

Britons Start to Eat More Healthily... But Only at the Beginning of the Week

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Britons are increasingly paying attention to the healthiness of the food we eat; however whilst willpower is strong at the start of the week we become ever more indulgent in the run up to the weekend, according to the latest research from TNS, a leading global provider of market information.

The TNS information shows that half of all takeaways consumed in Britain are eaten on a Friday or Saturday. In addition the number of pizzas we eat on a Saturday is almost double the number we eat on a Monday in the home (220 million and 118 million respectively), highlighting our changing habits as the week progresses.

The new findings show that none of the age group in Britain achieves its 5-a-day recommended portions of fruit and vegetables. Men and women above the age of 65 came closest with an average of 3.8 portions per day - they are also the age group most driven by eating for health rather than enjoyment. Children under the age of 16 eat on average just 2 portions per day, but importantly there has been a rise in the amount of fruit and vegetables eaten by children 0-16. This may be the result of media pressure on parents to protect their children's health and restrictions placed on food companies developing marketing campaigns which target children directly.

Giles Quick, Managing Director of Usage Panels at TNS, said: "It is a very positive trend that the British population is becoming more health conscious in our eating habits. However, as our society becomes increasingly cash-rich and time-poor it is unsurprising to see that enjoyment and convenience still rank very highly on the list of motivators towards our food choices."

Pub and bar food still accounts for the majority of our meals out (18 per cent), followed by Chinese (16 per cent) and fish and chips (12 per cent) as the second and third most popular choices. This reflects the trend towards eating out being seen as a treat where enjoyment is more important than the healthiness of the meal.

Giles Quick concludes: "We actually change our attitude to health on a daily basis as well as weekly - at breakfast we are increasingly careful to ensure we have a healthy start to the day. At lunchtime this gives way to practicality as we balance work and convenience. By the evening our motivations turn to reward and enjoyment becomes the key deciding factor in what we will eat. Taking this to a weekly level there is a direct decline in how healthy our meals are from Monday's breakfast through to Saturday's dinner."

About TNS

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