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Americans Shift Beverage Choices Toward Health and Digital Discovery, Survey Finds

More than half of U.S. consumers prioritize wellness and use online tools to select drinks, with Gen Z leading the trend

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A new survey from the EY organization reveals that health concerns, digital engagement, and generational shifts are changing how Americans choose and consume beverages. The Consumer Beverage Survey, which included responses from more than 2,500 adults in the United States and Brazil, highlights a growing focus on wellness and technology in beverage decisions.

According to the survey, 58% of U.S. consumers now pay close attention to the ingredients in their drinks. More than half—52%—are willing to pay extra for beverages that support their health and wellness goals. Sugar content remains a major factor, with 66% of respondents choosing lower sugar or lower calorie options. These trends reflect a broader movement toward intentional consumption, as people seek drinks that offer

functional benefits beyond simple hydration.

The study also shows that digital tools are playing a larger role in how consumers discover and select beverages. In the U.S., 19% of respondents use online grocery recommendations to find new drinks, while 17% rely on fitness and health apps, and 16% use loyalty apps. Younger generations are leading this shift: 26% of Gen Z respondents report higher digital usage compared to other age groups.

Artificial intelligence is beginning to influence beverage choices as well. In Brazil, 45% of consumers used AI-based recommendations for beverages in the past year, compared with 27% in the U.S. Looking ahead, 70% of Brazilian respondents say they are very likely to use AI for beverage recommendations next year, with millennials showing the most enthusiasm.

Generational differences are also shaping beverage culture in both countries. In the U.S., social pressure to drink alcohol remains for 20% of respondents, but functional beverages are gaining ground. Among Gen Z and millennials, 80% and 75%, respectively, report drinking alcoholic beverages at least every two weeks, compared with 65% overall. In Brazil, alcohol consumption is high overall (57%), but only 47% of Gen Z drink alcohol at least every two weeks—a sign of shifting attitudes toward moderation and alternative drinks.

Energy drinks illustrate another generational divide in the U.S. More than half of Gen Z (53%) and nearly half of millennials (47%) consume energy drinks at least every two weeks, compared with just 34% overall.

Industry leaders say these findings point to a need for beverage companies to adapt quickly. Sean Harapko, EY Americas Beverage Leader, notes that consumers are becoming more selective and informed about what they drink. Rob Holston, EY Global and Americas Consumer Products Sector Leader, adds that wellness is now a baseline expectation rather than a niche market.

The survey was conducted online between November 20 and December 11, 2025. It included 1,511 adults from the U.S. and 1,001 from Brazil. The results were weighted to reflect census representation, with a margin of error of approximately ±2.5% for the

U.S. sample and ±3.1% for Brazil.

As beverage preferences continue to evolve, companies will need to focus on transparency about ingredients and health benefits while embracing digital platforms for discovery and engagement. The full survey results are available on the EY website.