



Product Safety:

A Nationally Representative Multi-Mode Survey

April/May 2021 Results

Overview of Methodology

Consumer Reports fielded a nationally representative online survey of Americans to explore Americans' behaviors and opinions related to household product safety. The results are based on interviews conducted from April 26-May 6, 2021.

The survey was administered by NORC at the University of Chicago through its AmeriSpeak® Panel to a nationally representative sample. Interviews were conducted in English and in Spanish, and were administered both online and by phone. In total NORC collected 2,273 interviews, 2,131 by web mode and 142 by phone mode. Final data are weighted by age, gender, race/Hispanic ethnicity, housing tenure, telephone status, education, and Census Division to be proportionally representative of the US adult population.

The margin of error for results based on the total sample is +/-2.85 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Smaller subgroups will have larger error margins, and only those subgroups for which there are at least 100 unweighted cases are included.

TOPLINE RESULTS

The questions presented below were shown to respondents in this order unless otherwise noted. Where appropriate, question verbiage, response answer choices, or direction of scales were randomized or rotated and those instances are noted below.

The product safety survey contained two sections: product safety and warning labels. These sections were shown to respondents in a random order.

Prepared by CR Survey Research Department, June 2021

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SECTION 1: PRODUCT SAFETY

SECTION 1 INFO:

For this section of the survey, we are interested in products you buy for your home that you would not expect to be a safety issue--things like TVs or furniture, for example--that cost over \$50.

Q1. [SHOWED WITH ADDITIONAL QUESTION TEXT: "BY 'RESEARCH', WE MEAN ANYTHING YOU WOULD LOOK UP ONLINE OR IN STORES BEFORE PURCHASING, ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE COMPARING BETWEEN PRODUCTS" AND ADDITIONAL RESPONSE TEXT: "REMEMBER, WE ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN PRODUCTS FOR YOUR HOME THAT COST AT LEAST \$50." SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. RANDOMIZE ITEMS AND RESPONSE OPTIONS WITH 'NONE OF THESE' ANCHORED AT THE END AND EXCLUSIVE FOR EACH.]

For each type of product, please tell us which, if any, of the following characteristics you research before you decide what to buy.	
	Total %
<i>A: Electronics, like computers, TVs, or headphones</i>	
Price	85
Performance	82
Reliability	76
How it looks	39
Convenience	31
Safety	22
None of these	2
<i>B: Other household products, like appliances, furniture, and tools</i>	
Price	84
Reliability	75
Performance	72
How it looks	54
Safety	39
Convenience	36
None of these	2
Base: All respondents	2,273

Q2. [SHOWED WITH ADDITIONAL RESPONSE TEXT: "REMEMBER, WE ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN PRODUCTS FOR YOUR HOME THAT COST AT LEAST \$50." RANDOMIZE ITEMS IN THE SAME ORDER AS Q1. ROTATE SCALE.]

For each of the types of products listed below, please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement:	
<i>"I trust that products for sale in the USA are safe."</i>	
	Total %
<i>A: Electronics, like computers, TVs, or headphones</i>	
Strongly agree	18
Agree	55
Neither agree nor disagree	21
Disagree	5
Strongly disagree	2
<i>B: Other household products, like appliances, furniture, and tools</i>	
Strongly agree	16
Agree	56
Neither agree nor disagree	21
Disagree	5
Strongly disagree	2
Base: All respondents	2,255

Q3. [SHOWED WITH ADDITIONAL RESPONSE TEXT: "REMEMBER, WE ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN PRODUCTS FOR YOUR HOME THAT COST AT LEAST \$50." SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. RANDOMIZE ITEMS IN THE SAME ORDER AS Q1. RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS WITH 'OTHER' ANCHORED AT THE END AND TEXT CAPTURED FOR EACH.]

For each of the types of products listed below, please tell us how you decide whether or not a given product is safe.	
	Total %
<i>A: Electronics, like computers, TVs, or headphones</i>	
Product receives good reviews about its safety online	56
Familiarity with similar products	52
My own determination after looking at or using it	49
People I know recommend the product	48
Product receives good safety ratings from organizations like Consumer Reports, Wirecutter, or CNET	45
No recalls or reports of incidents on the Consumer Product Safety Commission website (cpsc.gov)	37
Other, please specify:	2
<i>B: Other household products, like appliances, furniture, and tools</i>	
Product receives good reviews about its safety online	56
My own determination after looking at or using it	52
Familiarity with similar products	51
People I know recommend the product	46
Product receives good safety ratings from organizations like Consumer Reports, Wirecutter, or CNET	44
No recalls or reports of incidents on the Consumer Product Safety Commission website (cpsc.gov)	36
Other, please specify:	1
Base: All respondents	2,273

Q4. [SHOW QUESTION STEM IF Q2A = 'DISAGREE' OR 'STRONGLY DISAGREE' OR Q2B = 'DISAGREE' OR 'STRONGLY DISAGREE'. SHOW Q4A IF Q2A = 'DISAGREE' OR 'STRONGLY DISAGREE' AND SHOW Q4B IF Q2B = 'DISAGREE' OR 'STRONGLY DISAGREE'. SHOWED WITH ADDITIONAL RESPONSE TEXT: "REMEMBER, WE ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN PRODUCTS FOR YOUR HOME THAT COST AT LEAST \$50." SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. RANDOMIZE ITEMS IN THE SAME ORDER AS Q1. RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS WITH 'OTHER' ANCHORED AT THE END AND TEXT CAPTURED FOR EACH.]

