Americans Are Hungry For Healthy Foods

Contributed by Mintel
Tuesday, 17 July 2012
Last Updated Tuesday, 17 July 2012

Healthy eating has come to the forefront of many minds over the past several years with help from the First Lady Michelle Obamaâ€™s Letâ€™s Move program and TV shows like The Biggest Loser, not to mention the extensive media coverage regarding the countryâ€™s growing obesity problem.

Indeed, this increased interest in healthy eating is highlighted by new research from Mintel which reveals that just over two-thirds (67%) of Americans choose healthier foods to stay well.

â€œConsumers are more aware than ever of their own nutritional deficits, and what poor eating habits can do in terms of their long-term health,â€• says John N. Frank, category manager, CPG food and drink reports at Mintel. â€œAs a result, todayâ€™s consumers are seeking out healthy food with greater urgency. However, skeptical or confused consumers arenâ€™t likely to pay a premium for healthier food, making it hard for manufacturers to justify investment in nutritional/ingredient upgrades.â€•

Some 31% of consumers choose healthy foods to lose weight and 30% do so to maintain weight. Mintelâ€™s report shows that the fact that these percentages are fairly similar across all age groups illustrates how widespread the interest in healthy eating is. This creates a growth opportunity for retailers, as they can create their own private label versions of healthier products to generate higher profits, fill a growing need of consumers and also reinforce a retailerâ€™s identity in the marketplace.

Based on Mintelâ€™s research, as age increases so does the likelihood that adults are maintaining a mostly healthy diet. Nearly half (48%) of Americans age 65+ say they pay close attention to how they eat, compared to only 32% of 18-24s. Nearly one fourth (24%) of the 65+ age group (the highest percentage of any demographic) say they do not exercise at all. This could be a principal reason for their healthier eating habits, as that is their main way of controlling their weight and health.

â€œYounger adults generally still feel invincible and have a more naturally active metabolism, making it easier to maintain their weight,â€• adds John N. Frank.

Do people really know whatâ€™s good for them? Mintel research also reveals that women seem to think so more than men. Some 67% of males think they are a good judge of healthy foods versus 76% of females. Perhaps thatâ€™s because 64% of women say they read nutritional information on products, while only 56% of men do the same. It also appears like Americans are trying to create healthier children, as 67% of women and 57% of men claim to eat healthy food more often to set a good example for their kids.

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Chicago - 16 July 2012