

A Matter Of Taste? Synovate Survey "Weighs" Food Issues

Contributed by Synovate
Tuesday, 30 June 2009
Last Updated Tuesday, 14 July 2009

You eat a huge greasy hamburger for lunch then carefully crunch on a few lettuce leaves for dinner.

You go for a run and light up that cigarette as you recover. You choose a low-fat meal and wash it down with three beers.

Strange? Not really. Perhaps not ideal behaviour... but it is surprisingly normal.

Market research firm Synovate conducted a global 'Healthy Living' survey on health, weight control and attitudes to food and exercise, and discovered that, when it comes to food and weight, people are not always logical.

The pizza paradox

Tucking into tacos, nibbling on nuggets and chowing down on chips? A third of Canadian respondents surveyed say they like fast food too much to give it up.

But many make themselves feel better by paying for their actions in other ways, with 30% saying they exercise in order to compensate for other bad habits.

Rob Myers, Managing Director of Canada, says

"We all want to stay healthy but when it comes to actions it's often very hard for people to resist culinary temptation".

Indeed, the attitudinal questions posed by the survey were the clincher in realizing just how mixed up people can be about food.

An overall 56% of Canadians agreed that they eat what they want, when they want. Yet 80% also say watch their food carefully and strive to be healthy.

"It all comes back to whether we think of food as pleasure or food as fuel... and it seems that most people vacillate between the two," said Myers.

Tackling the tub

Your jeans must have shrunk in the dryer, right? This moment happens to most of us from time to time (and some of us almost daily), so what strategies do Canadians use to battle their bulges?

The top responses across the nation were reduce food intake (53%), increase physical activity (50%), change types of food eaten (41%), and avoid sugar (26%).

On the other hand, consuming low-fat food products was the most popular method (40%) of Canadian used or are using to maintaining or reduce weight.

Getting a good sweat with home exercise equipment (31%) and a gym membership (21%) are other top approaches people use to stay fit.

The Bridget Jones effect

When Renée Zellweger, an American actress, signed on to play the very British Bridget Jones in the 2001 movie, the producers may have been making more of a statement than they realized... it turns out the two groups who are most likely to link food to mood, emotionally eating their way through life, are American and British women.

An overall 35% of respondents across in Canada 'I tend to eat junk food when I am feeling down', comprised of 44% women and 25% men.

"There is a reason Bridget Jones was and still is so popular. It perfectly captures the ongoing battle that women have with food and mood. The knee jerk reaction to bad news, or even boredom, is often a cup of tea and something sweet to wash it down. Similarly, a bad day can be made a whole lot better with a hefty glass or two of Chardonnay in the evening," says Jill Telford, CEO of Synovate UK.

The survey also showed that the Canada is more of a drinking nation with 18% of respondent's admitting to drinking alcohol on a daily or near-daily basis, comprised of 24% men and 11% women.

Among 12 markets surveyed, the Britons was the heaviest drinkers with a high 27% of which 33% men and 21% women.

Additionally, an overall 21% of Canadians say they smoke daily, comprised of 23% men and 20% women, while 24% of people globally smoke.

The weighty issue of obesity

Is obesity the Government's fault? Is it society's? Who's to blame?

Most people firmly place the responsibility for obesity with the individual. Two-thirds of all Canadians blame unhealthy food choices and another 30% say it is due to genetics / it runs in the family.

Curiosities

33% of Canadian weighted themselves whenever they remember comprised of 36% men and 31% women

One in ten Canadian women weighted themselves whenever their clothes are getting tight

77% of all respondents in Canada agree that healthy food makes them feel better, comprised of 82% women and 71 men

About the survey

This Synovate survey on healthy living was conducted online, via telephone and face-to-face in February 2009 across 10,300 respondents in twelve markets - Brazil (BR), Bulgaria (BG), Canada (CA), China (CN), India (IN), Malaysia (MY), the Netherlands (NL), Spain (SP), Sweden (SW), the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA).

A version of the study was also conducted in Australia.

For more information, visit www.synovate.com/insights/infact or contact infact@synovate.com .

Toronto - June 2009