Earlier, you said that you disagree with the following statement for the type(s) of products listed below: "I trust that products for sale in the United States are safe." Please tell us which, if any, of the reasons below explain why you said that.

	Total %
A: Electronics, like computers, TVs, or headphones	
Do not trust manufacturers to follow safety regulations	44
Hard to do research on the safety of products before I buy them	35
Do not believe safety regulations are enforced	35
Do not believe safety regulations are adequate	32
Have had past experiences with unsafe products	25
Do not believe safety regulations exist for this type of product	14
Other, please specify:	8
Base: Respondents who said they don't trust that electronic products sold in the US are safe	109
B: Other household products, like appliances, furniture, and tools	
Do not trust manufacturers to follow safety regulations	47
Do not believe safety regulations are adequate	45
Do not believe safety regulations are enforced	44
Hard to do research on the safety of products before I buy them	33
Have had past experiences with unsafe products	25
Do not believe safety regulations exist for this type of product	19
Other, please specify:	13
Base: Respondents who said they don't trust that household products sold in the US are safe	126

Q5. [SHOWED WITH ADDITIONAL RESPONSE TEXT: "REMEMBER, WE ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN PRODUCTS FOR YOUR HOME THAT COST AT LEAST \$50." RANDOMIZE ITEMS. ROTATE SCALE. "DON'T KNOW" NOT SHOWN.]

How responsible, if at all, do you think each of the following groups should be for <u>making sure that products sold in the United States are safe?</u>	
	Total %
<i>Federal regulatory agencies</i>	
Completely their responsibility	39
Mostly their responsibility	33
Somewhat their responsibility	21
Slightly their responsibility	4
Not at all their responsibility	2
Don't know/Skipped	1
<i>Manufacturers</i>	
Completely their responsibility	64
Mostly their responsibility	26
Somewhat their responsibility	6
Slightly their responsibility	2
Not at all their responsibility	0
Don't know/Skipped	1
<i>Retailers</i>	
Completely their responsibility	15
Mostly their responsibility	26
Somewhat their responsibility	37
Slightly their responsibility	14
Not at all their responsibility	7
Don't know/Skipped	1
<i>Consumers</i>	
Completely their responsibility	10
Mostly their responsibility	18
Somewhat their responsibility	37
Slightly their responsibility	16
Not at all their responsibility	18
Don't know/Skipped	2
<i>Watchdog groups (that is, independent organizations whose job is to make sure that companies act legally or responsibly, such as Consumer Reports)</i>	
Completely their responsibility	15
Mostly their responsibility	22
Somewhat their responsibility	38
Slightly their responsibility	13
Not at all their responsibility	10
Don't know/Skipped	1
<i>News Media</i>	
Completely their responsibility	7
Mostly their responsibility	8
Somewhat their responsibility	30
Slightly their responsibility	18
Not at all their responsibility	35
Don't know/Skipped	1
Base: All respondents	2,273

Q6. [SHOWED WITH ADDITIONAL RESPONSE TEXT: "REMEMBER, WE ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN PRODUCTS FOR YOUR HOME THAT COST AT LEAST \$50." RANDOMIZE ITEMS IN THE SAME ORDER AS Q5. ROTATE SCALE. "DON'T KNOW" NOT SHOWN.]

How responsible, if at all, do you think each of the following groups should be for <u>identifying and warning the public about product safety issues</u> for products sold in the United States?	
	Total %
<i>Federal regulatory agencies</i>	
Completely their responsibility	49
Mostly their responsibility	28
Somewhat their responsibility	16
Slightly their responsibility	4
Not at all their responsibility	1
Don't know/Skipped	2
<i>Manufacturers</i>	
Completely their responsibility	66
Mostly their responsibility	23
Somewhat their responsibility	8
Slightly their responsibility	1
Not at all their responsibility	0
Don't know/Skipped	2
<i>Retailers</i>	
Completely their responsibility	23
Mostly their responsibility	29
Somewhat their responsibility	31
Slightly their responsibility	11
Not at all their responsibility	4
Don't know/Skipped	2
<i>Consumers</i>	
Completely their responsibility	11
Mostly their responsibility	15
Somewhat their responsibility	35
Slightly their responsibility	17
Not at all their responsibility	20
Don't know/Skipped	2
<i>Watchdog groups (that is, independent organizations whose job is to make sure that companies act legally or responsibly, such as Consumer Reports)</i>	
Completely their responsibility	22
Mostly their responsibility	27
Somewhat their responsibility	33
Slightly their responsibility	11
Not at all their responsibility	5
Don't know/Skipped	2
<i>News Media</i>	
Completely their responsibility	14
Mostly their responsibility	18
Somewhat their responsibility	35
Slightly their responsibility	18
Not at all their responsibility	13
Don't know/Skipped	2
Base: All respondents	2,273

