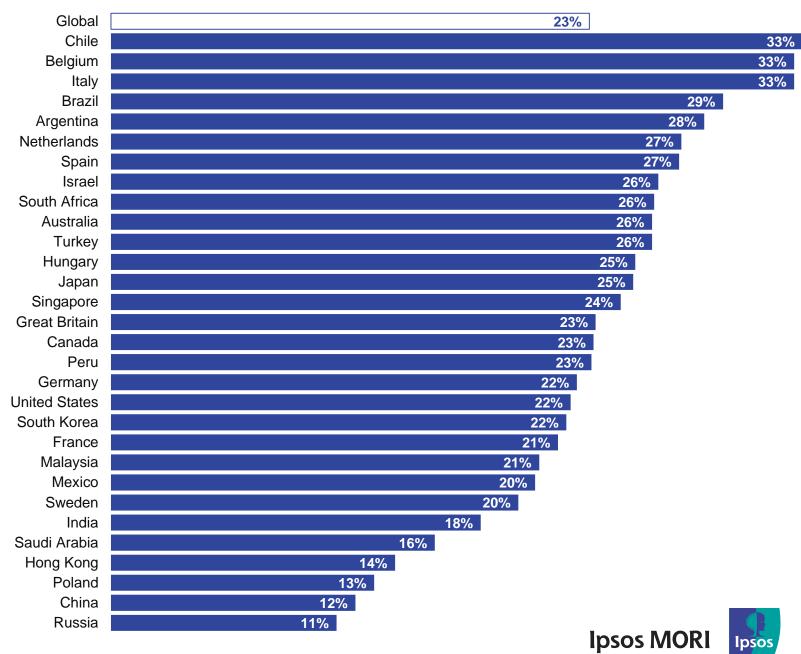
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#### EXERCISE DECREASE

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, which of the following, if any, have you personally done?

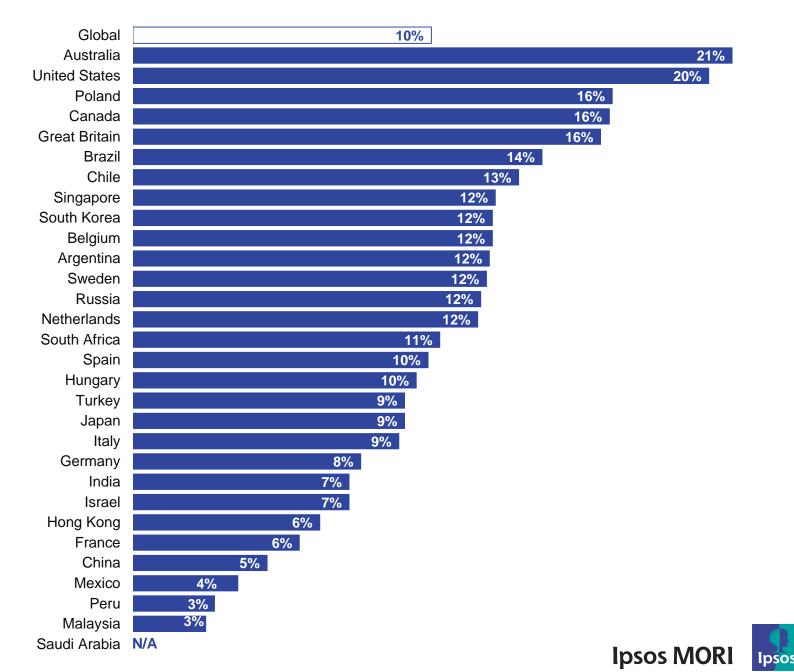
Those in Chile, Belgium and Italy are more likely to say they have done less exercise since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.



#### Q1. ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION INCREASE

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, which of the following, if any, have you personally done?

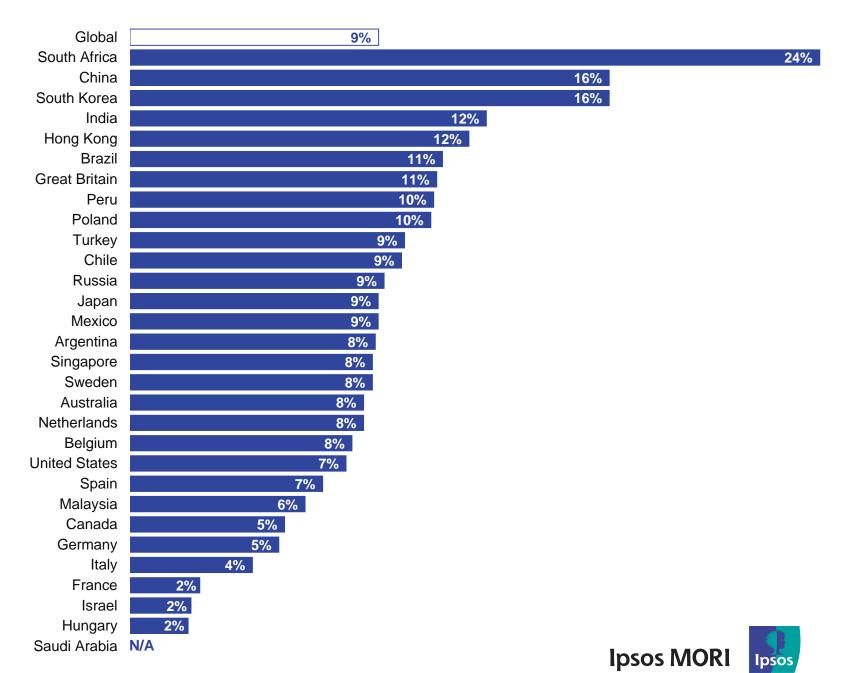
Australia and the United States have the greatest proportion of people who say they have increased their alcohol consumption since the COVID-19 pandemic began.



