

National Diet and Nutrition Survey published

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A revealing insight into the nation's diet

Results from the first year of the new **National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS)** suggest that the **UK population** is eating less saturated fat, less trans fat and less added sugar than it was 10 years ago.

Saturated fat intakes in adults have dropped slightly to 12.8% of food energy, compared with 13.3% in 2000/01, and men and children are eating less added sugar.

The population's trans fat intakes have also fallen slightly and are now at 0.8% of food energy, which is well within recommended levels. And, on average, adults are eating 4.4 portions of fruit and vegetables a day with over a third of men and women now meeting the '5-a-day' guideline.

However, despite these encouraging indications, intakes of saturated fat are still above the recommended level of 11% of food energy intake, and at 12.5%, population intakes of added sugars still exceed the recommended 11%.

The research shows that the overall picture of the diet and nutrition of the UK population is broadly similar to previous surveys in the NDNS series carried out between 1992 and 2001, although there are suggestions of positive changes. Importantly though, the findings do not identify any new or emerging nutritional problems in the general population.

Other findings include:

- People are still not eating enough fibre, which is essential for healthy digestion. Current average intakes are 14g per day for adults, some way below the recommended 18g.
- Consumption of oily fish, which is the main source of beneficial omega 3 fatty acids, remains low. Both adults and children are eating well below the recommendation of one portion per week.
- Iron intakes among girls aged 11 to 18 years and women are still low in many cases – which can lead to iron deficiency and anaemia. However, overall, vitamin and mineral intakes among the population are slightly improved.

Gill Fine, Director of Consumer Choice and Dietary Health at the FSA, said: 'The results from the first year of our new NDNS rolling programme provide us with an interesting snapshot of the nation's diet, and will allow us to track emerging trends over future years. The evidence from this and from further surveys will help us and other government departments formulate policy to address the issues that have been raised.'

'It's good news that the survey suggests around a third of the population is eating five portions of fruit and veg each day and it's encouraging to see that these initial findings suggest slightly lower intakes of saturated fat and added sugars than in previous surveys. However, there is obviously a way to go before we are meeting all the Government's dietary recommendations.'

‘Good nutrition is important for health and poor diet accounts for a large percentage of premature deaths. We now need to build on the indications of positive change we have observed in this survey. By continuing our programme of campaign work and encouraging product reformulation in key areas such as saturated fat, we will hopefully observe further improvements over the next few years of the programme.’

Notes to editors

The full set of findings, and further details about the research methodology, can be found at the link below.

The NDNS is commissioned by the FSA and the Department of Health to provide robust, nationally representative data on the dietary habits and nutritional status the UK population.

The NDNS rolling programme is being carried out by a consortium of organisations led by the National Centre for Social Research, with the MRC Human Nutrition Research and Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at the Royal Free and University College London Medical School.

Fieldwork for the first year of the programme was undertaken from February 2008 to March 2009.

The NDNS rolling programme is a continuous cross-sectional survey of the food consumption, nutrient intakes and nutritional status of people aged 1.5 years and older, living in private households in the UK. It is carried out in all four countries of the UK and is designed to be representative of the UK population. The programme was commissioned in 2006 by the FSA, with a contribution to funding from the Department of Health in England.

In its previous format, the NDNS programme comprised a series of cross-sectional surveys, each covering a discrete age group. The programme was set up in 1992 and surveys of pre-school children, young people, and older people were carried out in the 1990s, with the most recent NDNS of adults aged 19 to 64 years carried out in 2000/01.

Following a review of the dietary survey programme in 2003, the FSA’s Board agreed, in principle, that future NDNS surveys should be carried out on a rolling basis to strengthen the ability to track changes in diet and nutrition over time.

The Agency’s ‘eatwell plate’ illustrates what a balanced and varied diet looks like. A healthy diet is based on starchy foods such as bread, cereals, rice and pasta, and also contains lots of fruit and vegetables, some protein-rich foods like meat, fish and lentils and some dairy foods. Foods high in saturated fat, sugar and salt should be eaten less often and the Agency advises people to check labels and pick the healthier options whenever possible.

For more information about the survey please call Sarah Newman in the FSA press office on 020 7276 8814.

For further information on the FSA’s work on nutrition and healthy eating, and advice on healthy eating can be found at the links below.

Related links

[National Diet and Nutrition Survey](#) Find out more about the survey

[More advice from our eatwell website](#)

[The eatwell plate](#)

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National Diet and Nutrition Survey



The National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS) rolling programme is a continuous cross-sectional survey of the food consumption, nutrient intakes and nutritional status of people aged 18 months and older living in private households in the UK. It covers all four countries of the UK and is designed to be representative of the UK population.

The NDNS is funded by the Agency and the Department of Health in England, and is carried out by a consortium of three organisations: the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), MRC Human Nutrition Research (HNR) and the University College London Medical School.

