

# Diet Perception Among Adults in Los Angeles County

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# Background

- What is a "Healthy Diet"?



- **Diet perceptions are changing**
  - People are less likely to rate their diets as “Excellent” or “Very Good”
  - Suggesting a more “**realistic**” self-assessment based on more awareness
- **Knowledge and attitudes/perceptions influence dietary choices, and health behaviors**



# Objectives

- **Assess diet perception and factors associated with diet perception in the LA County adult population**
- **Examine diet perception with**
  - **Nutrition intake and access**
  - **Physical activity**
  - **Chronic conditions**
- **Evaluate reasons given for not eating healthier meals**



# Methods

## 2007 Los Angeles County Health Survey (LACHS)

- Random digit dial telephone survey
- Conducted every 2-3 years since 1997
- **6 Languages**
  - English, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Korean
- **7,200 adults (18+ years)**
  - Nutrition series from a random sub-sample of 1,040
- **Data weighted to reflect non-institutionalized population of LA County**



# Survey Question

- **How healthy do you think your diet is?**
  - **Very Healthy**
  - **Somewhat Healthy**
  - **Somewhat Unhealthy**
  - **Very Unhealthy**
- “Very Healthy” = Positive Diet Perception
- Not “Very Healthy” = **Negative Diet Perception**
  - Those with negative diet perception asked follow-up questions about **reasons for not eating healthier meals**



