

Healthy Snackers Looking To Nibble Their Way Into 2012

Contributed by Mintel
Friday, 03 February 2012
Last Updated Friday, 03 February 2012

Weâ€™ve made it a month into the 2012 resolution-season, and you have to wonder, who is still sticking to their New Yearâ€™ healthy eating resolution, 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.

“Eating 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,” says Molly Maier, senior wellness analyst at Mintel. “The number of snackers who only consume healthy treats is a relatively small one, but one that shouldn’t be ignored by snack-food manufacturers.”

The definition of “healthy” 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 snacks—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 it’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. “Increasing accessibility and portability can help maximize usage,” adds Molly Maier.

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Chicago, USA - 2 February 2012