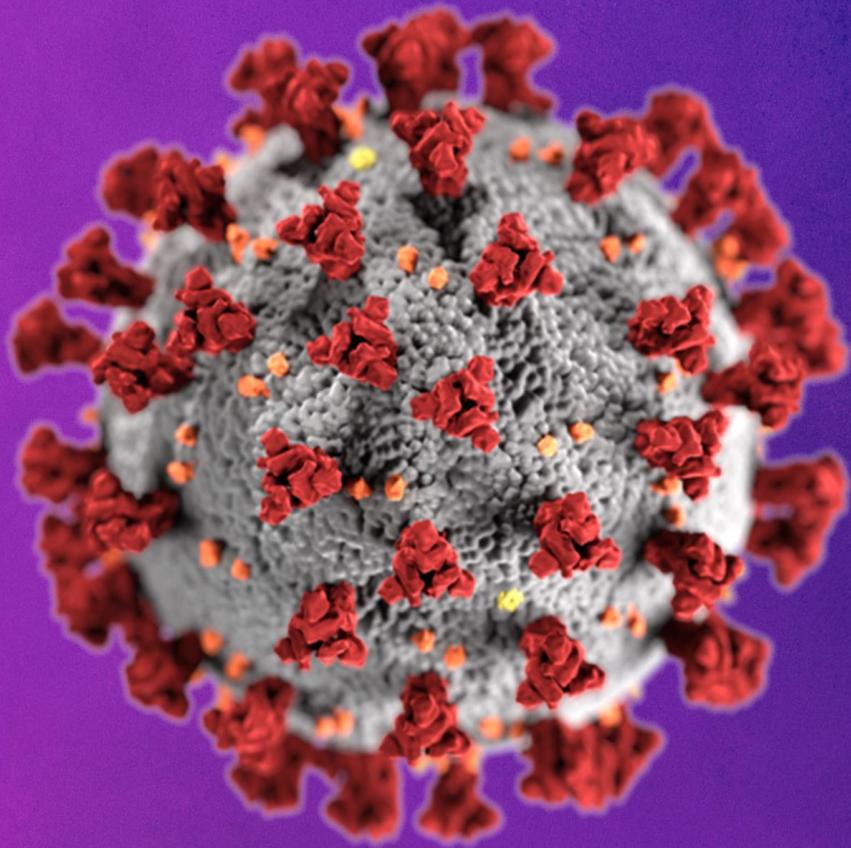




COVID-19

CORONAVIRUS & THE IMPACT ON EATING
3.12.20



The news today is all-Coronavirus, all the time. But as we all seek to understand the impact on our personal lives, it remains unclear what this all means for the food industry. How will it affect restaurant traffic, eating at home, and more?

It's impossible to predict precisely how Coronavirus will spread, but we can share insights on how consumers are likely to react.

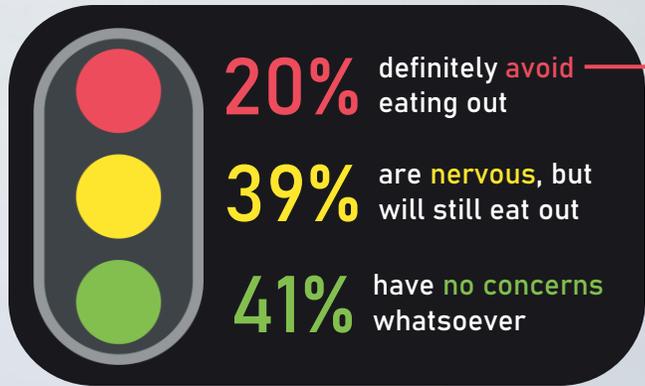
Here are a few highlights from Datassential's Coronavirus research, fielded March 10 with 1,000 US consumers.



Restaurants are vulnerable to dramatic traffic declines.

Coronavirus has led to nearly 60% of consumers being concerned about eating out, with one-in-five “definitely” avoiding doing so. These are significant figures that suggest a considerable reduction in restaurant traffic should Coronavirus infect more communities at a fast rate.

