



CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS ON FOODSERVICE PACKAGING



2025 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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INTRODUCTION

The spotlight on single-use foodservice packaging refuses to fade, and the Foodservice Packaging Institute sought to better understand consumer perceptions around these packaging products. To achieve this goal, FPI conducted its first survey of consumers in the United States and Canada in April 2019, followed by another survey in March 2021 and again in March 2025.

Participants were asked questions about how frequently they use single-use foodservice packaging; their beliefs about the importance of performance attributes in single-use foodservice packaging; benefits and concerns they have about single-use foodservice packaging and their reusable counterparts; their behavior choices related to foodservice packaging; and environmental issues. Each question was analyzed looking for significant differences in responses across demographic groups and frequency of using single-use foodservice packaging with comparisons from the previous surveys.

To achieve a diverse sampling of the population that could be accurately extrapolated, U.S. and Canadian residents between the ages of 18 and 60+ were surveyed. The 800 respondents were balanced across income, education level, gender and region, and approximately evenly split between U.S. and Canadian residents. This sample provides a statistically representative view of the beliefs of the U.S. and Canadian populations with a 95% confidence rate with a plus/minus 5% margin of error.

The results of this survey were compiled to create FPI's third Consumer Perceptions on Foodservice Packaging. The full results are available for FPI members only. This Executive Summary contains publicly available highlights from the survey.

Please contact FPI's Natha Dempsey, ndempsey@fpi.org, with any questions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are a variety of thoughts and opinions on single-use foodservice packaging and its importance from consumers. In 2019, in an effort to better understand the general consumer's use and perception of single-use foodservice packaging, FPI commissioned a third-party entity to conduct its inaugural consumer perceptions survey. The survey was designed to find out how frequently people use single-use packaging and their perceptions and behavior choices related to food packaging. As the spotlight on single-use packaging refused to fade, and the foodservice industry irrevocably changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, FPI commissioned a follow-up survey in 2021, followed by the current survey. For each question asked, analysis was performed to identify significant differences in responses across demographics and frequency of use, as well as between the 2025 and previous surveys.

Survey results showed that 56% of adults in the U.S. and 62% of adults in Canada use single-use foodservice packaging at least once a week. This represents a slight decrease from 2021 results for U.S. respondents and a slight increase for Canadian respondents. Within U.S. respondents, survey results in 2025 and in previous surveys show that those with the highest income remain the most likely to use single-use foodservice packaging every day, and higher education appeared to correlate with higher use.

Performance attributes of single-use foodservice packaging were found to be of varying importance for different types of respondents. In both the U.S. and Canada, being leak- or spill-proof and stopping oil or grease from soaking through and staining clothes, car seats, etc. remain the most important attributes, followed closely by protection from tampering. As in previous surveys, the ability to see the food inside the packaging remains the least important performance attribute.

Respondents in both countries continue to agree on the most important benefits of single-use foodservice packaging items. The cleanliness and sanitary nature of single-use foodservice packaging was seen as the most important benefit, followed closely by the convenience of being able to take food on the go, in line with the two most important benefits in 2021. Although respondents maintain that the most concerning issue with single-use packaging is the possibility of it ending up as litter on land or in waterways, the level of concern has remained steady compared to 2021.

When asked about the benefits and concerns they see in reusable options, the environmental attributes, along with the sturdy nature of reusables, were seen as the top benefits by respondents in the U.S. and Canada, however, sturdiness was rated as the most important benefit in the U.S, just as it was in 2021. Respondents also indicated their top concern regarding reusables is that they're not clean and sanitary, which is in line with 2021 results.

Additional opinions on consumer behavior and purchasing decisions are included in the full survey available to FPI members.