Healthy Snackers Looking To Nibble Their Way Into 2012

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Weâ€™ve made it a month into the 2012 resolution-seasonâ€¦and you have to wonder, who is still sticking to their New Yearâ€™s healthy eating resolutionâ€¦and who has fallen off the wellness wagon?

According to recent Mintel research, among healthy snackers, 44% say they tend to eat healthfully most of the time and 42% make it a point to snack on foods that are healthy.

At the same time, indulgence can be part of a well-rounded lifestyle, as 39% of healthy snackers say they use less-healthy nibbles as an occasional treat.

â€œEating healthy snacks can offer many benefits to consumers, such as increased energy and feeling fuller longer, so there is a big opportunity for the makers and marketers of snacks to leverage these connections to maximize health positioning,â€• says Molly Maier, senior wellness analyst at Mintel. â€œThe number of snackers who only consume healthy treats is a relatively small one, but one that shouldnâ€™t be ignored by snack-food manufacturers.â€•

The definition of â€œhealthyâ€• is very subjective, but Mintel respondents seem to have a good grasp on truly healthful foods. Fresh fruit is overwhelmingly (86%) considered healthy snacking, followed by raw vegetables (73%), and nuts/seeds (71%). However, a surprising number of people rated ice cream (12%) and cookies (9%) as healthy snacksâ€¦keep dreaming snackers!

Snacks are often an impulsive purchase, and one of convenience. As a result, people are at the mercy of the food choices most available. Nearly half (46%) of respondents say itâ€™s hard to find healthy snacks in vending machines or other on-the-go locations while 16% believe it takes more time to prepare a healthy snack than other types. â€œIncreasing accessibility and portability can help maximize usage,â€• adds Molly Maier.

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