The report of the first year of the NDNS rolling programme (February 2008 to March 2009) can be downloaded below. This report focuses on food consumption and nutrient intakes for adults aged 19 to 64 years and for children aged 1.5 to 3 years, 4 to 10 years and 11 to 18 years. Intakes are compared with government recommendations and comparisons with findings from previous surveys are also made.

[Making comparisons with previous NDNS](#)

The previous NDNS of adults aged 19 to 64 years and young people aged 4 to 18 years used slightly different data collection methods from the new rolling programme. The results of these two surveys have been re-analysed so that they are directly comparable with results from the new survey. If you wish to compare results from the NDNS rolling programme with previous NDNS we recommend that you read Appendix K of the year 1 report and use the re-modelled data from the previous NDNS presented in chapter 5 and Appendix K.

[Previous survey reports](#)

In its previous format the NDNS programme comprised a series of cross-sectional surveys, each covering a different age group. The programme was set up in 1992 and surveys of pre-

school children, young people, and older people were carried out in the 1990s, with the most recent NDNS of adults aged 19 to 64 years carried out in 2000/01. The report of this survey is available at the link below. The reports of other surveys are available to purchase from the Stationery Office bookshops, by ordering via the link below or by calling 08706 005 522.

External links [The Food Standards Agency has no responsibility for the content of external websites](#)

[The Stationery Office](#)

Find out more

[National Diet Nutrition Survey: headline results from year 1 \(2008/2009\)](#)

The report of the first year of the NDNS rolling programme (February 2008 to March 2009) can be viewed at the links below. This report focuses on food consumption and nutrient intakes for adults aged 19 to 64 years and for children aged 18 months to 3 years, 4 to 10 years and 11 to 18 years.

National Diet Nutrition Survey: headline results from year 1 (2008/2009)

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The report of the first year of the NDNS rolling programme (February 2008 to March 2009) can be viewed at the links below. This report focuses on food consumption and nutrient intakes for adults aged 19 to 64 years and for children aged 18 months to 3 years, 4 to 10 years and 11 to 18 years.

The key findings of the survey are:

- People are eating less saturated fat, trans fat and added sugar than they were 10 years ago, when the survey was last carried out.
- Saturated fat intakes in adults have dropped slightly to 12.8% of food energy, but are still above the recommended level of 11%. Whereas, the population's trans fat intakes, having also fallen slightly, are well within recommended levels.
- People are still eating too much added sugar, currently 12.5% of food energy intake compared to the recommended 11%.
- A third of men and women are now eating the recommended '5-a-day' fruit and veg.
- People are still not eating enough fibre, which is essential for healthy digestion. On average intakes are 14g per day for adults, some way below the recommended 18g.
- Consumption of oily fish, which is the main source of omega 3 fatty acids, remains below the recommended one portion per week.
- Iron intakes among teenage girls and women are still low, which can lead to iron deficiency and anaemia. However, overall, vitamin and mineral intakes among the population are slightly improved.

Related links

[Report – NDNS Headline results from Year 1 of the Rolling Programme \(2008/2009\)](#)

 (pdf 475KB)

[Tables – NDNS Headline results from Year 1 of the Rolling Programme \(2008/2009\)](#)

 (pdf 412KB)

See also

[NDNS 0809: Appendix A – Dietary data collection and editing](#)

 (pdf 76KB)

[NDNS 0809: Appendix B – Weighting the NDNS core sample](#)

 (pdf 190KB)

[NDNS 0809: Appendix C – Participant information documents](#)

 (pdf 239KB)

[NDNS 0809: Appendix D – Interviewer \(stage 1\) documents](#)

 (pdf 553KB)

[NDNS 0809: Appendix E – Diary documents](#)

 (pdf 1MB)

[NDNS 0809: Appendix F – Self-completion questionnaires](#)

 (pdf 985KB)

[NDNS 0809: Appendix G – Interviewer \(stage 1\) documents](#)

 (pdf 168KB)

[NDNS 0809: Appendix H – Consent sheets](#)

 (pdf 53KB)

[NDNS 0809: Appendix I – Measurement Protocols](#)

 (pdf 138KB)

[NDNS 0809: Appendix J – Feedback to participants](#)

 (pdf 249KB)

[NDNS 0809: Appendix K – Conversion of previous survey data to four-day estimates](#)

 (pdf 670KB)

<http://www.food.gov.uk/science/dietarysurveys/ndnsdocuments/ndns0809year1>

[NDNS Previous Survey Reports](#)

In its previous format the NDNS programme comprised a series of cross-sectional surveys, each covering a different age group.

[National Diet and Nutrition Survey: Adults aged 19 to 64, Volume 1 2002](#)

The first volume presents the initial findings on food intake from a survey of the diet and nutrition of adults aged 19 to 64 years living in private households in Great Britain, carried out between July 2000 and June 2001.