Q7. [SHOWED WITH ADDITIONAL RESPONSE TEXT: "REMEMBER, WE ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN PRODUCTS FOR YOUR HOME THAT COST AT LEAST \$50."]

Do you think products should be allowed to go on the market before safety and testing requirements for the product (that is, a safety standard) are in place?	
	Total %
Yes	14
No	86
Base: All respondents	2,253

Q8. [SHOWED WITH ADDITIONAL RESPONSE TEXT: "REMEMBER, WE ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN PRODUCTS FOR YOUR HOME THAT COST AT LEAST \$50." ROTATE SCALE.]

Sometimes a product's label or advertisements for the product say that it meets a certain safety standard. How likely is it that a safety claim would influence whether or not you buy a product?	
	Total %
Extremely likely	15
Somewhat likely	61
Somewhat unlikely	20
Extremely unlikely	5
Base: All respondents	2,258

Q9. [SHOW IF Q8 = 'EXTREMELY UNLIKELY' OR 'SOMEWHAT UNLIKELY'. SHOWED WITH ADDITIONAL RESPONSE TEXT: "REMEMBER, WE ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN PRODUCTS FOR YOUR HOME THAT COST AT LEAST \$50." SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS WITH 'OTHER' ANCHORED AT THE END AND TEXT CAPTURED.]

You said that it is unlikely that a safety claim on a product's label or advertising would influence your decision whether to buy that product or not. Why is that?	
	Total %
I assume that all products are held to basic safety standards, so this claim does not make the product special	58
The standard could be something the manufacturer made up to sell this specific product and doesn't necessarily mean anything	40
I don't trust advertising claims in general	37
I'm more interested in other features of the product, such as design or price	34
Other	3
Base: Respondents who said it is unlikely that a safety claim on a product's label or advertising would influence whether or not they buy a product	502

SECTION 2: WARNING LABELS

Q10AB. [Q10A SHOWN IN POSITION 10 ON THE SURVEY AND Q10B SHOWN AS THE LAST ITEM, POSITION 17. Q10A AND Q10B WERE RANDOMIZED WITH HALF RESPONDENTS SEEING Q10A AND HALF SEEING Q10B. DATA FOR Q10A AND Q10B WERE MERGED INTO Q10AB. ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS.]

Thinking about warning labels on products sold in the USA, which of the following sounds most right to you, even if neither is exactly right?	
	Total %
Warning labels on products exist more to protect manufacturers from potential lawsuits.	66
Warning labels on products exist more to protect consumers' safety.	34
Base: All respondents	2,250

SECTION 2 INFO:

The next three questions are about warning labels on products. Warning labels are descriptions of how a product should and should not be used, often found on the packaging or an associated manual, a sticker around a cord, or a sticker or tag on the product itself. They are usually in capital letters under a heading like "WARNING" or "CAUTION."

[RANDOMIZE ORDER OF Q11, Q12, AND Q13]

Q11. [RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS AND ROTATE RESPONSE SCALE.]

How often do you typically read warning labels for the following product categories when the warning label is on the product itself?	
	Total %
<i>Appliances, such as a microwave, refrigerator, or blender</i>	
Always	34
Sometimes	38
Rarely	18
Never	10
Base: All respondents	2252
<i>Products for babies or children, such as toys, playpens, or bottles</i>	
Always	52
Sometimes	26
Rarely	10
Never	11
Base: All respondents	2243

[Q11 CONTINUED]

<i>Electronics, such as TVs, cell phones, or computers</i>	
Always	31
Sometimes	37
Rarely	21
Never	11
Base: All respondents	2246
<i>Home and garden equipment, such as lawn mowers, pressure washers, and generators</i>	
Always	38
Sometimes	37
Rarely	16
Never	9
Base: All respondents	2252
<i>Cleaning supplies, like all-purpose cleaning sprays, laundry detergent packets, or vacuums</i>	
Always	39
Sometimes	42
Rarely	14
Never	5
Base: All respondents	2256
<i>Furniture and fixtures, like dressers, wall-mounted televisions, or built-in shelves</i>	
Always	26
Sometimes	38
Rarely	23
Never	13
Base: All respondents	2248

Q12. [RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS AND ROTATE RESPONSE SCALE.]