#### Q1 ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION DECREASE

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, which of the following, if any, have you personally done?

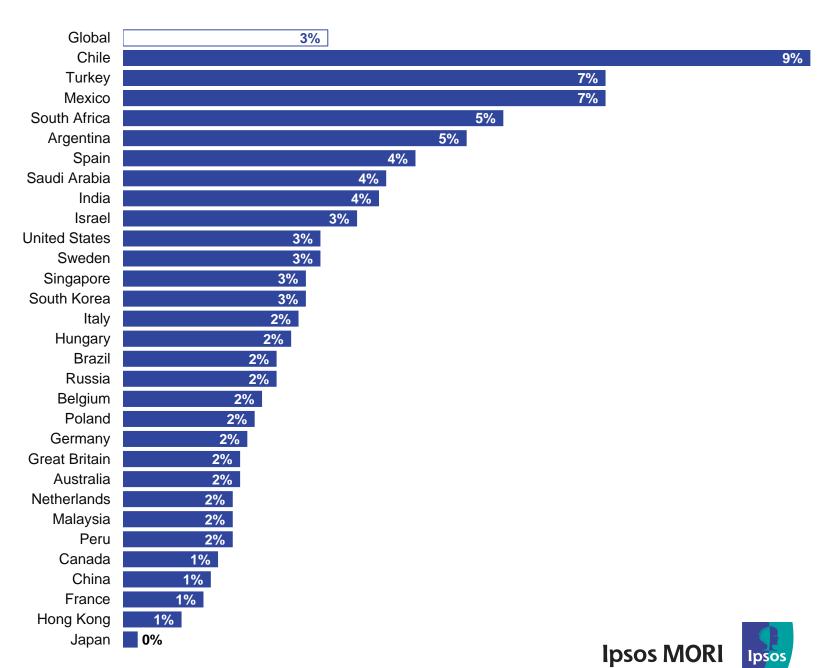
People in South Africa are the most likely to say they have decreases their alcohol consumption since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, reflecting their lockdown restrictions on alcohol.



#### TAKEN UP SMOKING

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, which of the following, if any, have you personally done?

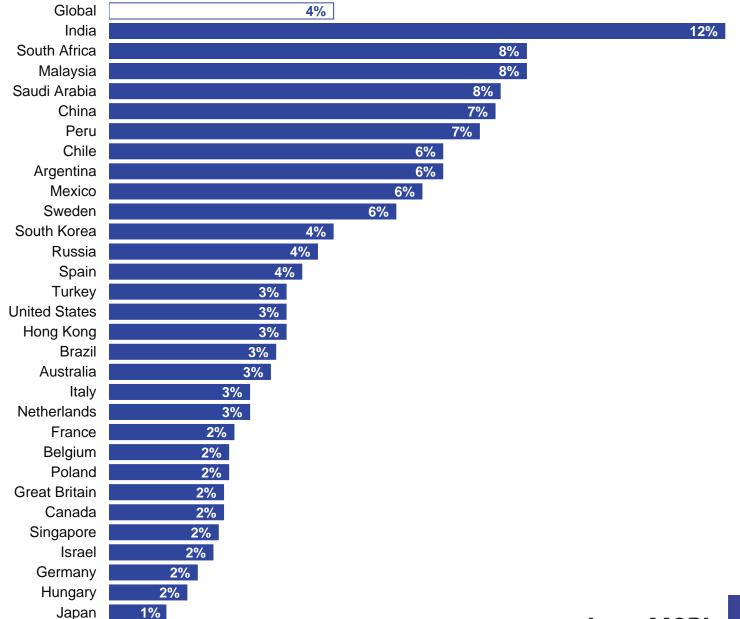
Those in Chile are most likely to say they have taken up smoking since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.



#### **GIVEN UP SMOKING**

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, which of the following, if any, have you personally done?

Those in India are most likely to say they have given up smoking since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.