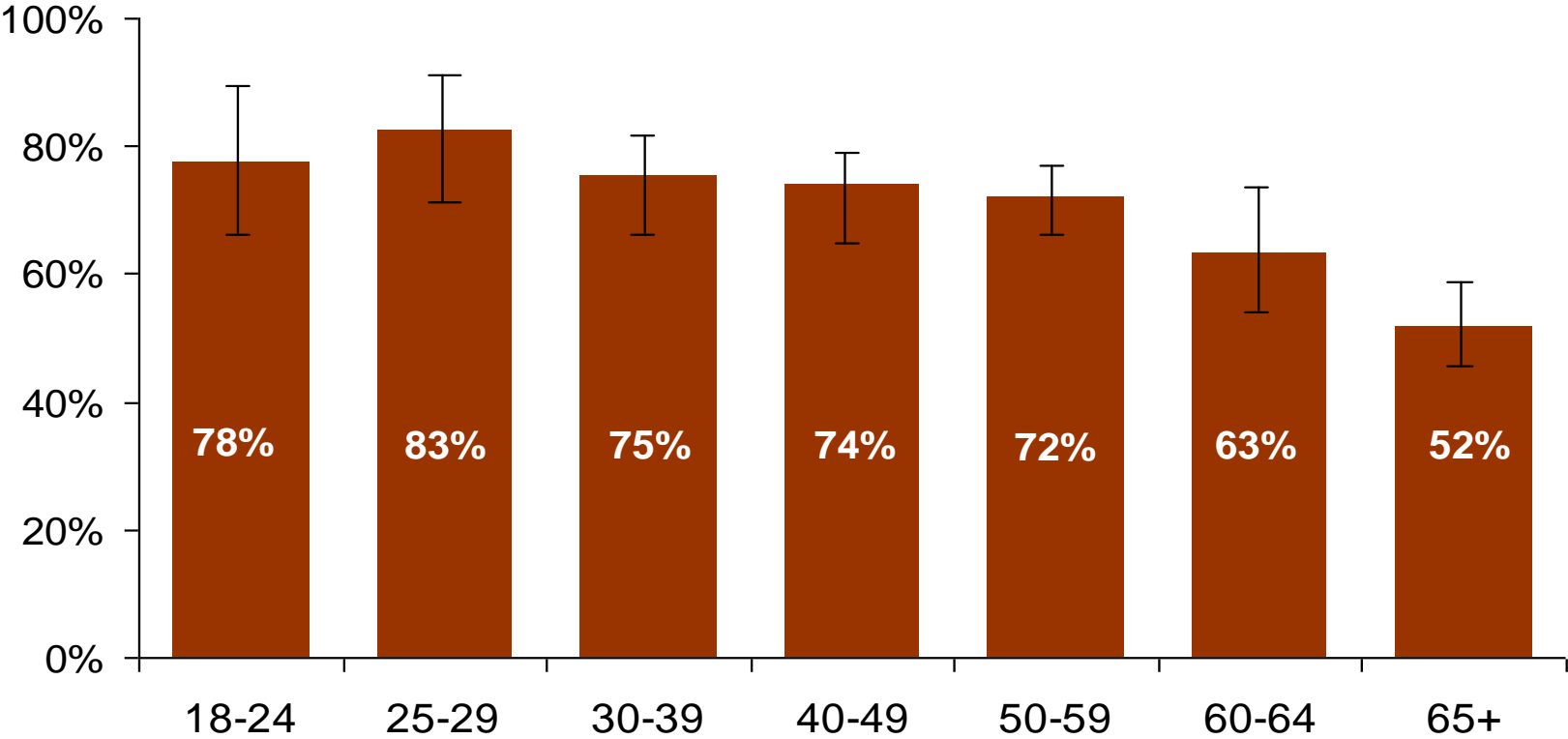
# Results

**72%** of adults reported that they think their diet was not “very healthy”

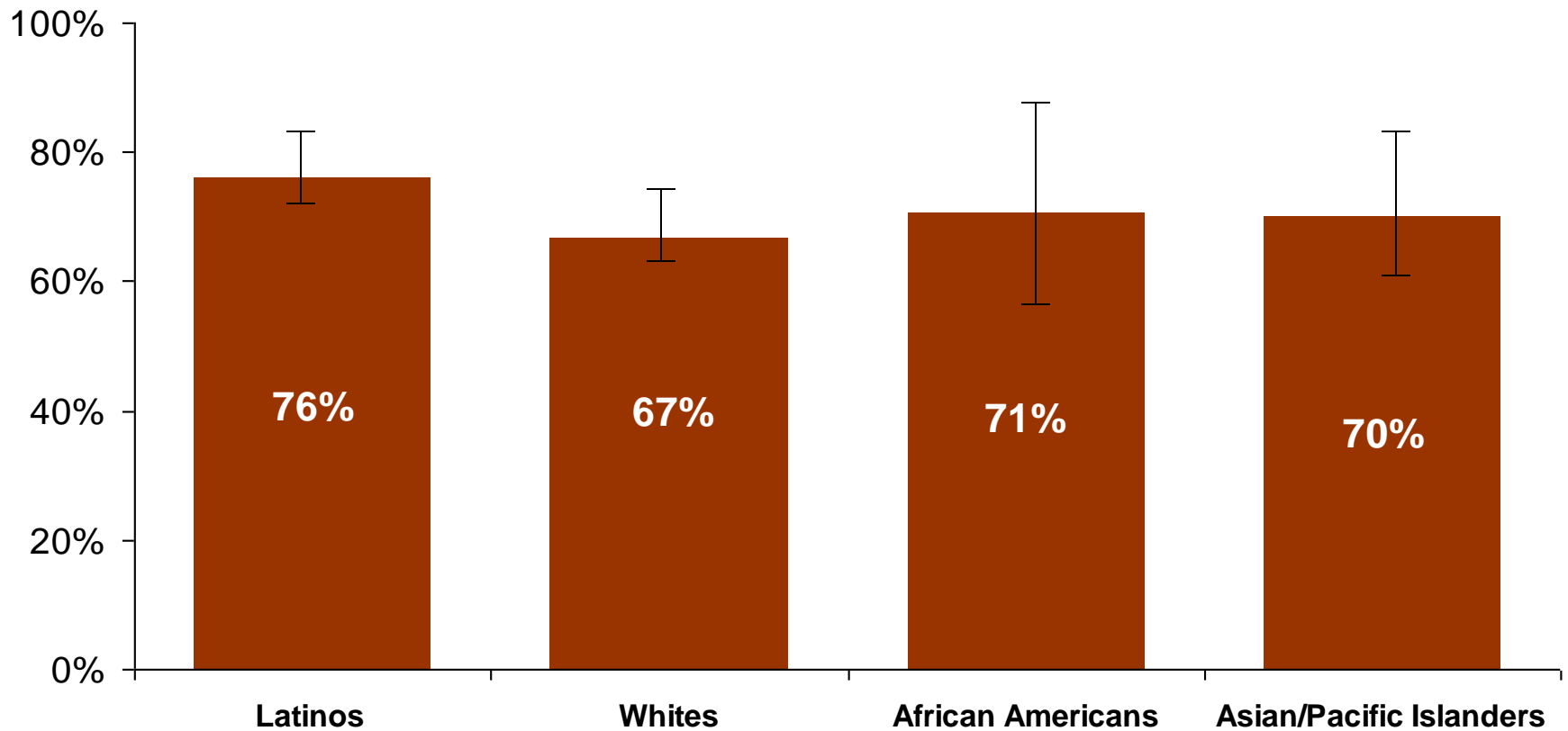
**“Negative Diet Perception”**



# Negative Diet Perception by Age Group

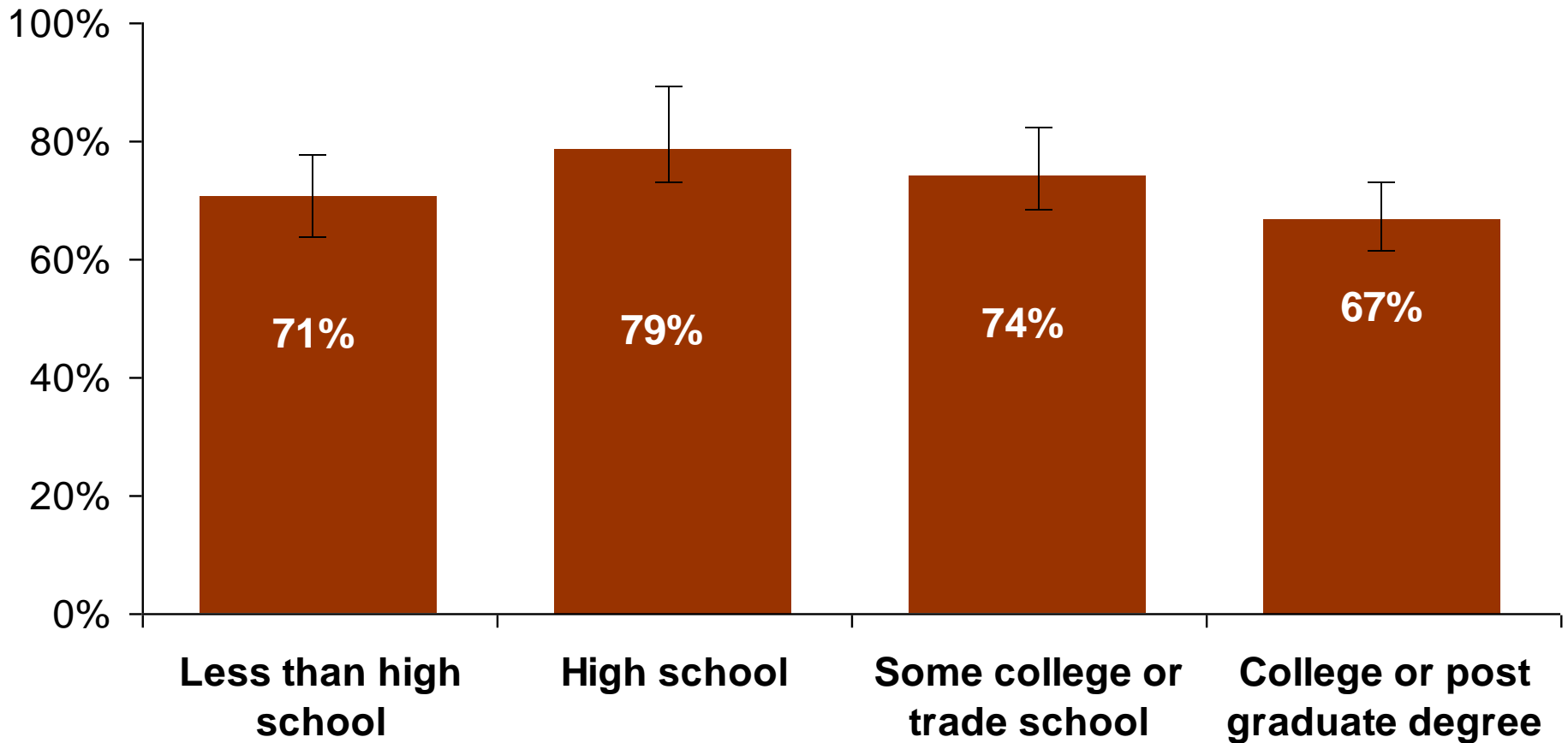


# Negative Diet Perception by Race/Ethnicity

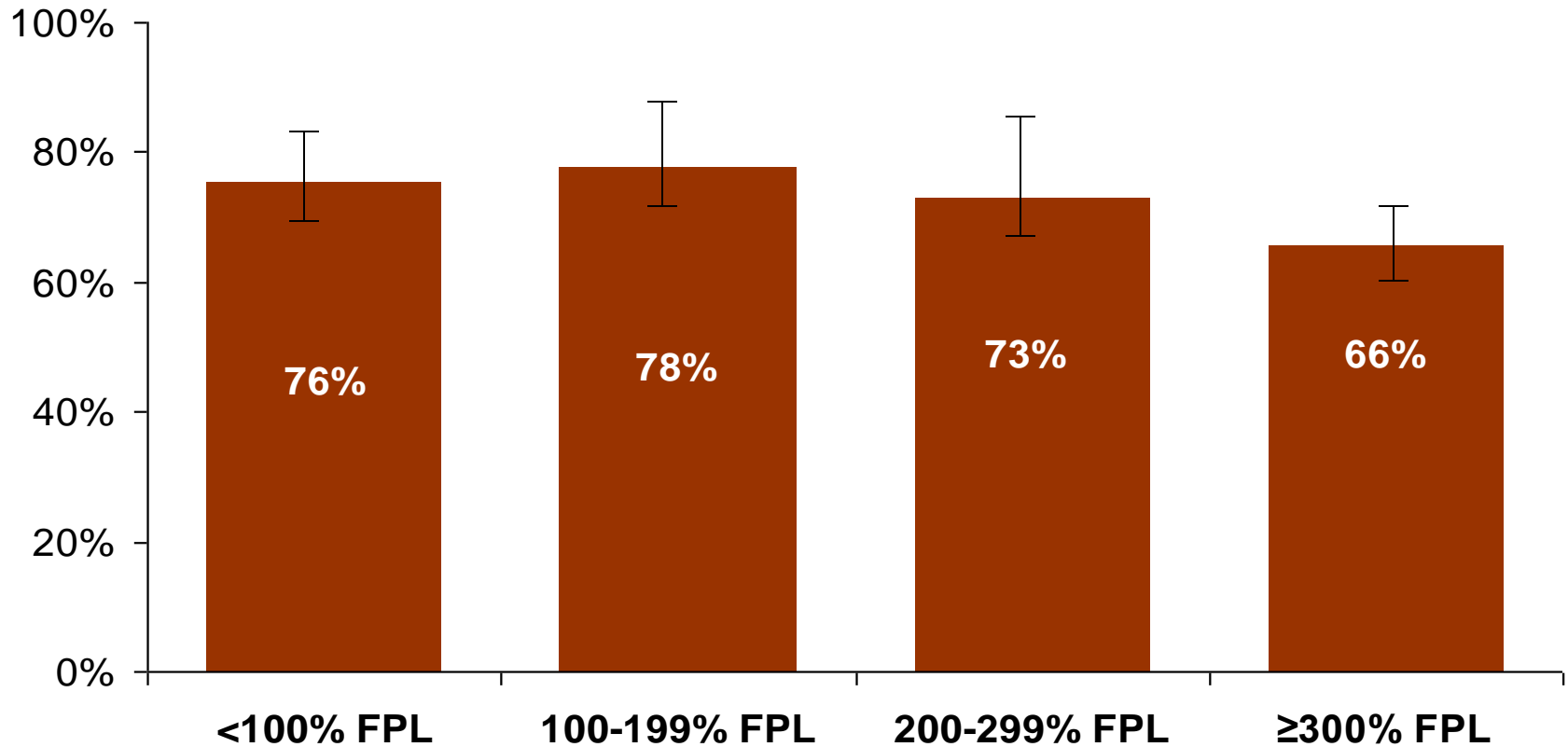




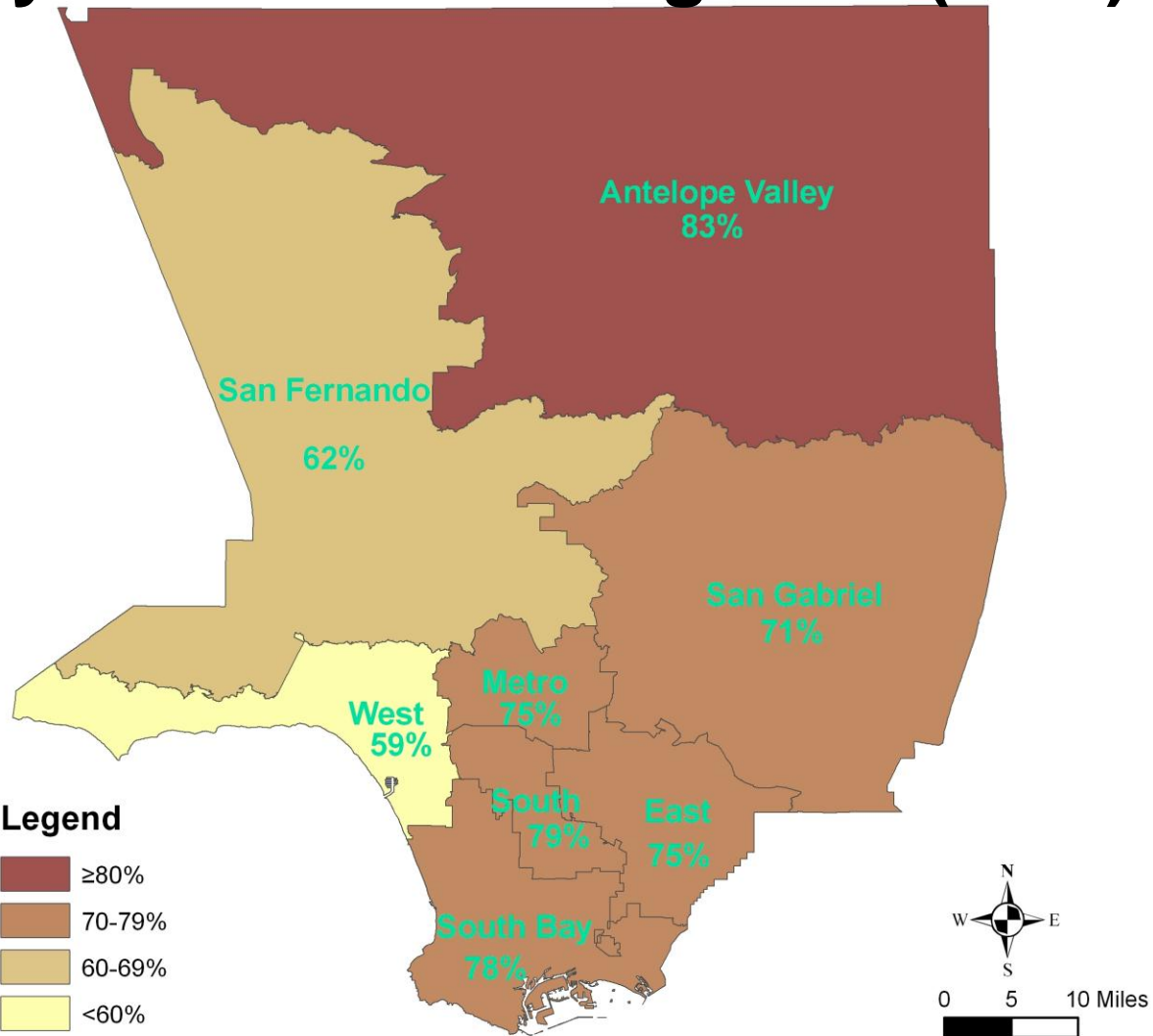
# Negative Diet Perception by Education



# Negative Diet Perception by Federal Poverty Level (FPL)

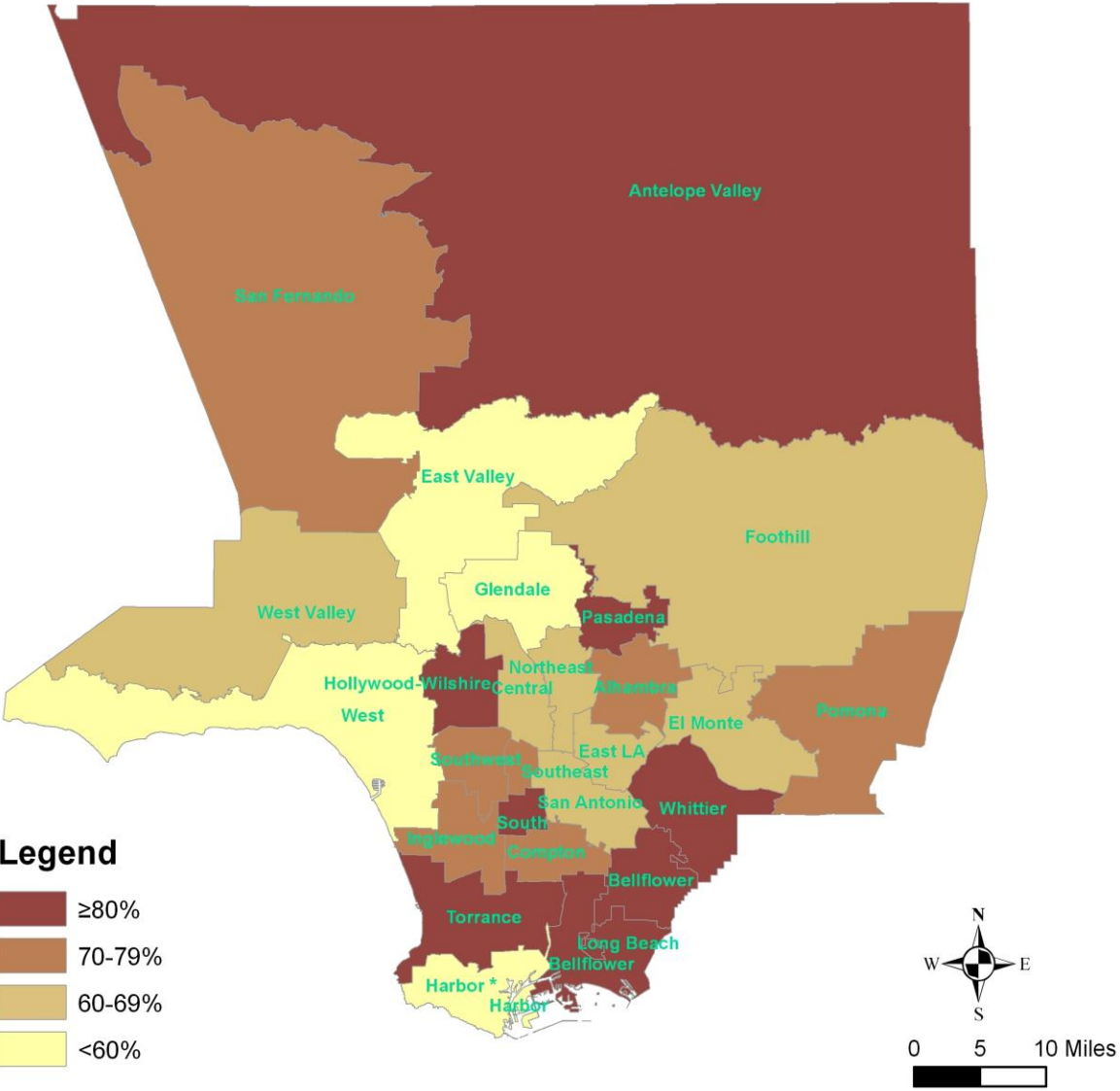