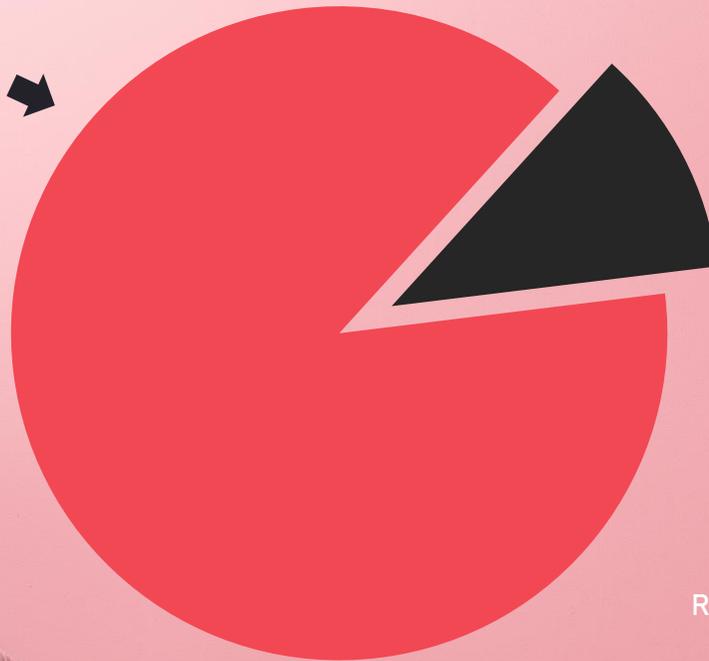
Moreover, the fear is most significant among parents, urban dwellers, and higher earners; should the situation worsen, look for family dining and kids meals to be most impacted – particularly for restaurant brands located primarily in city centers.



21%	Men	
18%	Women	
12%	Gen Z	
22%	Millennial	
20%	Gen X	
20%	Boomer+	
26%	Kids	←
16%	No Kids	
19%	<\$25K	
18%	\$25k - \$50k	
15%	\$50k - \$100k	
26%	\$100k+	←
25%	Urban	←
18%	Suburban	
15%	Rural	

Thinking of COVID-19 / coronavirus,
which do you feel safer eating?

