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Nearly one third of Singaporeans have gained weight during the pandemic and slightly over half of Singaporeans are trying to lose weight.

[Ipsos report]

Please refer to attachment for high resolution images of charts included within this report.

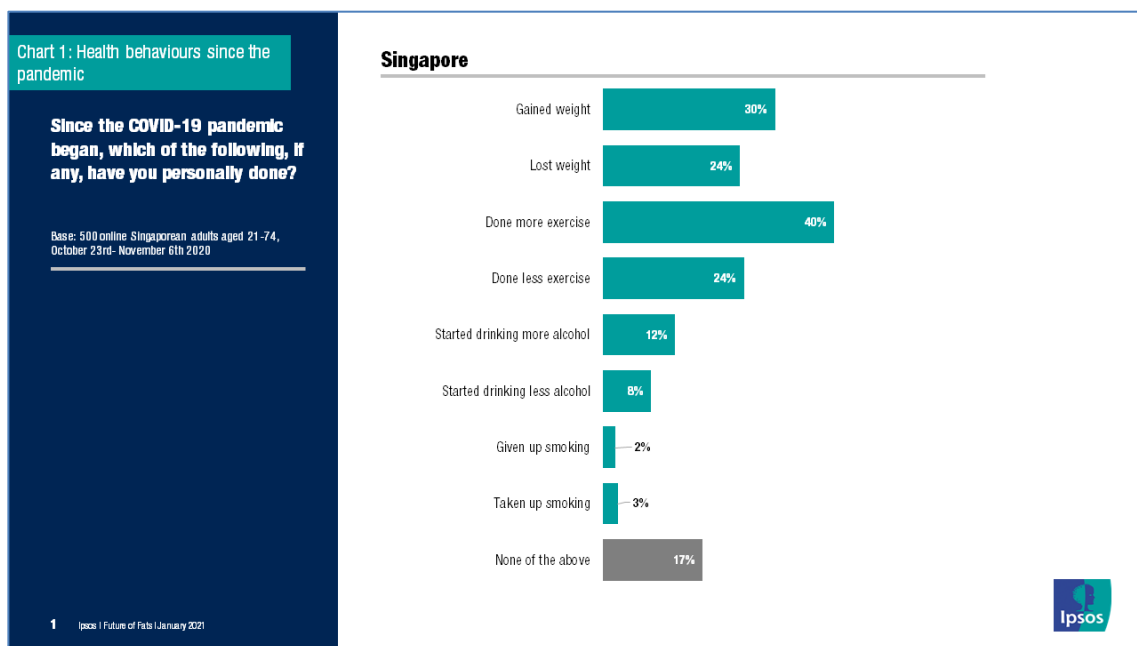
Singapore, 22 Jan 2021 - Almost one third (30%) of Singaporeans say that they have gained weight during the COVID-19 pandemic with an average weight gain of 4.8kg. Another 24% of Singaporeans reported weight loss during the pandemic.

These are the findings from an Ipsos study that looks at the impact of COVID-19 on dietary related health choices. The study was conducted online over the period of 23rd October to 6th November 2020. A total of 500 interviews were conducted among adult Singaporeans aged 21 to 74 years old.

The COVID-19 pandemic had also brought on changes in other lifestyle/health related behaviours. Some 40% of Singaporeans did more exercise while 24% reported doing less exercise. While 8% reported lower alcohol consumption, 12% said their alcohol consumption had risen.

Shifts in smoking habits changed by a few percentage points with 2% who say they had given up smoking since the pandemic but about the same portion of people (3%) had taken up smoking.

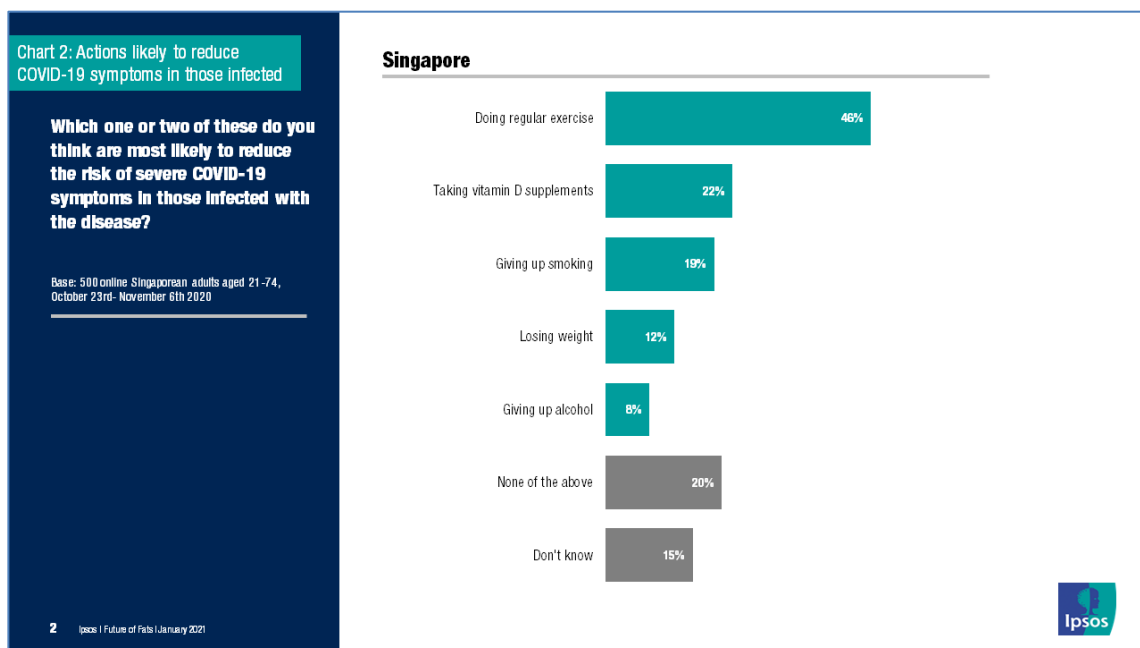
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33% of Singaporeans believe there is a link between obesity and more severe symptoms of COVID-19 among those infected. This view is split with 39% of Singaporeans who believe there is no link. Another 28% say they do not know if there is a link.