# Negative Diet Perception by Service Planning Area (SPA)



Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology,  
2007 Los Angeles County Health Survey.

# Negative Diet Perception by Health District



Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology,  
 2007 Los Angeles County Health Survey.

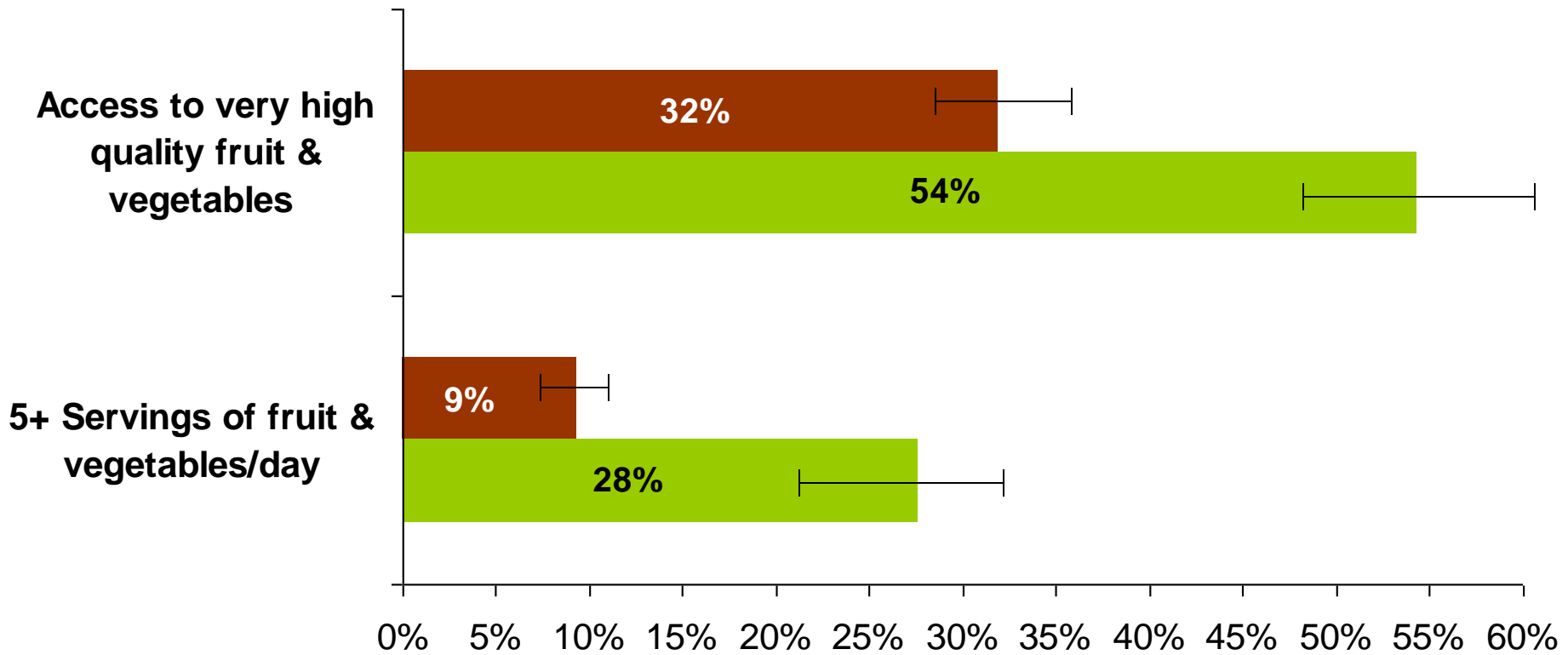
\* The estimate is statistically unstable (relative standard error ≥23%)