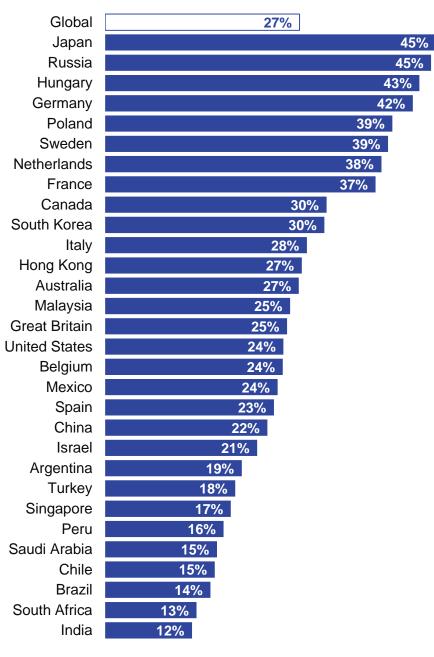


#### NONE OF THE ABOVE

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, which of the following, if any, have you personally done?

The pandemic has impacted over half of people in terms of weight, exercise, drinking or smoking in all countries.

However, it has not affected all countries equally: India, South America, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Singapore have the highest levels of reported change(s); Japan, Russia, Hungary and Germany have the fewest reporting any change(s).





Q2. Reducing the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms Globally, of the options presented, increasing exercise is the activity most identified with being likely to reduce the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms, but there are huge differences among countries in terms of beliefs.

• In China, regular exercise is considered key, far more so than in any other country, while people in China are less likely to mention losing weight as likely to reduce COVID-19 severity.

## Few countries consider losing weight to be the most likely to reduce the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms.

• In Great Britain, losing weight is considered key, far more so than any other market.

## Giving up smoking is seen as more effective in reducing the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms.

- Across countries, giving up smoking is considered important, and in some is the most important factor.
- Globally, giving up alcohol is considered less likely than the other factors to reduce risk.

#### Vitamin D supplements divide opinion.

- Vitamin D supplements are far more likely to be viewed as one of the top ways to reduce risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms outside of Western Europe, Japan, Australia and Peru.
- It is the top answer given in Hungary and Poland.

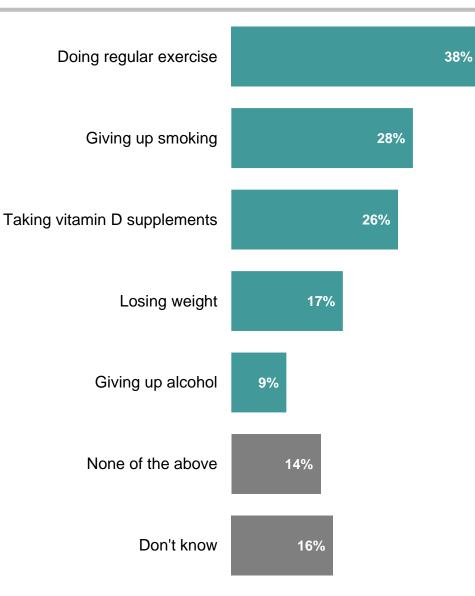


## Q2.

Which one or two of these do you think are most likely to reduce the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms in those infected with the disease?

Globally, increasing exercise is the activity most identified as being most likely to reduce the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms.

#### **Global totals**







#### **REGULAR EXERCISE**

Which one or two of these do you think are most likely to reduce the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms in those infected with the disease?

People in South / South East Asian countries (e.g. China, Hong Kong, India, South Korea), are considerably more likely to think doing regular exercise is most likely to reduce the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms

Total 38% China 78% Hong Kong 59% India 58% South Korea 57% Peru 47% Saudi Arabia 46% 46% Singapore Mexico 45% South Africa 44% Malaysia 42% Brazil 40% Turkey 38% Belgium 37% Japan 36% Great Britain 35% Argentina 35% Netherlands 34% **United States** 33% Sweden 33% Chile 32% France 32% Australia 31% 30% Israel Poland 30% 30% Italy Canada 29% Germany 29% Hungary 29% Spain 25% 17% Russia





## LOSING WEIGHT

Which one or two of these do you think are most likely to reduce the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms in those infected with the disease?

People in Great Britain are most likely to consider losing weight as most likely to reduce the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms. This view is much less prevalent in most other countries.

Total	17%	
Great Britain		i i
Peru		34%
Netherlands		34%
Mexico	26%	
Sweden	25%	
Belgium	21%	
Argentina	21%	
Spain	20%	
Brazil	19%	
Chile	19%	
France	19%	
United States	19%	
Israel	19%	
Canada	16%	
South Korea	15%	
India	15%	
Australia	15%	
Saudi Arabia	14%	
Germany	13%	
Singapore	12%	
Poland	11%	
Turkey	11%	
Italy	11%	
Japan	11%	
Malaysia	11%	
South Africa	11%	
Hong Kong	10%	
Hungary	8%	
Russia	7%	
China	6%	

45%





#### **GIVING UP SMOKING**

Which one or two of these do you think are most likely to reduce the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms in those infected with the disease?