89%
grocery stores / food from home



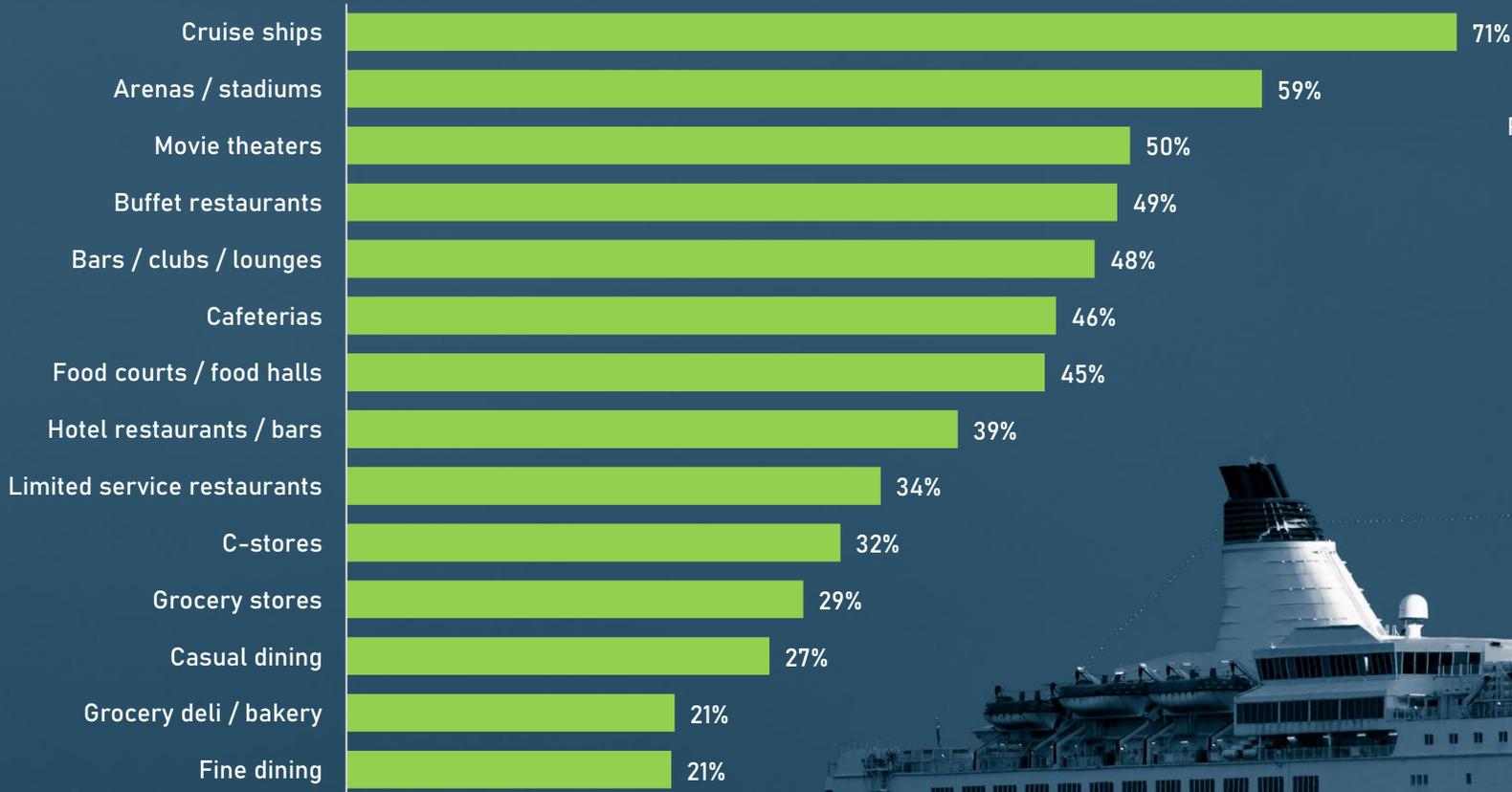
11%
restaurants / away from home

Home food wins the battle of safety perception by a landslide.

Relative to Coronavirus, consumers overwhelmingly believe food from home to be the safest option. Just 11% perceive away-from-home food as safer, posing a major psychological barrier that is certain to challenge restaurants.

Foodservice operators that can offer a responsible and safe solution should do so recognizing that their true competition during these times isn't other restaurants, but rather the consumer's own home.





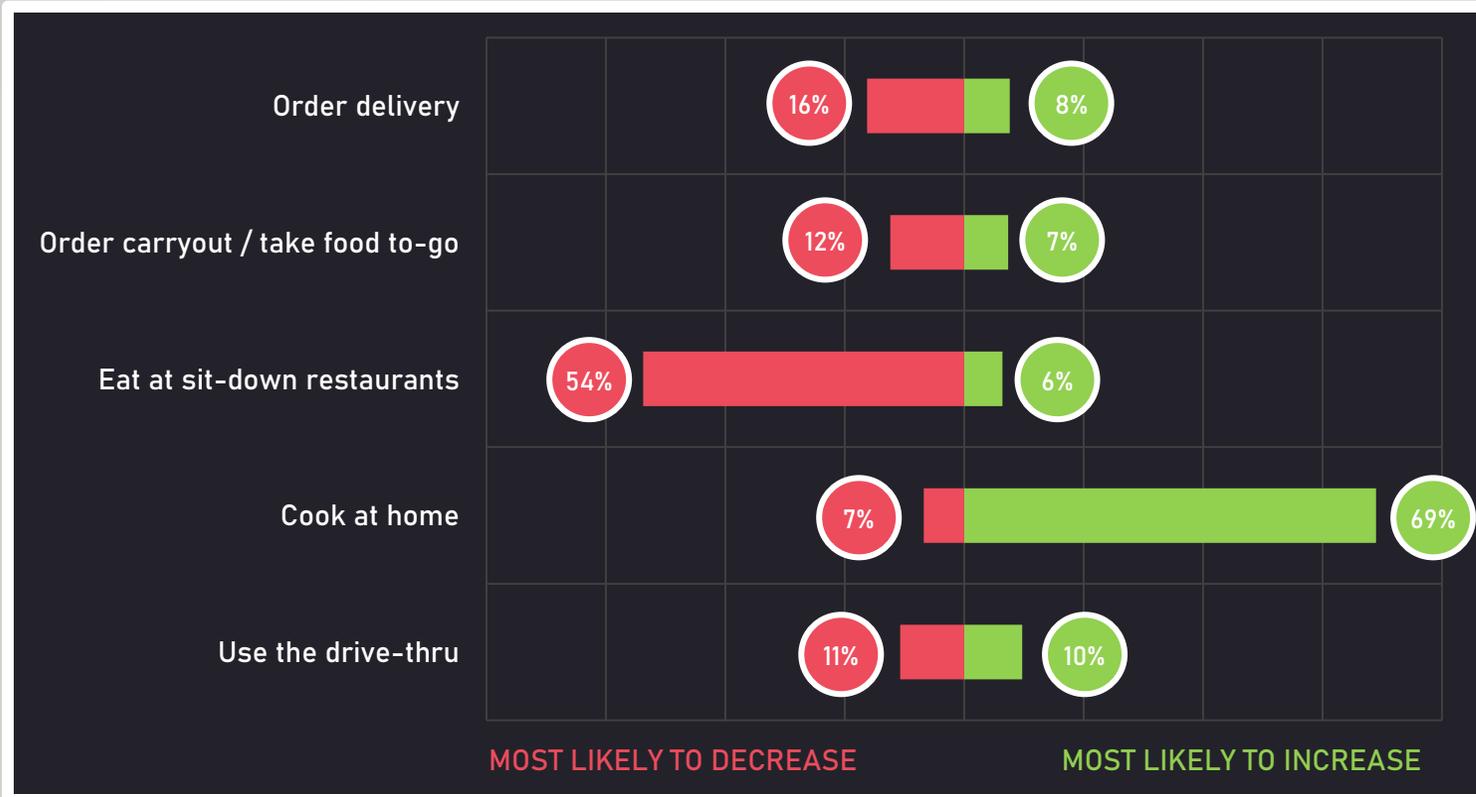
% who believe visiting that establishment would INCREASE their likelihood to contract Coronavirus

It's not just cruise ships.