# Nutrition Intake & Access



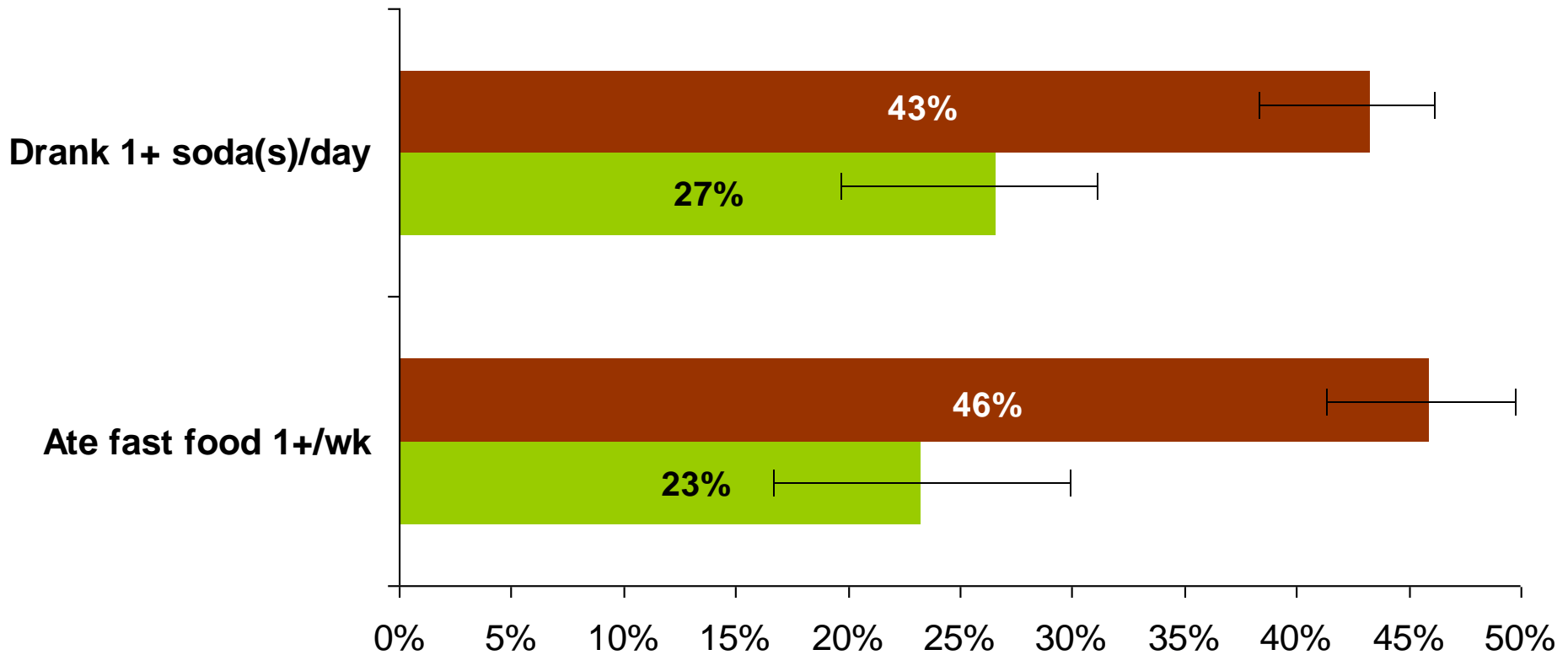
# Fruit/Vegetable Access & Consumption by Diet Perception

■ Positive Diet Perception ■ Negative Diet Perception



# Fast Food & Soda Consumption by Diet Perception

■ Positive Diet Perception ■ Negative Diet Perception



# Physical Activity

To meet Physical Activity Guidelines :

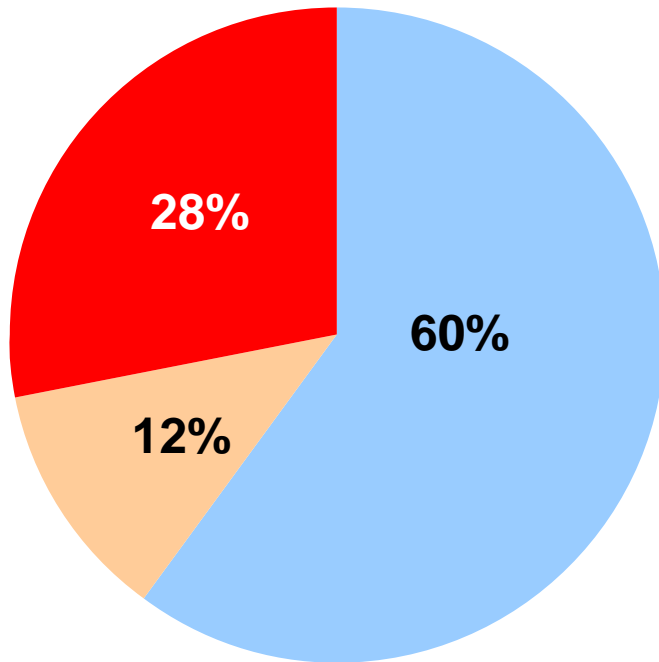
- ***Vigorous Activity*** for  $\geq 20$  minutes,  $\geq 3$  days/wk,
- ***Moderate Activity*** for  $\geq 30$  minutes,  $\geq 5$  days/wk,



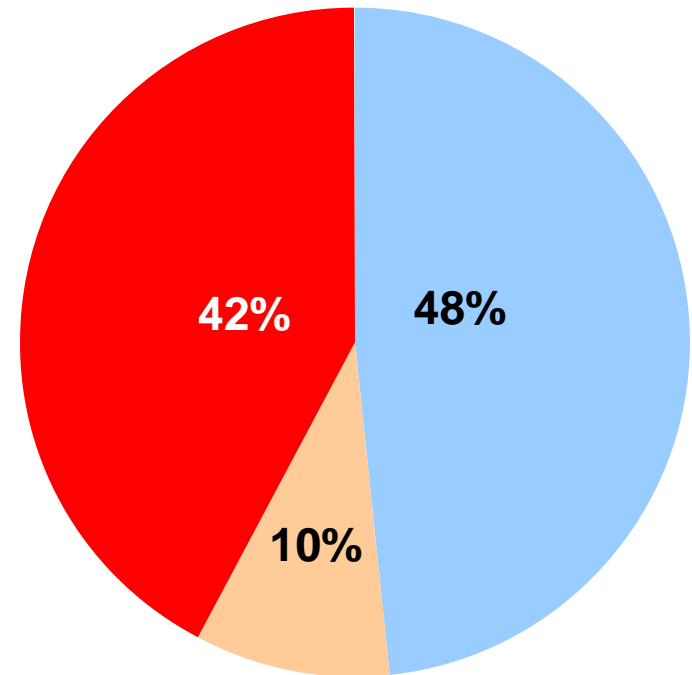


# Physical Activity by Diet Perception

## Positive Diet Perception



## Negative Diet Perception



- Active (Meet Guidelines)
- Some Activity (Does Not Meet Guidelines)
- Minimal to No Activity (Sedentary)