Giving up smoking is least likely to be chosen as one of the top picks for reducing COVID-19 symptoms in South / South East Asian countries (e.g. China, India, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia), and is also least likely to be chosen in France.

Total	28%	
Sweden		43
Turkey		42%
Saudi Arabia		40%
Spain		39%
Chile		38%
South Africa		35%
Argentina		35%
Italy		33%
United States	31	%
Great Britain	319	%
Mexico	319	%
Peru	28%	
Brazil	28%	
Israel	28%	
Japan	27%	
Australia	27%	
Germany	26%	
Canada	26%	
Russia	26%	
Belgium	25%	
Poland	25%	
South Korea	25%	
Hungary	23%	
Netherlands	23%	
Malaysia	21%	
Singapore	19%	
Hong Kong	18%	
India	17%	
France	16%	
China	14%	

43% 42%





#### **GIVING UP ALCOHOL**

Which one or two of these do you think are most likely to reduce the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms in those infected with the disease?

Relatively few consider giving up alcohol to be most likely to reduce severe symptoms of COVID-19.

Total	9%
South Korea	14%
Poland	14%
South Africa	14%
Russia	14%
Spain	12%
Turkey	12%
India	12%
Italy	10%
Malaysia	10%
Germany	10%
Brazil	10%
Peru	9%
Hong Kong	9%
Chile	8%
Australia	8%
Sweden	8%
France	8%
Jnited States	8%
Japan	8%
China	8%
Singapore	8%
Hungary	7%
Belgium	7%
Mexico	6%
Argentina	6%
Canada	5%
Netherlands	5%
Israel	4%
Great Britain	4%
Saudi Arabia	N/A





#### **VITAMIN D SUPPLEMENTS**

Which one or two of these do you think are most likely to reduce the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms in those infected with the disease?

Vitamin D supplements are more likely to be viewed as one of the actions most likely to reduce the severity of COVID-19 symptoms outside of Western European countries, Japan, Australia and Peru.

Total		26%	
Hungary			44%
South Africa			41%
Saudi Arabia			38%
Poland			37%
Turkey			36%
China			36%
Malaysia			36%
India			36%
Brazil			34%
Netherlands		3	1%
Israel		30'	%
South Korea		30'	%
United States		30%	6
Hong Kong		27%	
Mexico		26%	
Chile		24%	
Russia		24%	
Argentina		23%	
Singapore		22%	
Canada		22%	
Italy		19%	
Great Britain		19%	
Belgium		19%	
Peru		18%	
Spain	1	8%	
France	13%		
Sweden	11%		
Germany	11%		
Australia	10%		
Japan	8%		

44%



#### NONE OF THE ABOVE

Which one or two of these do you think are most likely to reduce the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms in those infected with the disease?

People in Australia, Germany and Russia are most likely to say that none of the presented options (doing regular exercise, giving up smoking, taking vitamin D supplements, losing weight or giving up alcohol) are likely to reduce the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms.

Total	14%
Australia	24%
Germany	24%
Russia	23%
France	21%
Singapore	20%
Canada	20%
Poland	19%
Sweden	18%
Japan	17%
Chile	16%
United States	16%
Italy	15%
Belgium	14%
Great Britain	14%
Hungary	14%
Spain	14%
Malaysia	13%
Netherlands	12%
South Korea	12%
Brazil	11%
Hong Kong	10%
Israel	10%
Peru	10%
South Africa	10%
Argentina	9%
Turkey	9%
Mexico	8%
India	5%
China	4%
Saudi Arabia	3%

Total

4 40/



Q3. Link between obesity and severe symptoms of COVID-19

## Globally, 45% of people think there is a link between obesity and severe symptoms of COVID-19.

- In Latin American markets (e.g. Peru, Mexico), where obesity is a national challenge, people are more likely to think there is a connection between obesity and severe symptoms of COVID-19 (82% and 61% respectively think there is a link).
- Among all countries, Great Britain is second most likely to think there is a link between obesity and severe symptoms of COVID-19 (64% think there is a link).

## Globally, 1 in 3 people do not think there is a link between obesity and severe symptoms of COVID-19.

 In South East Asian markets (e.g. China, Malaysia, South Korea), people are more likely to say there is not a link between obesity and severe symptoms of COVID-19 (53%, 49% and 48% respectively think there is not a link).

## Globally, 1 in 4 people do not know if there is a link between obesity and severe symptoms of COVID-19.

• People in Japan, Germany, Australia and Canada are most likely to say they don't know whether there is a link between obesity and severity symptoms of COVID-19.

