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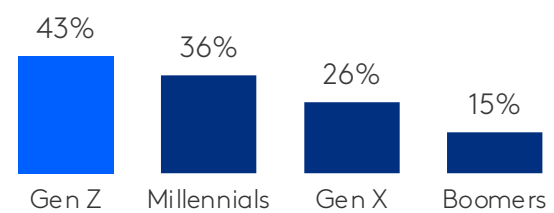
Stressed Eaters

How Gen Z's battle with stress is shaping their food decisions

Mental wellbeing remains a key concern for Gen Z

Pre-pandemic Gen Z already struggled with high rates of mental health issues, but even as COVID moves into the rearview mirror, Gen Z's concerns around their mental wellbeing remains high. As we covered in the [2022 Youth Outlook](#), there are many factors playing into Gen Z's struggle with mental health. Along with the social threats and coming-of-age challenges that typify the teen years and young adulthood, this generation is hyper-aware of broader threats in their world, from climate change to social inequities, that can easily translate into personal anxieties. As more Gen Zers gain control over their spending decisions, it's critical for companies to understand how their relationship with their mental health will create new needs in the food and beverage category, and beyond.

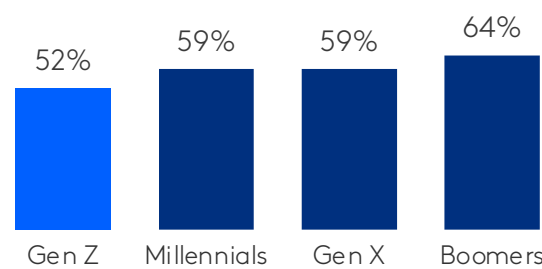
Aspect of your own wellbeing you feel most concerned about: Your mental health (vs. physical health or spiritual health)



Gen Z feels least in control of their mood

Not only are Gen Zers most concerned over their mental wellbeing, but they also feel least in control of their mood. Despite growing up at a time when mental health is approached more openly and largely seen as a core element of one's overall wellbeing, Gen Zers show there's still appetite for new solutions and tools that help them take control of their mood and mental health.

Control you have over your mood (A lot/complete control)



Only 36%

of Gen Zers who are most concerned about their mental health say they have a lot/complete control over their mood

Food is one area where Gen Z can take back control

A majority of Gen Zers (76%) believe the food they eat can impact their mood and mental health, suggesting a potential avenue where brands can help stressed Gen Zers. We've identified a segment of Gen Zers, called the Stressed Eaters, who not only feel a lack of control over their mood and are concerned about mental wellbeing, but also see food as a potential factor that can impact their mood and mental health. This bellwether segment within Gen Z is at the dynamic intersection of health, food, and mood—and they can shed light on the kinds of holistic solutions the generation as a whole will increasingly need from brands.

1 in 5 Gen Zers are Stressed Eaters



Stressed Eaters Definition:

- Generation: Gen Z
- Aspect of own wellbeing most concerned about: Mental health
- Amount of control have over your mood: Some/Not very much/No control at all
- The foods and drinks I consumer have a big effect upon my mental health and mood: Strongly agree/Agree

Stressed Eaters need opportunities for relaxation

As their name suggests, Stressed Eaters struggle to cope with the pressures in their lives. It's no surprise then that many are seeking more relaxation. But for Gen Z, relaxing doesn't necessarily mean unplugging from the world around them and doing nothing; Stressed Eaters find joy in gaming, cooking and baking, and going to the movies. Brands can leverage these interests to create appealing activations and opportunities for Stressed Eaters to decompress, even for just a bit.

Whether feel you are managing stress in life effectively: No



Would improve overall wellbeing if there was more of it in your life: Relaxation



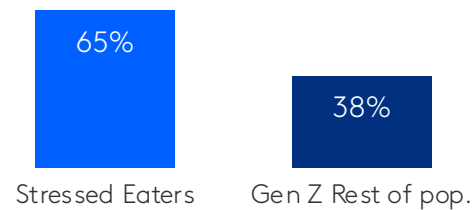
Top activities done in spare time for fun and enjoyment (among Stressed Eaters)

- #1 Play games/apps on your mobile phone
- #2 Cook/bake
- #3 Go to the movies

Stress Starts at Sunrise

It's not just when they get home from school or work that Stressed Eaters need solutions or moments to relax; many wake with an anxious mindset that then sets the tone for their day. This morning anxiety has a biological cause: during the first hour after waking, the stress hormone cortisol is higher for people experiencing anxiety. Rather than thinking about stress relief as a post-work or evening opportunity, brands should consider offering convenient solutions, whether that's through mood-lifting ingredients or activities, aimed at early dayparts to help Stressed Eaters get started on the right side of the bed.

Describes how you feel when you start your day: I am anxious about the day (Describes me completely/moderately well)



Money is a major stressor

Stressed Eaters' financial health plays an outsized role in their overall wellbeing. The adult segment of Stressed Eaters (Gen Zers ages 18+) are more worried about the cost of living and having enough money to put food on the table, compared to their 18+ peers. Even though they see a connection between their mood and what they eat, Stressed Eaters often put cost ahead of health in their food decisions. And amid soaring inflation, young consumers are increasingly trading down on non-essential goods. This price pressure means that value solutions aimed at addressing Gen Z's mental health need to double down on affordability, while premium solutions need to double down on why Gen Z can't afford not to prioritize their mental wellbeing.

Economic Anxiety: Severe/High



Biggest priority when eating meals on an average day

Sum Rank 1-3	Stressed Eaters	Gen Z. Rest of pop.
#1	Taste	Taste
#2	Cost	Health
#3	Health/Convenience	Cost

Mood to Order

New techniques, technologies and ingredients are heightening consumers' expectations that they can pro-actively affect the state of their mental health and mood.

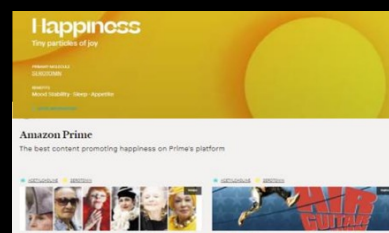
Emerging consumer trends, like Mood to Order, highlight the growing opportunity for mood-lifting solutions

Solutions tapping into Mood to Order



Perfy brain-boosting sodas

This soda alternative is designed as a healthier brain-boosting drink for all ages. The sodas are caffeine-free and feature functional ingredients thought to relieve stress such as L-theanine and Ashwaganda.



Moodrise

This mobile app curates content and experiences based on its "digital nutrition," or the desired brain chemical or mood state it helps deliver.



Toodaloo adaptogenic trail mix

Toodaloo offers trail mixes filled with adaptogens, with packaging that positions each pouch around the resulting moods they help support: from relaxation to focus to energy.

Learn more in the [2021 U.S Wellbeing Energies](#)

Stressed Eater Definition

- The foods and drinks I consume have a big effect upon my mental health and mood (top 2 on 4 pt agree)
- Aspect of wellbeing most concerned about: (Your Mental Health)
- Amount of control have over: your mood (Bottom 3 on a 5pt scale. / somewhat or less)