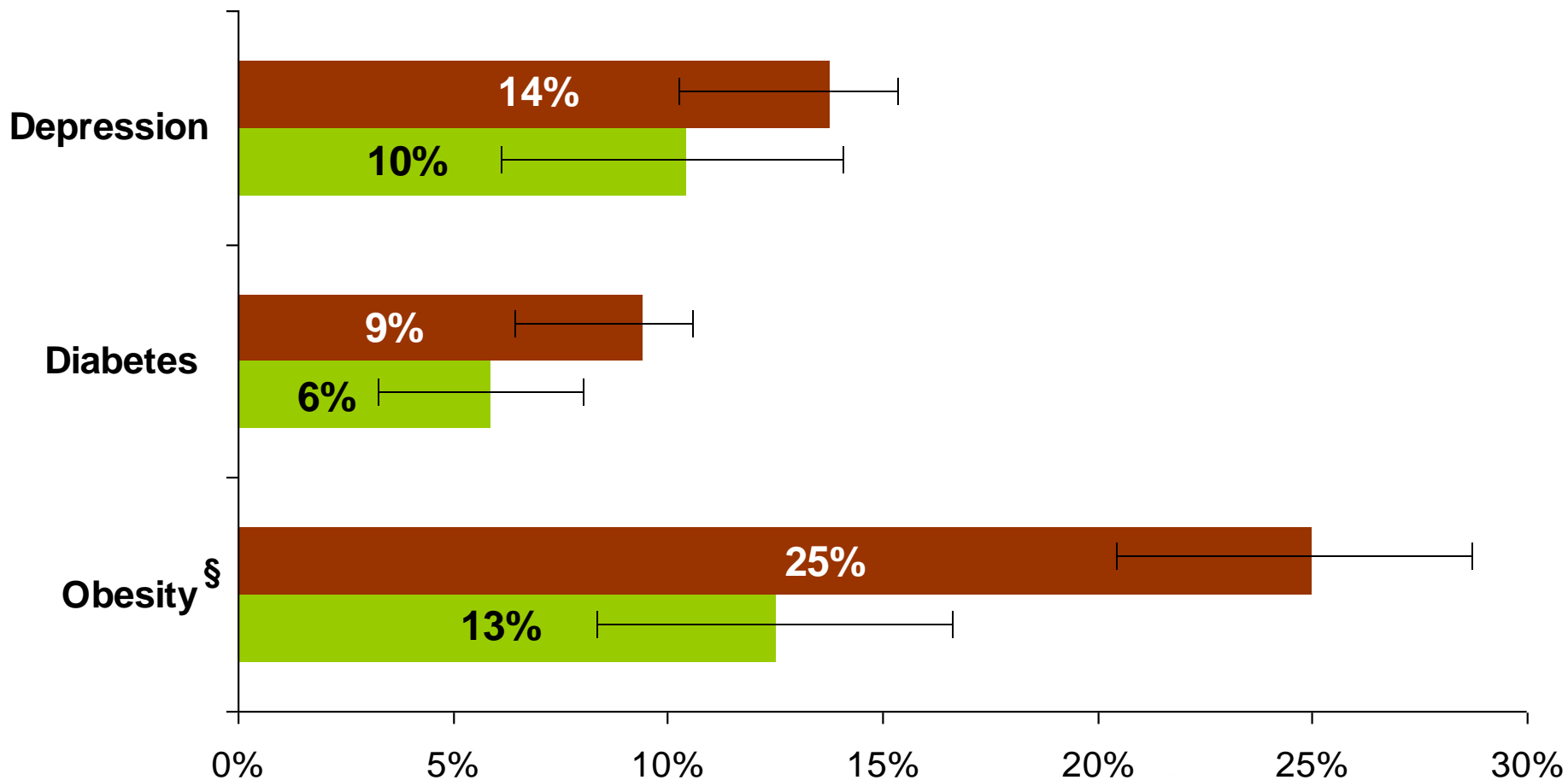


# Chronic Conditions



# Chronic Conditions<sup>†</sup> by Diet Perception

■ Positive Diet Perception ■ Negative Diet Perception



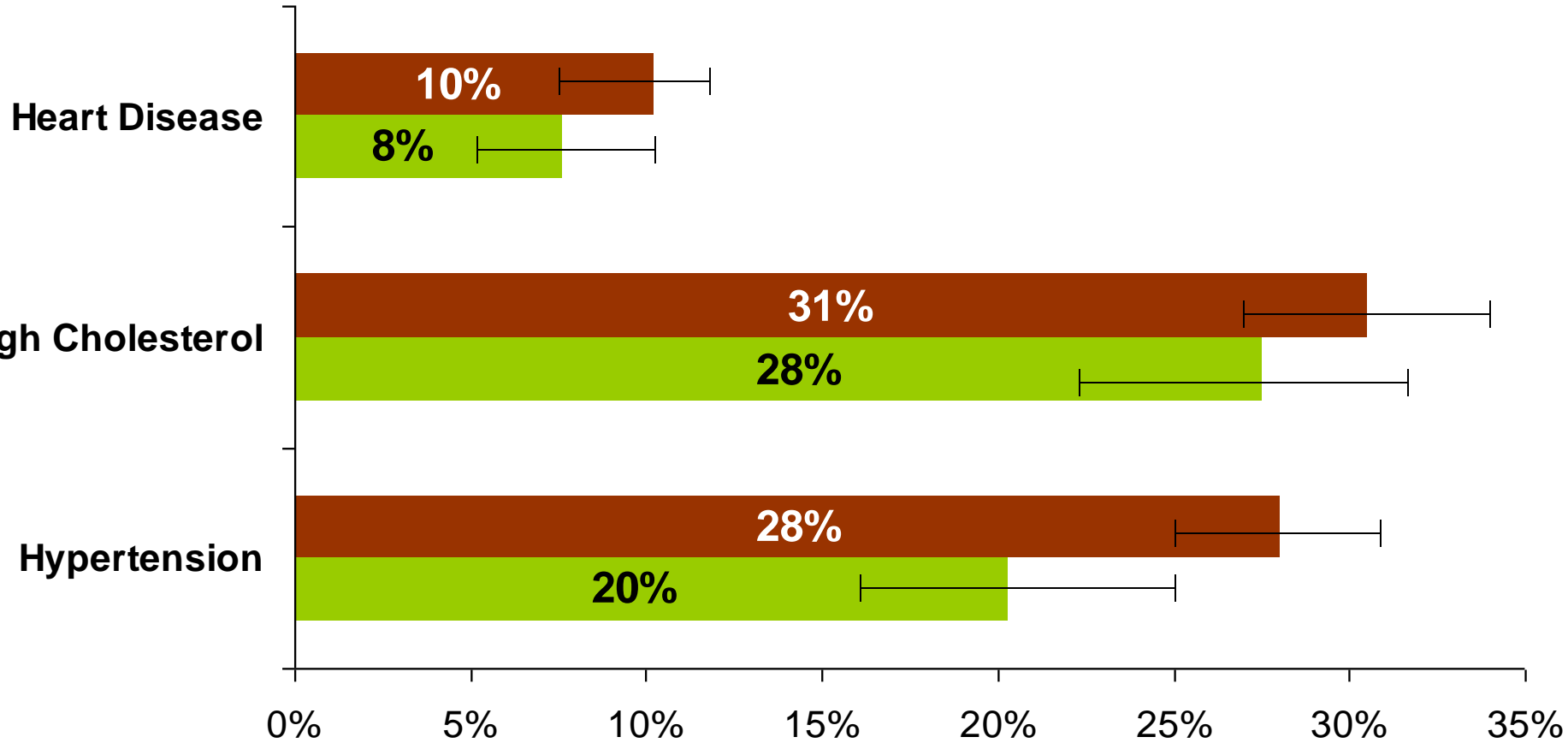
<sup>†</sup> Age adjustment to 2000 census standard population



<sup>§</sup> Weight status is based on Body Mass Index (BMI) calculated from self-reported weight and height. According to NHLBI clinical guidelines, a BMI  $\geq 30$  is obese.

# Chronic Conditions<sup>†</sup> by Diet Perception

■ Positive Diet Perception ■ Negative Diet Perception



<sup>†</sup> Age adjustment to 2000 census standard population

# Follow-up Questions

Are any of the following reasons why you don't eat healthier meals?

## – Personal Preference

- You *don't want to give up the foods you like*
- Your *prefer to eat at restaurants or get take out*

## – Perceived Barriers

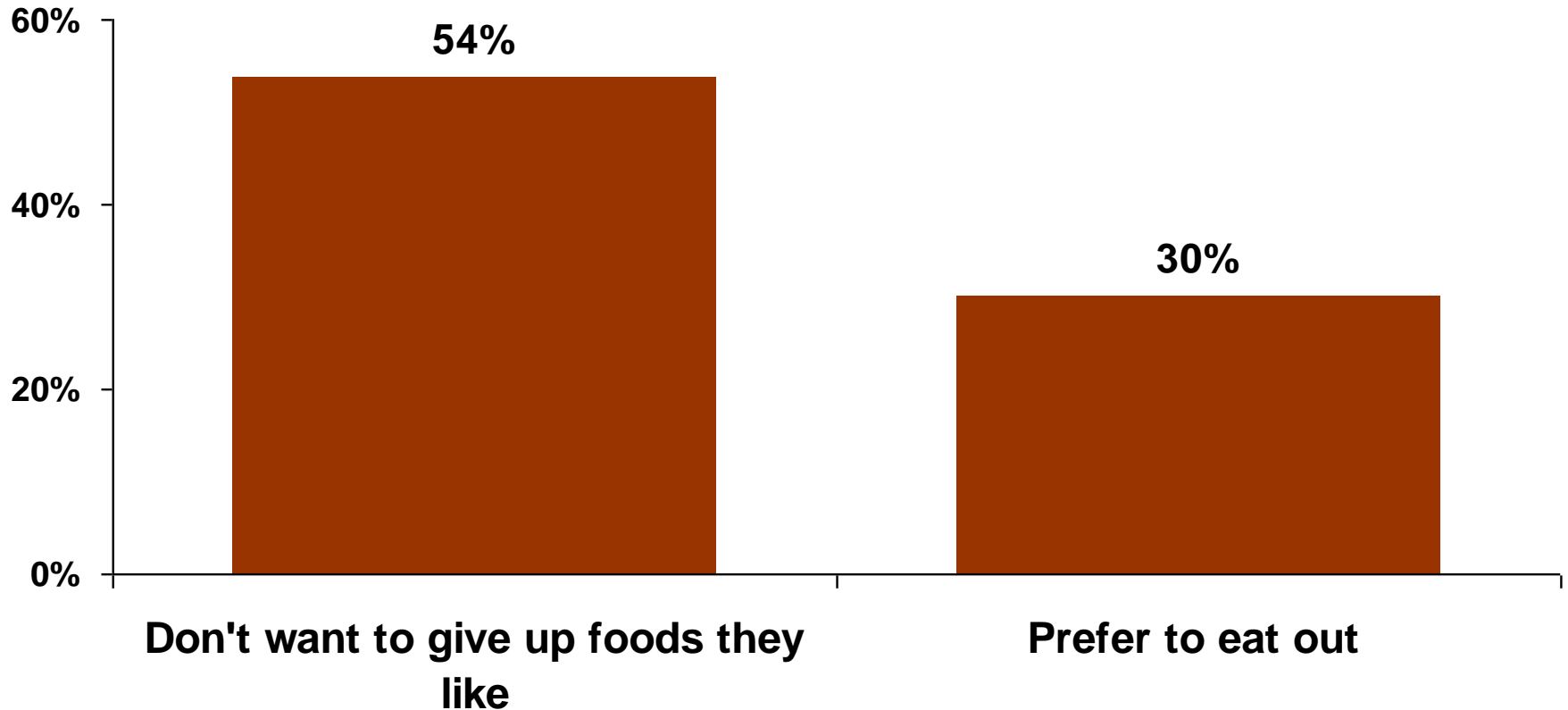
- It takes too much *time/effort* to prepare healthy meals
- It *cost too much* to purchase foods that are nutritious
- You *don't know or understand nutrition guidelines*



