Is Swine Flu Making Brits Healthier?

Contributed by TNS Global
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Over half of Brits are keeping fit and healthy and eating better in an effort to deal with the swine flu epidemic, indicating that the virus may yet contribute to improving the long-term health of the nation.

A new survey by TNS Omnibus reveals that 60% of people are consciously trying harder to keep fit and healthy so that their bodies can deal with the symptoms of the flu more efficiently. Â

We are also upping our intake of fruit and vegetables â€“ something the health authorities have been trying, and failing, to achieve for years.

49% of Brits are now trying to eat more fruit and veg to boost their immune system and ward off the virus, and sales of fresh fruit have increased by 11% in July, compared to the same period last year [TNS Worldpanel]. Â

A quarter (25%) of us are also taking more vitamins and health supplements now than we used to.

Parents of young children are particularly vigilant.Â A third of those with children under the age of five have bought products specifically for the preparation or prevention of swine flu, with thermometers, disinfectant hand wipes and tissues being the most popular. Â

53% of us have also chosen a â€˜flu friendâ€™ â€“ a friend or neighbour who is willing to get medication and food if necessary â even admit to stockpiling food supplies and 4% additional bottles of drinking water at home in case they are forced to stay indoors. Â

Despite these preventative measures, people are still taking pains to avoid possible contamination.

56% of us are actively avoiding people with a cough or a runny nose, 1 in 10 are trying to stay away from crowded areas and a similar number are avoiding public transport.

According to Sue Homeyard from TNS Omnibus:
â€œSwine flu is changing the way we live our lives, and although the epidemic is having devastating social and economic impacts, we may yet see some benefit in the long term.Â Brits are starting to consciously consider their health and are looking after themselves better by eating healthier food, stocking up on vitamins and exercising more.Â The government and health authorities have canvassed Brits to change their lifestyles for years, but this may be the first time we are seeing a real difference in peopleâ€™s behaviour.â€•

TNS Omnibus online study of 1015 British adults aged 16-64, conducted online from 21 to 23 July 2009

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