People are concerned about contracting Coronavirus from an array of food establishments – arenas, movie theaters, buffets, bars, cafeterias, and anywhere else they could be exposed to large crowds.

And while restaurants and grocery stores are of course just one of many perceived “high risk” environments a typical consumer may encounter in a given day, it's important to remember this is where their head is at – and provide honest reassurances that their safety is top of mind.





Full-service restaurants need to act.

A majority of consumers indicate they are most likely to decrease their visits to sit-down restaurants. Here they are quite loud and clear – while some may reduce their usage of delivery, takeout, or drive-thru, those numbers pale in comparison to the 54% who most anticipate curbing their trips to FSRs.

On the flipside, consumers indicate they are most likely to increase their reliance on food prepared at home. Note that much of this is rooted in simple logistics – one trip to a restaurant typically yields just one meal, whereas a single trip to the grocery store can fuel a week’s worth of eating.



To many, eating out has become a minefield.

Door handles, soda fountains, and condiment bottles are among the multitude of perceived risky propositions consumers face inside a restaurant or cafeteria. Operators should take great care to diagnose and remediate any potential points of exposure.

% who believe it would INCREASE their likelihood to contract Coronavirus

Touching door handles in restaurants	78%
Self-serve food (salad bar, buffet, etc.)	77%
Using public restrooms in restaurants	74%
Sitting in a crowded restaurant	69%
Self-serve drinks (fountain drinks, coffee carafe, etc.)	68%
Sharing condiments (ketchup bottles, etc.)	64%
Sharing food at restaurants	63%
Eating food with your hands	56%
Using dishware / silverware / glassware at restaurants	48%



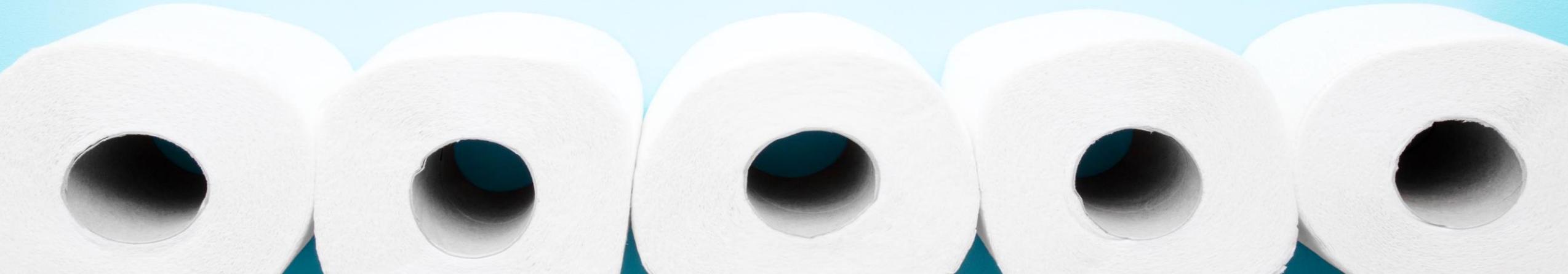
Regularly / visibly wiping down tables, kiosks, other things people touch	57%
Employees visibly wearing food safety apparel	46%
If restaurants handed out disinfectant wipes for me to use	43%
More food covers / sneeze guards / enclosed cold cases, etc.	42%
No open containers	40%
If everything came individually wrapped	37%
More space in between tables / no communal seating	36%
No ingredients coming from coronavirus-affected areas	35%
If restaurants made it so you don't have to touch door handles	32%
Visible food safety inspection results	28%
If I could order by phone app	18%

← **What would make you more comfortable about dining out in the wake of the Coronavirus outbreak?**

Wipe it down.

It's good hygiene, and also provides critical reassurance to consumers. If it's something multiple people touch, wipe it down frequently and visibly.

But it's not just about one particular thing. Operators and retailers should practice – and visibly demonstrate – a broad range of sanitary measures. Start with the list here, but also pursue other opportunities to keep things clean and safe for patrons.





HOTSHOT REPORT

Get additional consumer and operator detail in Datassential's upcoming COVID-19 report, available for download soon.