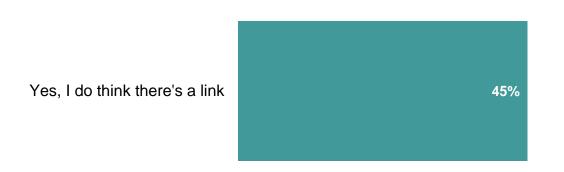


## Q3.

Do you think there is, or is not, a link between obesity and more severe symptoms of COVID-19 among those infected?

Globally, 45% of people think there is a link between obesity and severe symptoms of COVID-19.

#### **Global totals**



No, I don't think there's a link







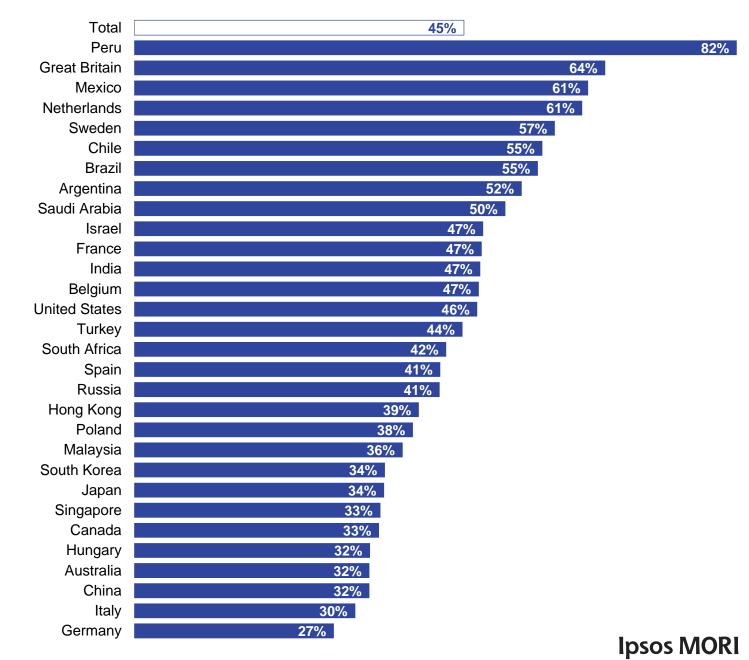


### YES

Do you think there is, or is not, a link between obesity and more severe symptoms of COVID-19 among those infected?

People in Peru are by far the most likely to link obesity and severity of COVID-19 symptoms.

A third or fewer in Hungary, Australia, China, Italy and Germany think there is a link.



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## NO

Do you think there is, or is not, a link between obesity and more severe symptoms of COVID-19 among those infected?

In South East Asian markets (e.g. China, Malaysia), people are more likely to say there is not a link between obesity and severe symptoms of COVID-19.

Total	31%
China	53
Malaysia	49%
South Korea	48%
Hungary	46%
Italy	44%
Poland	40%
Singapore	39%
South Africa	38%
Russia	35%
India	35%
Turkey	35%
Hong Kong	34%
Saudi Arabia	32%
Germany	32%
Australia	31%
Canada	31%
Belgium	30%
Argentina	30%
Spain	29%
Chile	28%
Brazil	25%
Mexico	24%
United States	22%
Japan	22%
Israel	22%
France	21%
Sweden	21%
Netherlands	20%
Great Britain	15%
Peru	12%

53%





## **DO NOT KNOW**

Do you think there is, or is not, a link between obesity and more severe symptoms of COVID-19 among those infected?

People in Japan, Germany, Australia and Canada are most likely to say they don't know whether there is a *link between obesity and severity* symptoms of COVID-19.

Total	24%
Japan	44
Germany	41%
Australia	37%
Canada	36%
France	32%
United States	31%
Israel	31%
Spain	29%
Singapore	28%
Hong Kong	27%
Italy	26%
Belgium	24%
Russia	23%
Poland	22%
Sweden	22%
Hungary	22%
Great Britain	21%
Turkey	21%
Brazil	21%
South Africa	20%
Netherlands	19%
India	18%
Argentina	18%
South Korea	18%
Saudi Arabia	18%
Chile	17%
China	16%
Malaysia	15%
Mexico	15%
Peru	7%

44%



# Q4. Personal weight loss link to COVID-19

## Globally, trying to lose weight is more prevalent than trying to gain weight, or not trying to change current weight.

- Globally, two-fifths say they are currently trying to lose weight. This is most likely to be reported by people in Chile, Singapore, Peru and Saudi Arabia.
- Weight gain is most desired in India of all the countries surveyed, but is still less common than the desire to lose weight.