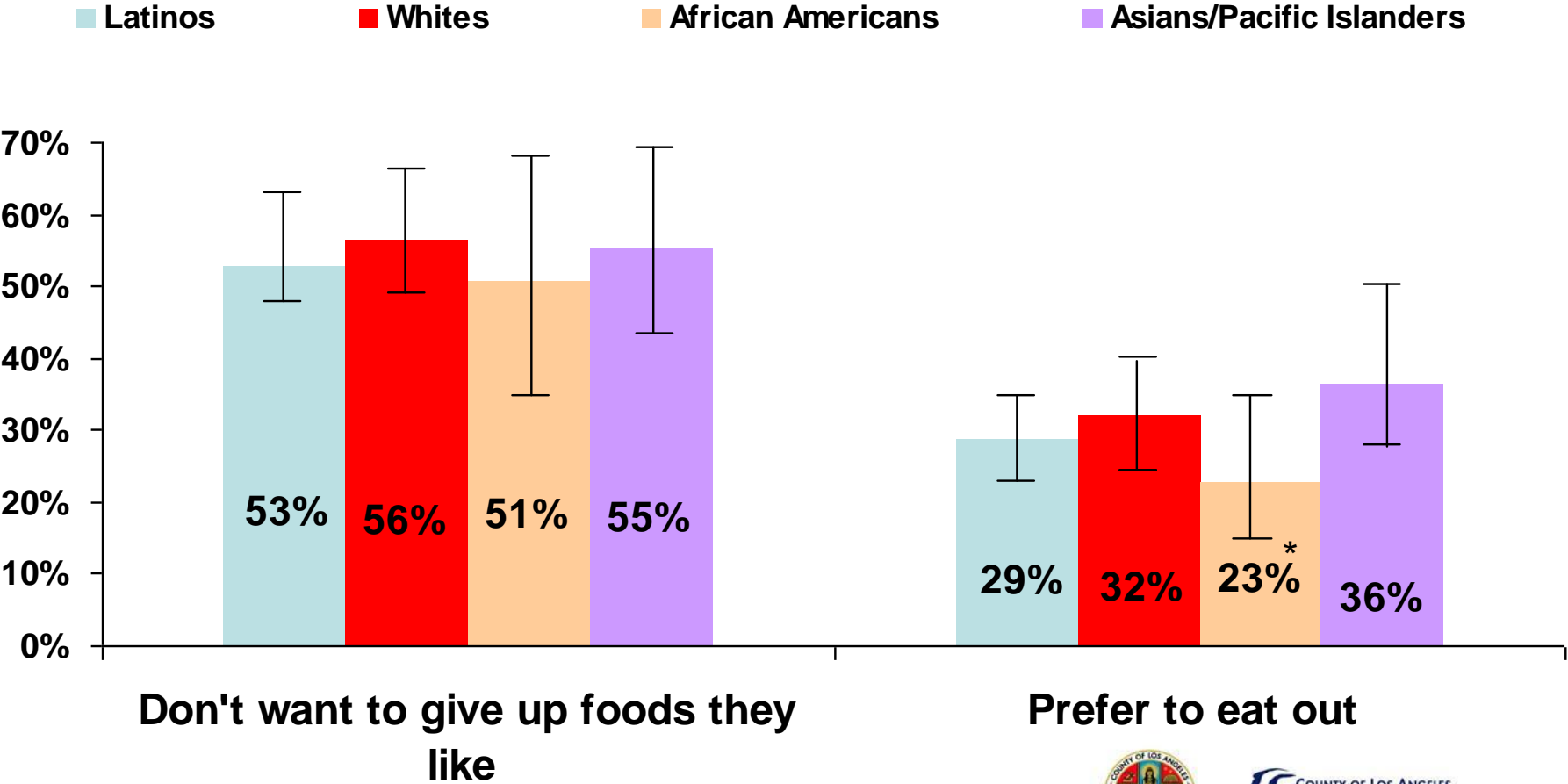
# Personal Preference Reasons for Not Eating Healthier Meals



# Personal Preference Reasons For Not Eating Healthier Meals



# Personal Preference Reasons by Race/Ethnicity



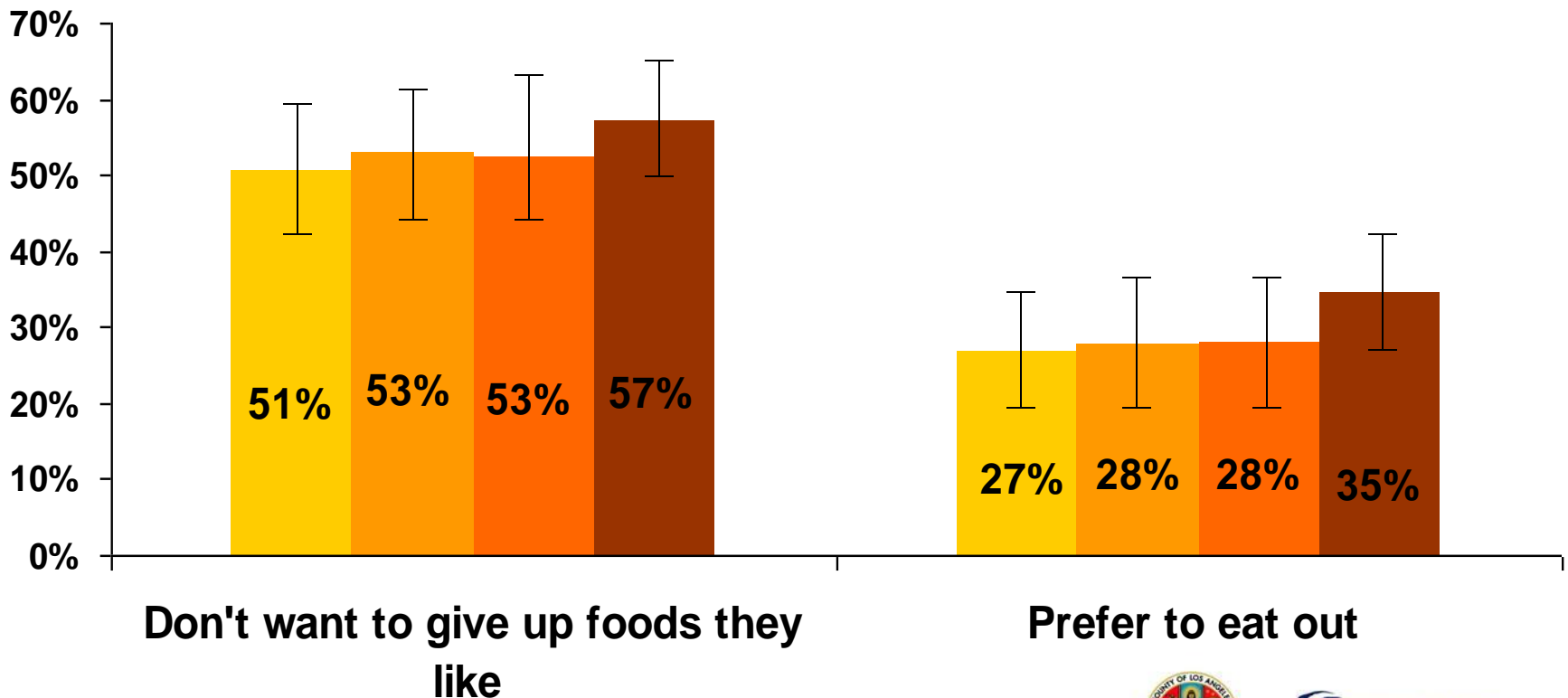
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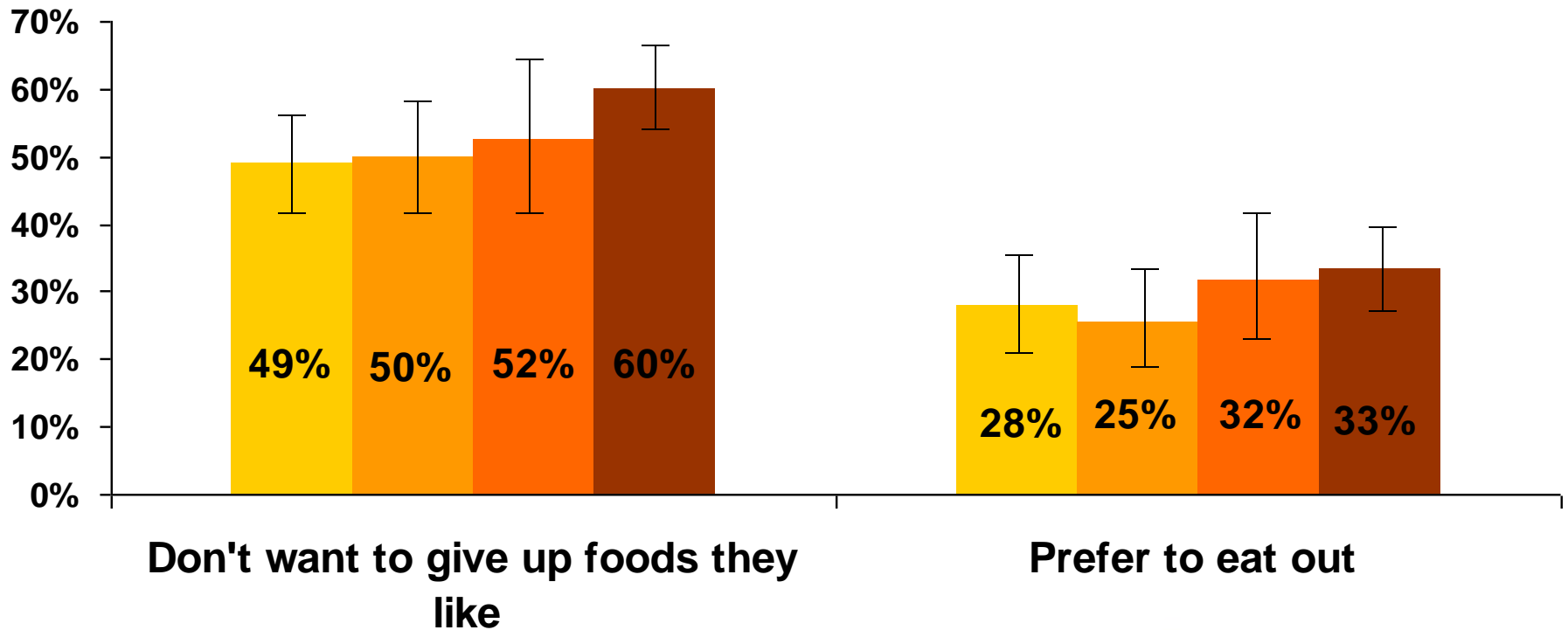
# Personal Preference Reasons by Education

