



## PRESS RELEASE

### More than a third of Australians have gained weight during the pandemic – Ipsos survey

One third of Australians believe there is a clear link between obesity and suffering more severe symptoms of COVID-19

Australia tops the world with increased alcohol consumption during the pandemic

**27 January 2021:** One in three Australians (35%) have gained weight during the global COVID-19 pandemic, according to a new Ipsos survey.

The survey, which looks at the impact of COVID-19 on diet across 30 countries, found many Australians (35%) had gained weight during the pandemic, despite being aware of the possible link between obesity and the severity of COVID-19 symptoms.

Half of those surveyed admitted to facing the battle of the bulge, yet two thirds (66%) said they were keen to lose weight gained prior to the pandemic. For those looking to shed the kilos, most were exercising more (56%), followed by dieting (53%) and eating more healthily (51%). Only 10% of those trying to lose weight said they were doing it to reduce the risk of COVID-19.

Interestingly, one in five (19%) Australians reported losing weight during the pandemic, in line with the global average (20%).

The data also showed a third (32%) of Australians believed there was a clear link between obesity and suffering more severe symptoms of COVID-19, compared to 45% globally. When it comes to reducing the severity of coronavirus symptoms, most Australians (31%) said they thought exercise was more important than weight loss (15%).

Consuming more alcohol was a key change for people during the pandemic, and Australia topped the list in terms of the proportion of people who said they started drinking more alcohol (21% vs the global average of 10%), while 8% said they drank less (in line with the global average of 9%).

**Ipsos Australia Director, David Elliott,** said: “The fact that one third of Australians surveyed reported weight gain during the pandemic isn’t surprising. Anecdotally, we have heard lots of stories and discussion about weight gain - a quick flick through your social media account and friends’ feeds showed stories of weight gain and support for those reporting it.



## PRESS RELEASE

“Interestingly, one of the key findings in the Australian data was the low level of awareness of the link between obesity and the severity of COVID symptoms. This may be because much of the discussion around COVID-19 has been around preventing transmission. The seemingly daily press conferences from our State and Federal leaders have focused on transmission numbers and behaviours needed to prevent transmission. Ultimately, the fact we’ve been lucky with a low spread of the virus has meant the conversation has never really progressed to how to reduce the severity of symptoms.”

Globally, a third (31%) of people said they had gained weight since the onset of the pandemic. However, the proportion of weight gain varied considerably across countries - more than half of people in Chile and Brazil gained weight, compared to less than one in 10 in China and Hong Kong.

Additionally, one in 10 people surveyed worldwide said they had started drinking more alcohol since the start of the pandemic, while an equal proportion (9%) drank less. Australia topped the world in increased alcohol consumption, with 21% indicating they had done this, while 8% had drunk less.

### Note to editors:

All findings in this report are based on an online survey of more than 22,000 people across 30 countries, undertaken in October and November 2020. It was carried out via the Ipsos Global Advisor.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.ipsos.com/en-au>

For more information on this news release, please contact:  
Rochelle Burbury | Third Avenue Consulting  
0408 774 577 | [rochelle@thirdavenue.com.au](mailto:rochelle@thirdavenue.com.au)

### About Ipsos

Ipsos is the world’s third largest market research company, present in 90 markets and employing more than 18,000 people.

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.

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos is listed on the Euronext Paris since July 1st, 1999. The company is part of the SBF 120 and the Mid-60 index and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD). ISIN code FR0000073298, Reuters ISOS.PA, Bloomberg IPS:FP



## **PRESS RELEASE**

[www.ipsos.com](http://www.ipsos.com)