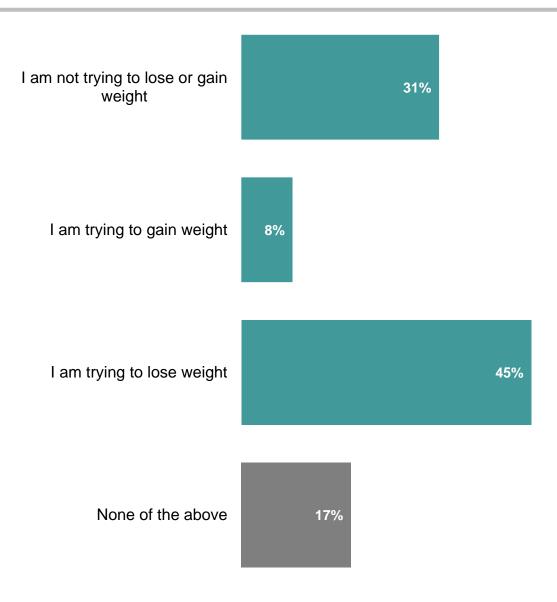




Which of the following applies to your current situation?

Globally, trying to lose weight is more prevalent than trying to gain weight, or not trying to change current weight.

#### **Global totals**







### I am not trying to gain or lose weight

Which of the following applies to your current situation?

People in China and France are most likely to say that they are not trying to gain or lose weight.

Total	31%
France	42%
China	41%
Turkey	37%
Israel	37%
Poland	36%
Great Britain	35%
Belgium	34%
Canada	33%
Russia	33%
Mexico	33%
Hong Kong	32%
Spain	32%
Japan	31%
Netherlands	31%
United States	31%
Argentina	30%
Sweden	30%
South Africa	29%
Australia	29%
Germany	29%
Hungary	28%
Peru	27%
India	27%
Brazil	27%
Malaysia	26%
Italy	26%
South Korea	24%
Singapore	24%
Chile	23%
Saudi Arabia	21%





## I am trying to gain weight

Which of the following applies to your current situation?

Weight gain is most desired in India of all the countries surveyed.

Total	8%
India	21%
Saudi Arabia	15%
Turkey	13%
South Korea	13%
South Africa	12%
Brazil	12%
Malaysia	10%
Poland	9%
Hong Kong	9%
Peru	8%
Hungary	8%
Singapore	7%
China	7%
Sweden	7%
France	7%
Belgium	6%
Germany	6%
Spain	6%
Russia	6%
United States	6%
Japan	6%
Canada	6%
Mexico	6%
Argentina	5%
Netherlands	5%
Great Britain	5%
Australia	5%
Italy	5%
Chile	5%
Israel	8%





## I am trying to lose weight

Which of the following applies to your current situation?

Trying to lose weight is most likely to be reported by people in Chile, Singapore, Peru and Saudi Arabia.

Total	45%
Chile	60%
Singapore	55%
Peru	54%
Saudi Arabia	53%
United States	51%
Spain	50%
Australia	50%
Argentina	49%
Brazil	48%
Israel	48%
Malaysia	47%
Mexico	45%
South Africa	45%
Sweden	45%
Belgium	44%
Japan	44%
Great Britain	43%
South Korea	43%
Hungary	43%
Canada	43%
Netherlands	42%
Poland	42%
Italy	42%
Hong Kong	41%
Turkey	40%
India	39%
Germany	38%
Russia	37%
France	33%
China	30%



Q4b. Personal weight goals (of those trying to lose weight) COVID-19 has had an impact on people's weight gain and the desire to lose weight: one third of those trying to lose weight say they want to lose weight gained during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The desire to lose weight gained during the pandemic is most mentioned in Turkey, Brazil and South Africa.
- People in Japan are least likely to say they want to lose weight gained during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## In addition, 15% want to lose weight to reduce their risk of COVID-19 severity.

• Peru and Malaysia are the countries most likely to agree.

However, for most trying to lose weight, this is not specifically weight gained as a result of the pandemic.





# Which, if any of these, apply to you?

Of those saying they are trying to lose weight, a third want to lose weight gained during the COVID-19 pandemic. **Global totals** 

I want to lose weight gained during the COVID-19 pandemic

I want to lose weight not related to the COVID-19 pandemic

I want to lose weight to reduce my risk of suffering severe symptoms if I get COVID-19 15%



62%



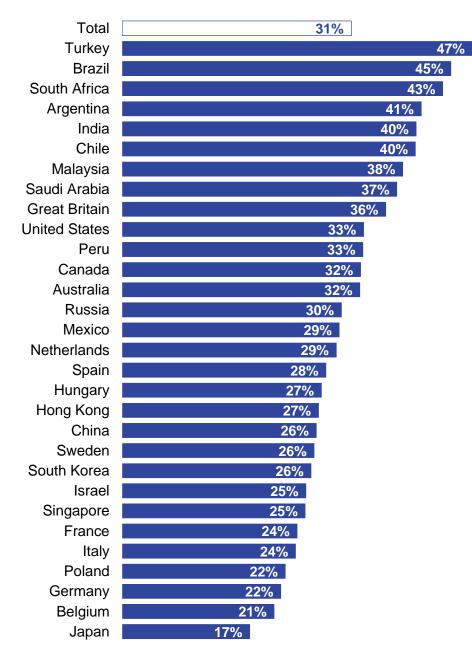


I want to lose weight gained during the COVID-19 pandemic

Which, if any of these, apply to you?