■ Less than high school   ■ High school   ■ Some college or trade school   ■ College or post graduate degree



# Personal Preference Reasons by Federal Poverty Level (FPL)

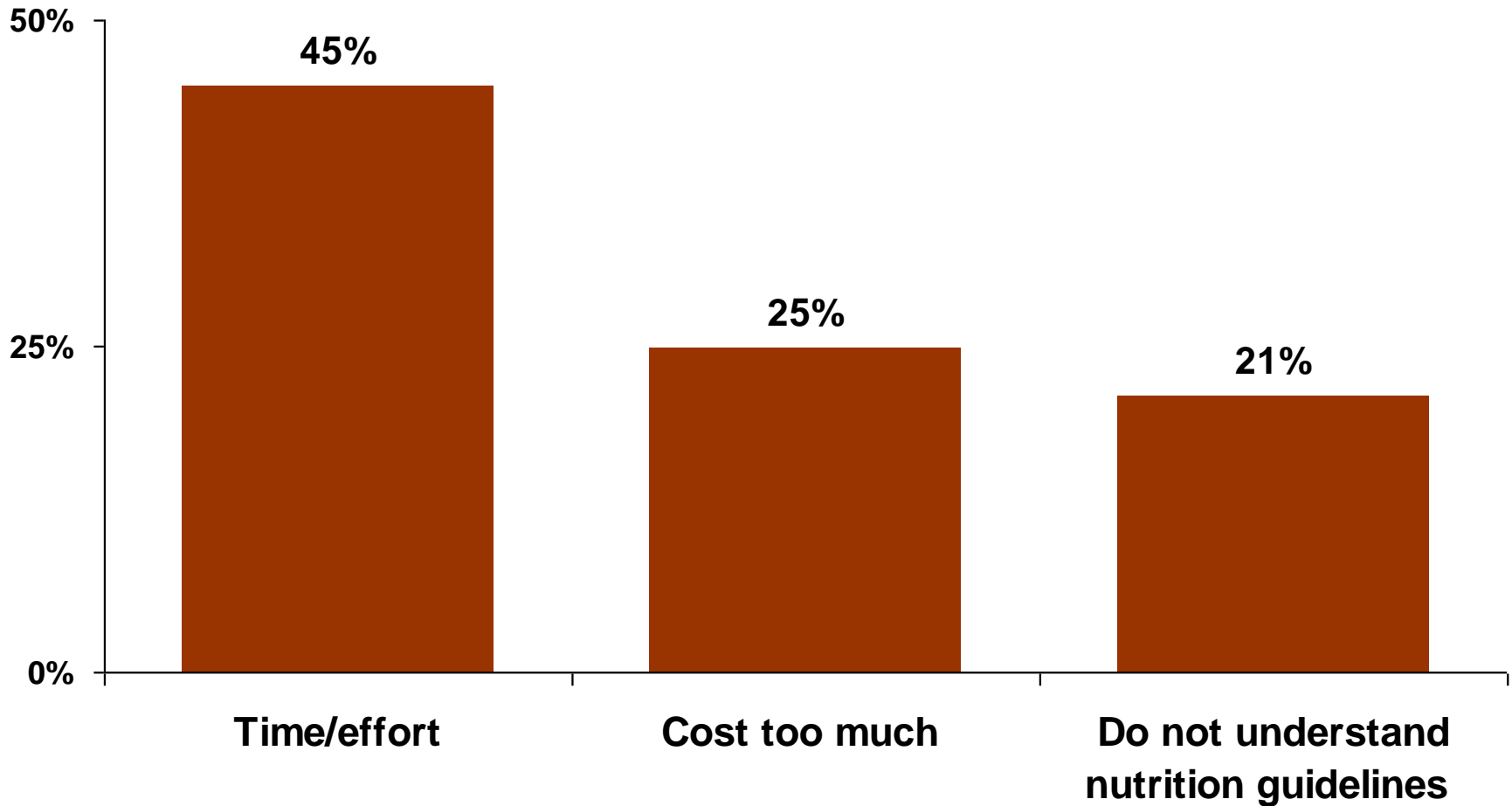
■ <100% FPL      ■ 100-199% FPL      ■ 200-299% FPL      ■ ≥300% FPL