[National Diet and Nutrition Survey: Adults aged 19 to 64, Volume 2 2003](#)

The second volume presents findings on energy and macronutrient intakes from a survey of the diet and nutrition of adults aged 19 to 64 years living in private households in Great Britain, carried out between July 2000 and June 2001.

[National Diet and Nutrition Survey: Adults aged 19 to 64, Volume 3 2003](#)

This volume presents findings on vitamin and mineral intakes and urinary analytes from a survey of the diet and nutrition of adults aged 19 to 64 years living in private households in Great Britain, carried out between July 2000 and June 2001.

[National Diet and Nutrition Survey: Adults aged 19 to 64, Volume 4 2004](#)

The fourth volume presents findings on the nutritional status, physical measurements and physical activity levels from a survey of the diet and nutrition of adults aged 19-64 years living in private households in Great Britain, carried out between July 2000 and June 2001.

[National Diet and Nutrition Survey: Adults aged 19 to 64, Volume 5 2004](#)

This volume, the fifth and final in the series, summarises the key findings from the first four volumes, and covers food consumption, nutrient intake, nutritional status, obesity, blood pressure and physical activity.

[National Diet and Nutrition Survey: Young people aged 4 to 18 years: Revised consumption data for some food groups](#)

Since publication of the above report in June 2000, an error has come to light with the methodology used for deriving consumption data for certain food groups.

[Re-estimate of trans fat intake in adults](#)

As part of the Agency's review of the evidence of the health impacts of trans fats, a new estimate of trans fat intake was made in November 2007 using food consumption data from the 2000/01 National Diet and Nutrition Survey of adults aged 19-64 years and information provided by the food industry on current levels of trans fats in processed food categories.

[Technical report - a\) Background, purpose and research design](#)

The National Diet and Nutrition Survey programme is a joint initiative between the Food Standards Agency and the Department of Health (DH).

[Technical report - b\) Response to the survey and characteristics of the interviewed sample](#)

This chapter gives details of response to each of the main components of the survey and describes the main characteristics of the responding sample (those who completed the dietary interview) and the diary sample (those who completed a full seven-day dietary record).

[Technical report - c\) Appendices](#)

Appendices to the 2002 National Diet and Nutrition Survey

The barriers between us and healthy eating

By Sue Davies, Chief Policy Adviser, Which?

Wednesday, 10 February 2010

The Food Standards Agency's National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS) published yesterday shows that we're eating less salt, saturated fat and sugar and more people are eating their five a day, but there is a lot to be done before most people meet dietary goals.

Rates of obesity and other diet-related diseases had prompted an unprecedented focus on promoting healthier eating. Whereas once it was all about education, it is recognised that government and industry also have important roles helping us to make healthier choices – from changing product recipes to simplified nutrition labelling. The NDNS results partly reflect this effort, but also reinforce that this will be a long haul. A multitude of actions are under way, but now need to go further and faster.

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One area of success has been in reformulating products. The FSA has worked with manufacturers to reduce salt and is now looking at saturated fat and sugar. Action has taken place across many sectors, but the fact that many people would be surprised by how much salt was in their cereal or ready meal in the first place highlights the importance of information. If people don't know what's going on their plates and into their mouths, how can they follow a balanced diet? Many of us know little about what's in our food so rely on producers to be transparent on front of pack and responsible in their use of health and nutrition claims, not exploiting our naivety.

But front of pack nutrition labelling is one area where the FSA still meets resistance. Many companies have adopted the FSA's recommended scheme; others have persisted with a different approach. A recent FSA evaluation found that the best model combines % guideline daily amounts, traffic light colours and 'high', 'medium' and 'low' descriptors. All manufacturers and retailers now need to take a responsible, evidence-based approach and use this single scheme.

But we don't just get our food from supermarkets. People spend almost a third of their food budget on eating out so more information is needed in restaurants. Last year, the FSA secured the commitment of some of the UK's leading eateries to display calorie information on their menus. This now needs to be rolled out more broadly. Some places where we eat out are particularly key and school meals have rightly received a lot of focus. It is now important to focus more on food provided in other important institutions, most notably, and ironically, hospitals.

Food promotions also need more attention. Government messages about healthy eating must not be watered down or undermined by heavy, sophisticated promotion of less healthy foods, whether in the form of price promotions aimed at adults or creative techniques targeting children through various media encouraging a desire for precisely those foods they should be eating in moderation.

Many UK initiatives have been world leading but will take time to translate into real change, healthier diets and longer lives. The momentum has to be maintained and there are still many new areas that need to be addressed. Only then will it be easy for consumers to opt for healthier, rather than less healthy choices.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/the-barriers-between-us-and-healthy-eating-1895027.html>