The desire to lose weight gained during the pandemic is most mentioned in Turkey, Brazil and South Africa.

People in Japan are least likely to say they want to lose weight gained during the COVID-19 pandemic.





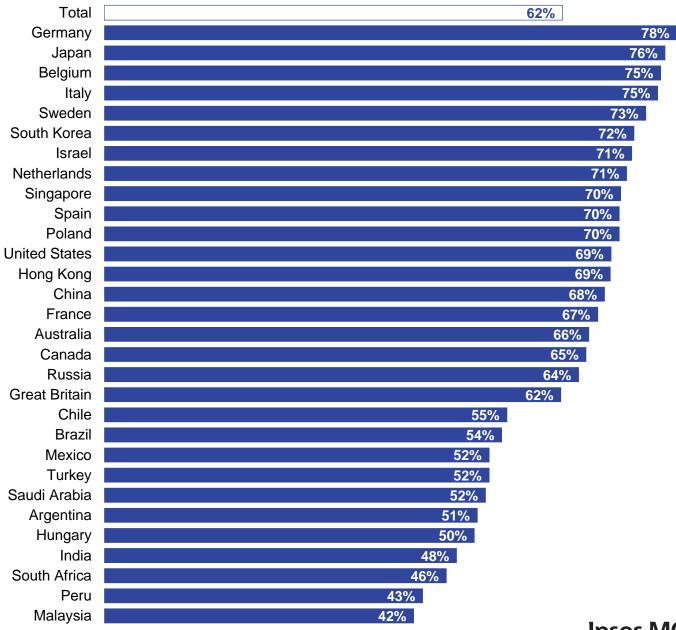
Base: those trying to lose weight - 9,947 online adults aged 16-74 across 30 countries, October 23rd- November 6th 2020



I want to lose weight not related to the COVID-19 pandemic

Which, if any of these, apply to you?

In most countries, for those trying to lose weight, this is not specifically weight gained as a result of the pandemic.





Base: those trying to lose weight - 9,947 online adults aged 16-74 across 30 countries, October 23rd- November 6th 2020



I want to lose weight to reduce my risk of suffering severe symptoms if I get COVID-19

Which, if any of these, apply to you?

Reducing the severity of symptoms does not appear to be a popular motivator to lose weight. However, this varies significantly across countries. Peru and Malaysia are the countries most likely to agree.

Total	15%
Peru	3
Malaysia	32%
Hungary	31%
Mexico	28%
South Africa	24%
India	22%
Saudi Arabia	20%
Singapore	15%
Great Britain	15%
Poland	15%
Russia	15%
United States	15%
France	14%
Argentina	13%
Chile	13%
China	12%
Japan	11%
Brazil	11%
Australia	10%
South Korea	10%
Canada	10%
Spain	10%
Hong Kong	10%
Israel	9%
Sweden	9%
Belgium	8%
Netherlands	8%
Germany	7%
Turkey	7%
Italy	6%



35%

32%

# Q4c. Personal weight loss link to COVID-19 (of those trying to lose weight to reduce risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms)

More than 8 in 10 trying to lose weight to reduce the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms say the risk of COVID-19 is a factor in their motivation to lose weight. A fifth identify it as their primary reason for trying to lose weight.

• The concern of COVID-19 seems to be motivating a higher proportion of those trying to lose weight in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia.

However, in most countries, the risk of COVID-19 is not the primary motivation to lose weight.

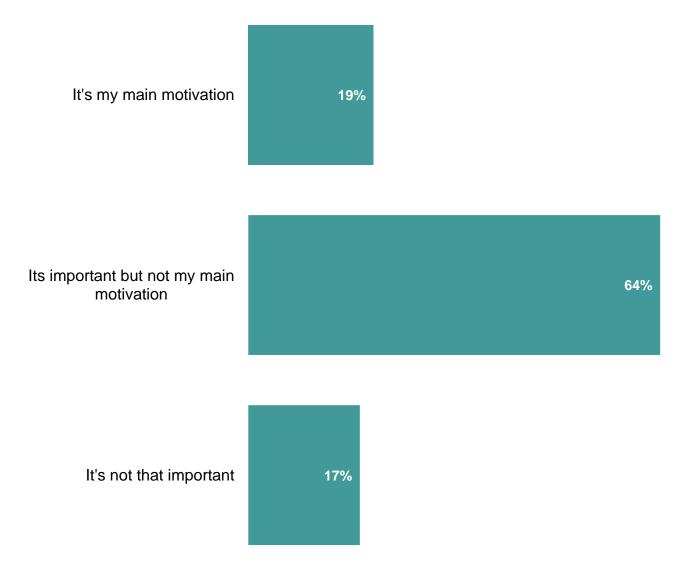


# **Q4c.**

How important is the risk of COVID-19 in your motivation to lose weight?