Regardless, exercise was thought to be more likely to reduce the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms (for those who become infected) than giving up smoking, taking vitamin D, losing weight or giving up alcohol. Almost 1 in 2 (46%) Singaporeans said that they thought doing regular exercise would reduce the risk of suffering severe COVID-19 symptoms, for those infected with the disease. This compared with almost a fifth who said taking vitamin D supplements (22%) and giving up smoking (19%) would help. Only 12% said losing weight and 8% said giving up alcohol would help. 20% of Singaporeans said none of these measures would help.

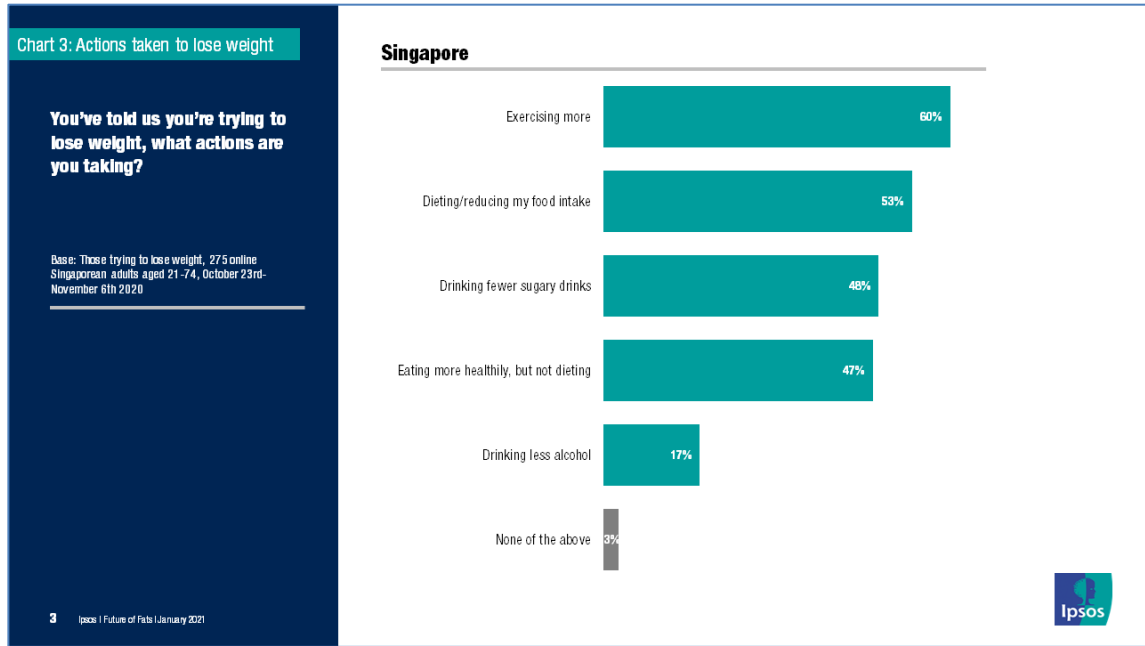
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Many people are trying to lose weight, but few of these people are specifically looking to lose weight to reduce their risk of COVID-19. More than half (55%) of Singaporeans state that they are trying to lose weight. Of these, 25% say they want to lose weight gained during the pandemic but 70% are saying they want to lose weight not gained during the pandemic. Only 15% are wanting to lose weight to reduce the risk of severe symptoms in the event that they catch COVID-19.

For those looking to lose weight, 60% say they would exercise more. Half of them (53%) say they would reduce their food intake, along with another half (47%) who say they would eat more healthily but would not be dieting. 48% say they would drink fewer sugary drinks and 17% say they would drink less alcohol.