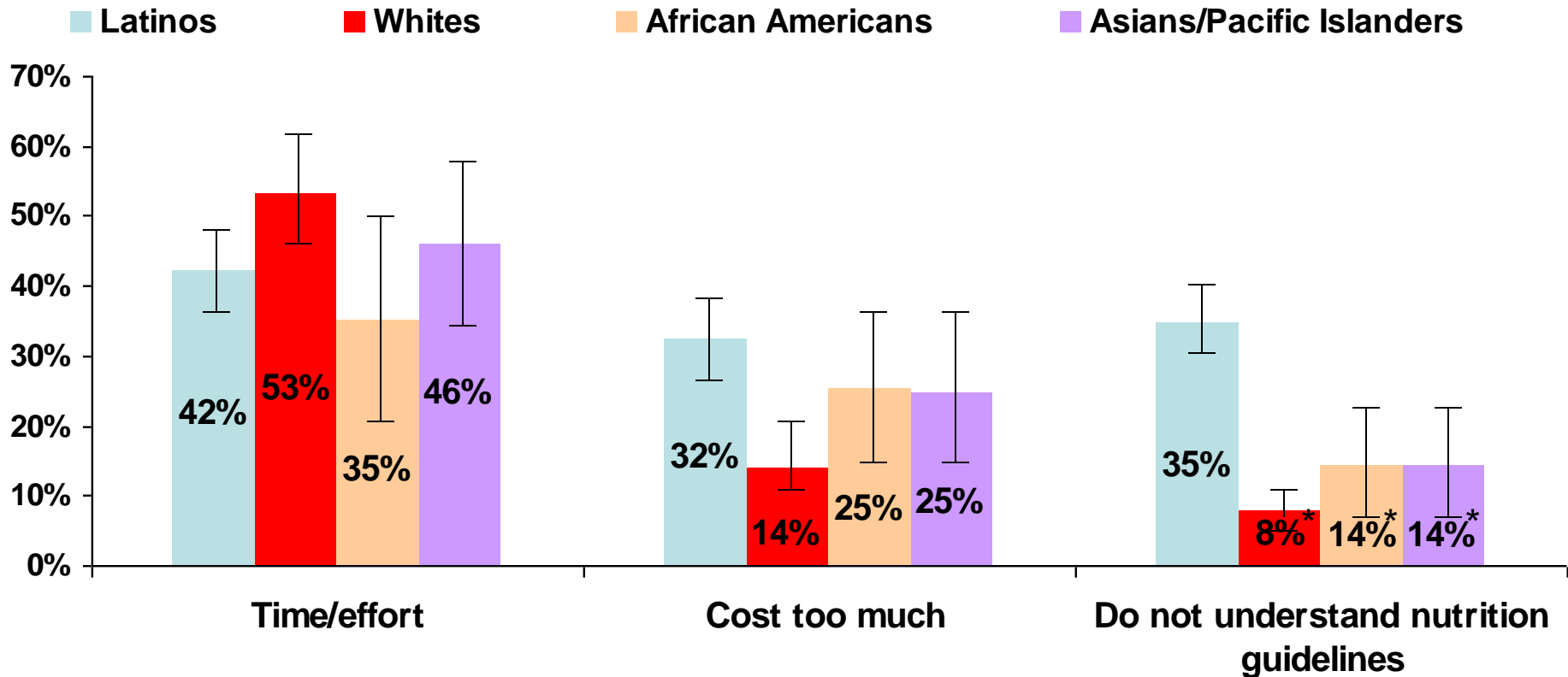
# Barriers to Eating Healthier Meals



# Barriers To Eating Healthier Meals



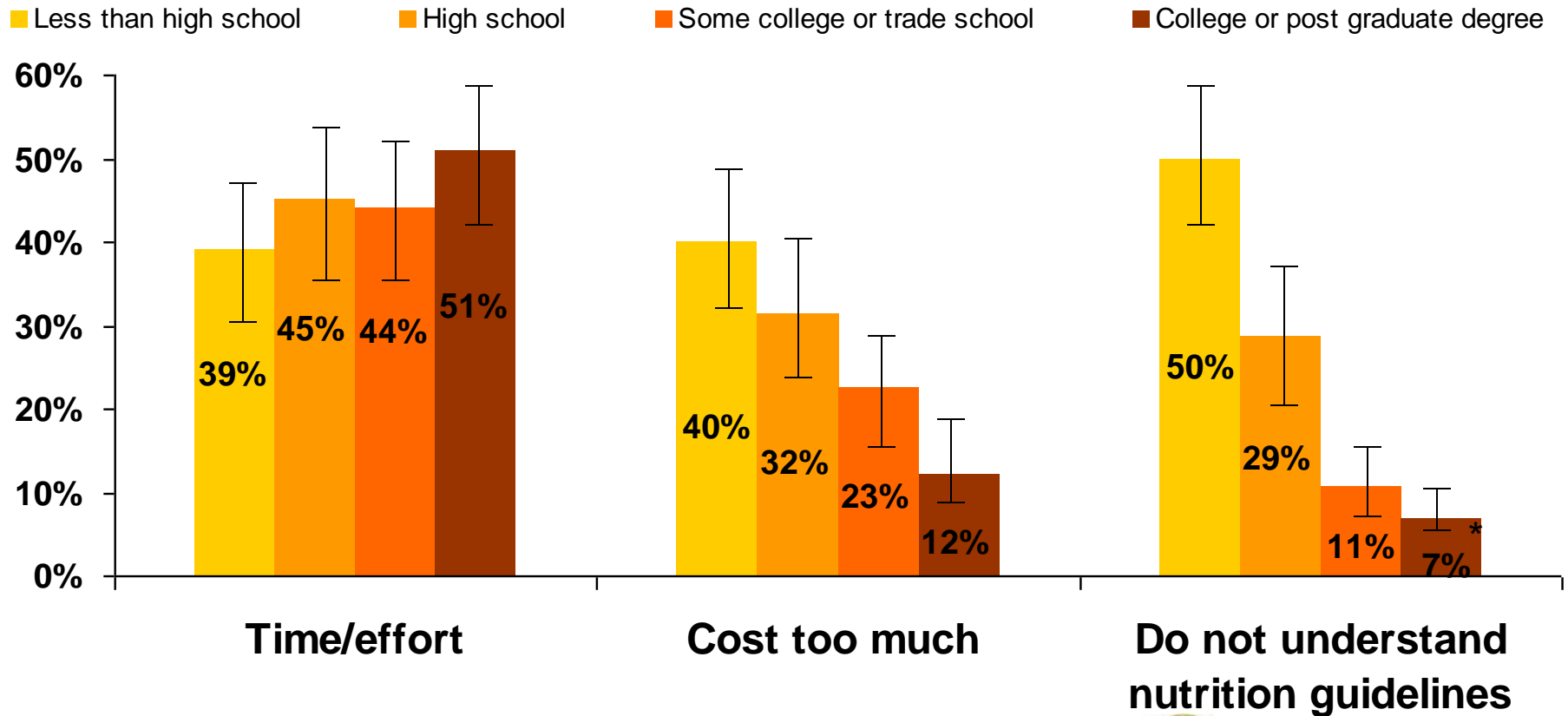
# Barriers To Eating Healthier Meals by Race/Ethnicity



\*The estimate is statistically unstable (relative standard error  $\geq 23\%$ )



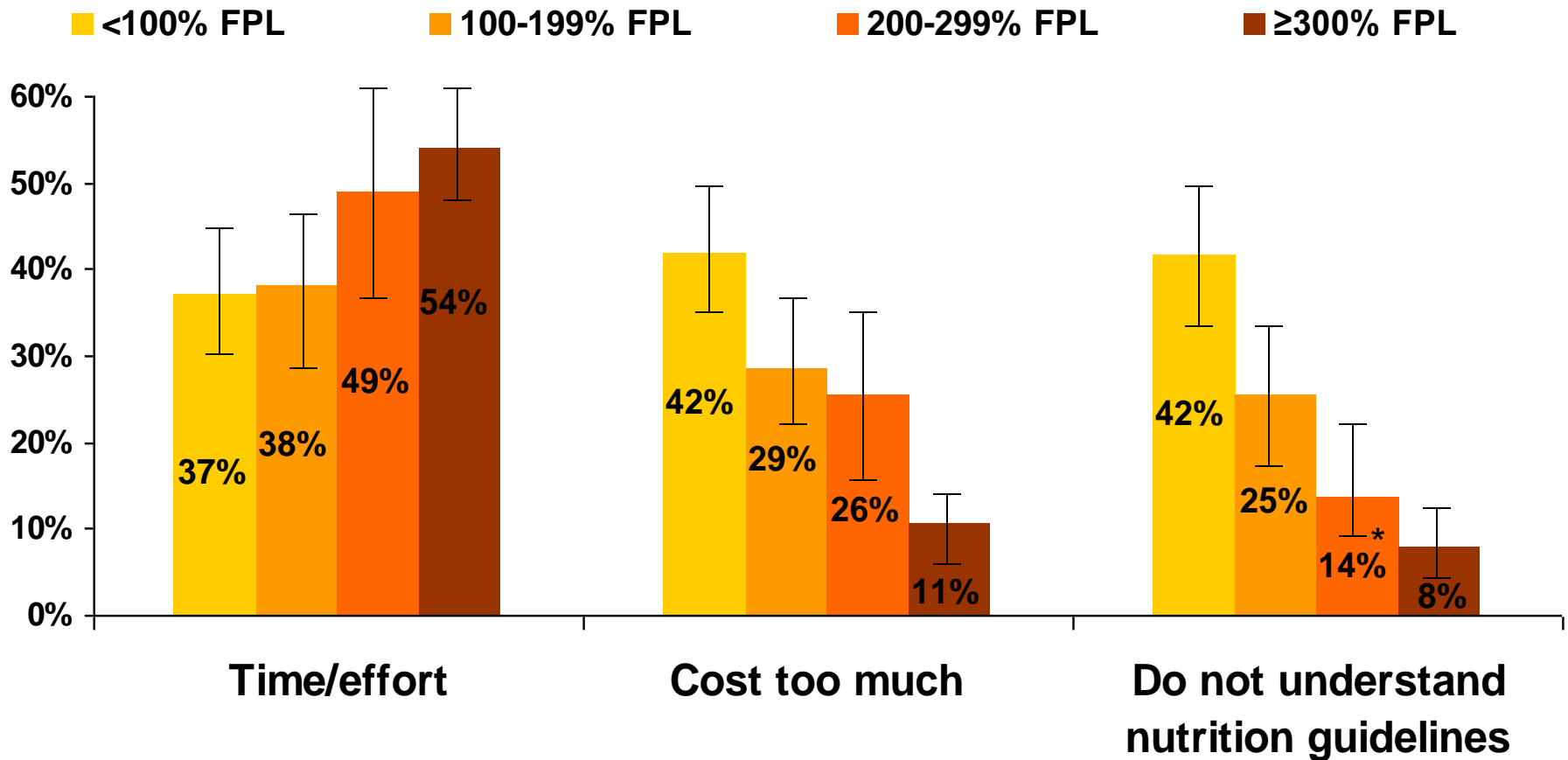
# Barriers To Eating Healthier Meals by Education



\*The estimate is statistically unstable (relative standard error  $\geq 23\%$ )



# Barriers To Eating Healthier Meals by Federal Poverty Level (FPL)



\*The estimate is statistically unstable (relative standard error >23%)



# Conclusions

- High prevalence of adults had negative diet perception in LA County
- Negative diet perception associated with:
  - **Lower** fruit/vegetable access and consumption
  - **Higher** fast food and soda consumption
  - **Higher** sedentary lifestyle
  - **Higher** prevalence of diagnosed chronic conditions

**Diet Perception aligns with Health Behavior**





# Recommendations

- Socio-economic barriers & racial disparities should to be addressed by increasing
  - Availability of high quality, low cost healthy food
  - Education regarding nutrition guidelines
  - Targeted outreach on quick and healthy meal preparation
- More research is needed on diet perception



# Limitations

- Self reported cross-sectional data
- Non-telephone and cell-phone only households not included in the sample
- Non-institutionalized population (excludes nursing homes, college dormitories, jails etc.)
- Questionnaire content limited by time constraints



# For More Info

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