More than 8 in 10 trying to lose weight trying to lose weight to reduce risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms say the risk of COVID-19 is a factor in their motivation to lose weight. A fifth identify it as their primary reason for trying to lose weight.

#### **Global totals**





Base: those trying to lose weight to reduce risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms - 1,334 online adults aged 16-74 across 30 countries, October 23rd- November 6th 2020



## It's my main motivation

How important is the risk of COVID-19 in your motivation to lose weight?

The perceived risk of COVID-19 is motivating a higher proportion of those trying to lose weight to reduce the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia.

Total	19%
Malaysia	
Saudi Arabia	32
Peru	28%
Sweden	28%
India	26%
Mexico	24%
Singapore	24%
Great Britain	24%
Poland	22%
Turkey	21%
Hong Kong	21%
Argentina	20%
Spain	17%
South Africa	16%
Belgium	15%
Brazil	14%
South Korea	13%
Canada	13%
France	12%
Italy	11%
Hungary	11%
Japan	11%
Netherlands	10%
<b>Jnited States</b>	10%
Germany	10%
China	10%
Chile	9%
Australia	8%
Israel	7%
Russia	4%



34%

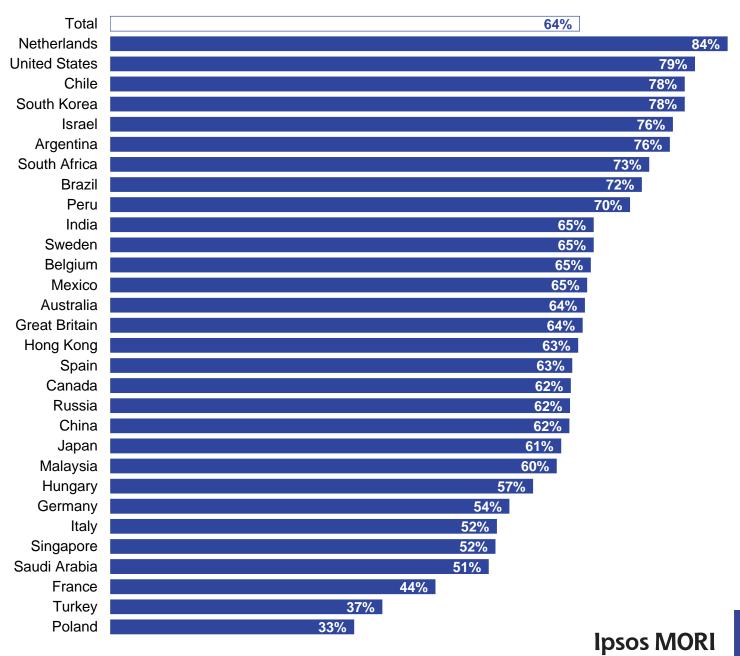
32%

# Q4c.

## Its important but not my main motivation

How important is the risk of COVID-19 in your motivation to lose weight?

In most countries, the desire to lose weight is not primarily motivated by the risk of COVID-19, but the risk of COVD-19 is a factor.



Base: those trying to lose weight to reduce risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms - 1,334 online adults aged 16-74 across 30 countries, October 23rd- November 6th 2020

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# It's not that important

How important is the risk of COVID-19 in your motivation to lose weight?

People who are trying to lose to reduce risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms in Poland, France and *Turkey are more likely to say that the* risk of COVID-19 is not that important in their desire to lose weight, compared with those in other countries.

Total		17%		
Poland			L	45%
France			4	5%
Turkey			42%	
Italy			37%	
Germany			36%	
Russia			34%	
Hungary			32%	
Japan		29%		
China		28%		
Australia		28%		
Canada		25%		
Singapore		24%		
Spain		21%		
Belgium		20%		
Saudi Arabia		17%		
Israel		17%		
Hong Kong	1	5%		
Brazil	15	%		
Chile	14%	, D		
Great Britain	12%			
Mexico	11%			
South Africa	11%			
United States	11%			
India	9%			
South Korea	9%			
Sweden	7%			
Netherlands	6%			
Malaysia	5%			
Argentina	4%			
Peru	6			



## **Technical note**

- The data for this research was collected via Ipsos Global Advisor from October 23<sup>rd</sup> to November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020. In total 22,008 interviews were conducted between October 23<sup>rd</sup> and November 6<sup>th</sup> 2020 among adult consumers.
- The survey was conducted in 30 markets around the world via the Ipsos Online Panel system: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, Turkey and the United States.
- The samples in some markets (e.g., Brazil, mainland China or India) are more urban, more educated, and/or more affluent than the general population. The survey results for such markets should be viewed as reflecting the views of the more "connected" segment of their population.
- The data is weighted so each country's sample composition best reflects the demographic profile of its adult population according to the most recent census data, and to give each country an equal weight in the total "global" sample.
- Where results do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, multiple responses or the exclusion of don't knows or not stated responses.
- . UK data for Q8 were subject to individual editing decisions