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When it comes to food specifically, 65% of Singaporeans trying to lose weight say they would reduce or eliminate sugar to help with weight loss. This is followed by carbohydrates (48%), overall calorie consumption (47%) and processed foods (33%). Singaporeans are not as willing to give up meat (10%) and alcohol (10%).

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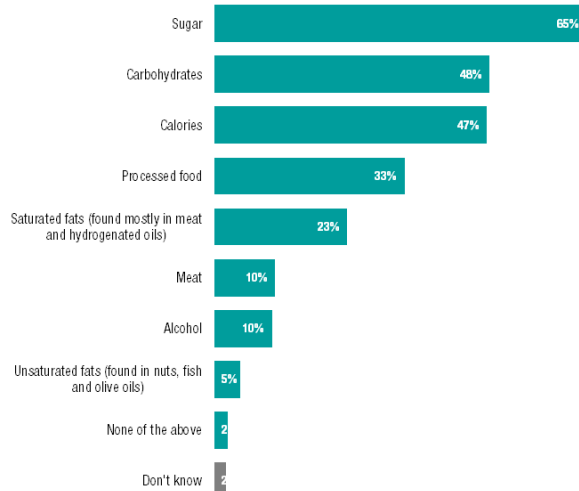
Chart 4: Foods reduced to lose weight

Which two or three of the following, if any, would you be looking to / are you trying to reduce or eliminate to help with your weight loss?

Base: Those trying to lose weight, 275 online Singaporean adults aged 21-74, October 23rd-November 6th 2020

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Singapore



Of twelve possible initiatives, that companies and governments could do to help people to lose weight, nearly half (49%) of Singaporeans who are actively looking to lose weight, said cheaper healthy food would be the most helpful. This response was significantly ahead of any of the other proposed initiatives. A fifth (20%) would like to see more green public spaces available for exercise. After this, initiatives such as having healthier ingredients in processed foods (15%), clearer food nutritional labelling (13%), and new legislation from government to tax unhealthy products (5%) are much less supported by Singaporeans who are trying to lose weight.

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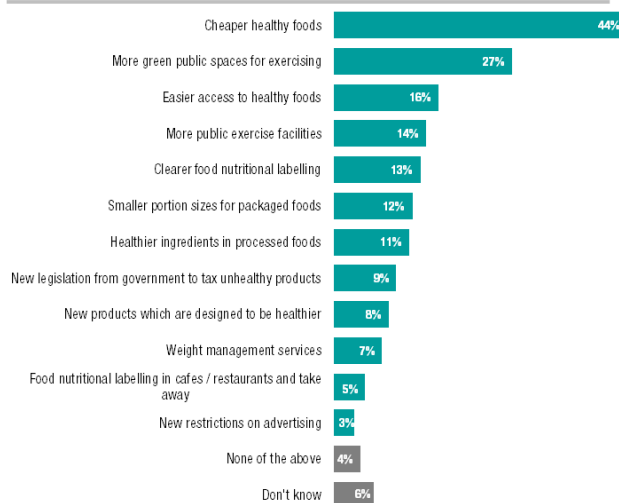
Chart 5: Initiatives that companies and the government can do to help with weight loss

Here are some things companies and governments could do to help. Which one or two of the following, if any, do you believe would be most likely to help with your weight loss?

Base: Those trying to lose weight, 275 online Singaporean adults aged 21-74, October 23rd-November 6th 2020

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Melanie Ng, Director of Public Affairs at Ipsos in Singapore said, “For Singaporeans, maintaining good health goes beyond fighting COVID-19. Other diseases are still prevalent such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Obesity levels in Singapore is relatively low compared to other countries so the focus for Singaporeans is more around achieving good health and well-being as a preventative measure against multiple diseases. In other Ipsos studies, we see that the mental health of Singaporeans has taken a toll in this pandemic. Other than the obvious positive effects of exercise on the physique, it is recognised also for relieving stress and anxiety. Hence, more exercise is a clear solution and a priority for a lot of Singaporeans. There has been tremendous effort by the government in building up more green public space for exercise, but it does not seem to be developing at a pace that meets the demand yet.

When it comes to food, eating out is a common practice for Singaporeans given busy

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schedules and the easy access to low cost, hearty meals at hawker centres and food courts. But healthy options with lower sugar, lower carbohydrates and processed foods are still limited within a more affordable price range. Having access to cheaper healthy foods is likely to make most impact to Singaporeans trying to achieve their health goals.”

-END-

Note to Editors

About the study

- These are findings from the Singapore segment of a 30-market study. The data for this research was collected via Ipsos Global Advisor from October 23rd to November 6th, 2020. In total 22,008 interviews were conducted between October 23rd and November 6th 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 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.

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For further information or to set up further interviews with opinion leaders cited in this article, please contact

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Our passionately curious research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide true understanding and powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. We serve more than 5000 clients across the world with 75 business solutions.

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