

HFMA Health of the Nation Survey 2016

Summary of findings

The Survey:

This research was conducted by One Poll on behalf of the Health Food Manufacturers' Association (HFMA) of 10,000 adults in the UK during 28th January and 8th February 2016. The survey covered a comprehensive gender, geographical and adult age representation.

Trends in how the population considers itself in terms of general health

- Over 1 in 10 (10.47%) of the population would rate themselves as unhealthy, however the majority of people (55.33%) consider themselves to be 'quite healthy'. People's perception of their own health gets lower as they get older.
- Over half of respondents (54.19%) say they don't get all the vitamins and minerals they need through their daily diet
- Almost 2 in 5 (39.43%) people consider those from the South of the UK to be healthier than those from the North, whereas only 6% (6.17%) see the North as healthier
- However Scotland had the highest percentage of people that considered themselves to be 'very healthy' with 13% (12.53%)
- Over one quarter (27.62%) of people spend no money on keeping healthy each week, but the biggest spender age category is the 25-34 age bracket, with the average 25-34 year old spending £9.28 on health and those aged 51+ spending an average of just £5.81 on their health
- Almost 80% (78.23%) of people see having a happy family life as one of the most important factors to their current lifestyle.
- Second most popular, half of people said having a regular healthy diet was one of the most important. The survey shows that it is more important to women to have a regular, healthy diet with 49% (49.11%) of men opting for it, in comparison to the 60% (60.11%) of women
- One quarter (24.09%) of people consider their weekly diet to be 'slightly unhealthy', however the majority at 35% (35.35%) see themselves as 'slightly healthy'
- Almost two fifths (38.73%) of people consider themselves to be healthier than their parents were at their age, and more than half (53.62%) of people consider their children to be healthier than they were as a child.

Pregnancy Nutrition

- 77% (76.7%) of people are aware of the need for pregnant women to take a supplement containing folic acid each day
- Yet only half (50.12%) of those who felt they were likely to become pregnant said they would take
- folic acid supplement

- 64% (63.8%) of parents would not consider giving supplements to their children, however almost half (47.36%) of those asked were given vitamins or supplements when they were children
- Younger parents are more likely to give their children supplements, with 34% (33.83%) of the 18-24 age bracket saying they would, in comparison to 29% (28.62%) of 25-34 year olds and 23% (23.24%) of 35-50 year olds.

Gender attitudes towards nutrition

- Over one quarter (26.66%) of people are unaware as to whether they get the right amount of vitamins and minerals through their diet
- Women are more likely (45.82%) to have bought vitamins or minerals for their own use in the last three months than men (35.92%)
- Men are less likely to notice vitamin D deficiency symptoms than women as 29% (28.65%) of men would notice tiredness as one, compared to 41% (40.52%) of women
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General supplement knowledge

- 45% (45.32%) of those that take supplements take them five times or more per week
- Multivitamins are the most commonly taken supplement, with almost 50% (46.28%) of supplement-takers taking them regularly. Fish oil and vitamin C are next, with 30% (29.61%) and 27% (27.45%) of people taking them regularly
- 67% (67.38%) of people take supplements for general health and wellbeing compared to just 17% (17.18%) that take them for a vitamin deficiency
- The percentage of those that take supplements due to age has decreased over the years
- Almost 40% (39.51%) of people don't know which groups of people the government advises to take vitamin D supplements and more than 30% couldn't recognise any potential deficiency symptoms.
- Awareness of the causes of vitamin D deficiency seems to have increased since the 2014 HOTN survey as the number of respondents including being housebound for long periods of time has increased from 26% (26.18%) to 31% (31.14%). The number of people recognising tiredness as a symptom has also increased from 32% (31.69%) to 36% (36.44%)
- One quarter (24.87%) of people say they feel run down if they don't get enough vitamins and minerals in their diet
- 20% (19.3%) of people buy fruit juices and smoothies to try and up their vitamin intake

General questions on supplementation

- 59% (59.34) of the adult population, around 38 million, now take food supplements, a 4% rise over the last two years
- More than half (53.14%) of people buy their supplements from their local supermarket, one quarter (26.72%) buy them from their local chemist or pharmacy, one fifth (21.95%) opt for their local health food store, and 17% (16.6%) go online

- When choosing health supplements or products, one third (30.04%) of people get the majority of their information online, and one quarter (26.65%) get it from product packs or boxes.
- Advertising in magazines and newspapers was considered to be the least likely place to get information from, with only 6% (6.43%) of people saying they do so
- Since the HOTN survey in 2014, less people look to advertising and doctors for information and more people look to product packs and boxes and online.
- Only 14% (13.85%) of people believe that vitamins and supplements are well researched with strong science
- Only 16% (16.14%) of people think that the industry is well regulated and safe
- 22% of people believe that vitamins and supplements truly work
- Just over half (55.97%) of consumers find the information on vitamin packs helpful
- 1 in 5 (21.82%) people don't find it easy to find and research the right information on vitamins and supplements that they want to buy