How often do you typically read warning labels for the following product categories when the warning label is on the box the product comes in?	
	Total %
<i>Appliances, such as a microwave, refrigerator, or blender</i>	
Always	31
Sometimes	38
Rarely	21
Never	10
Base: All respondents	2252
<i>Products for babies or children, such as toys, playpens, or bottles</i>	
Always	49
Sometimes	27
Rarely	11
Never	12
Base: All respondents	2238
<i>Electronics, such as TVs, cell phones, or computers</i>	
Always	28
Sometimes	37
Rarely	23
Never	12
Base: All respondents	2241
<i>Home and garden equipment, such as lawn mowers, pressure washers, and generators</i>	
Always	34
Sometimes	37
Rarely	18
Never	11
Base: All respondents	2248
<i>Cleaning supplies, like all-purpose cleaning sprays, laundry detergent packets, or vacuums</i>	
Always	34
Sometimes	43
Rarely	16
Never	7
Base: All respondents	2249
<i>Furniture and fixtures, like dressers, wall-mounted televisions, or built-in shelves</i>	
Always	24
Sometimes	37
Rarely	26
Never	13
Base: All respondents	2247

Q13. [RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS AND ROTATE RESPONSE SCALE.]

How often do you typically read warning labels for the following product categories when the warning label is <u>in a manual that comes with the product</u> ?	
	Total %
<i>Appliances, such as a microwave, refrigerator, or blender</i>	
Always	28
Sometimes	37
Rarely	23
Never	12
Base: All respondents	2250
<i>Products for babies or children, such as toys, playpens, or bottles</i>	
Always	44
Sometimes	28
Rarely	13
Never	15
Base: All respondents	2245
<i>Electronics, such as TVs, cell phones, or computers</i>	
Always	26
Sometimes	37
Rarely	25
Never	13
Base: All respondents	2247
<i>Home and garden equipment, such as lawn mowers, pressure washers, and generators</i>	
Always	32
Sometimes	36
Rarely	20
Never	13
Base: All respondents	2247
<i>Furniture and fixtures, like dressers, wall-mounted televisions, or built-in shelves</i>	
Always	20
Sometimes	37
Rarely	27
Never	15
Base: All respondents	2248

Q14. [SHOW IF ANY Q11, Q12, OR Q13 RESPONSE ITEMS = 'SOMETIMES' OR 'RARELY'. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS WITH 'OTHER' ANCHORED AT THE END AND TEXT CAPTURED.]

You said you "sometimes" or "rarely" read warning labels on products. Under what circumstances do you read them?	
	Total %
I read them for products I think may be dangerous or need care in use (hair dryers, hedge trimmers, etc.)	73
I read them when I have a question (like how to store a product or what age group a toy is for)	62
I read them when they are eye-catching, like when they are especially large, bold, or in red writing	52
I read them when they are put someplace easy to see on the product itself	40
Other, please specify	4
Base: Respondents who say they "sometimes" or rarely" read warning labels on the product, box, or manual for any of the products that were asked about in Q11, Q12, and Q13	2,026

Q15. [SHOW IF ANY Q11, Q12, OR Q13 RESPONSE ITEMS = 'NEVER'. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS WITH 'OTHER' ANCHORED AT THE END AND TEXT CAPTURED.]

You've said that you don't typically read warning labels on some products. Which, if any, of the following are reasons you don't?	
	Total %
I'm familiar with how to use this type of product properly and don't read the label on every new one I buy	68
Warnings are usually common sense so I do not need to bother reading them	65
Nearly all products come with warnings and they do not necessarily mean there is a real risk	34
It is not necessary to read the warnings because they mainly exist to protect the company from lawsuits	27
Type is typically too small to read	21
Warnings use symbols that I don't understand	9
Warning labels are difficult or impractical to comply with	7
Warning labels are hard to understand	6
Other, please specify	7
Base: Respondents who say they "never" read warning labels on the product, box, or manual for any of the products that were asked about in Q11, Q12, and Q13	734

Q16. [SHOW IF ANY Q11, Q12, OR Q13 RESPONSE ITEMS = 'ALWAYS', 'SOMETIMES', OR 'RARELY'. 'NOT APPLICABLE TO ME' IS EXCLUSIVE. TEXT BOX CAPTURES RESPONSES.]

You said that you read warning labels for at least some types of products. If you have ever changed your behavior because of reading the warnings--for instance, if you used or stored a product differently than you otherwise would have, or if you read the warnings because you were unsure how to do something--please tell us.	
	Total %
TEXT BOX	
Not applicable to me	53
Base: Respondents who say they "always", "sometimes", or "rarely" read warning labels on the product, box, or manual for any of the products that were asked about in Q11, Q12, and Q13	

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