

# CANADIANS AND EATING: THE CHOICES THEY MAKE

*Healthy Eating, Food Health Claims, Changes to Diet and  
What's for Dinner – Canadians Get Cooking with Supper  
Options during a Typical Week*

*Eating More Vegetables and Fruits Biggest Diet Change*



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## CANADIANS AND EATING: THE CHOICES THEY MAKE

### *Healthy Eating, Food Health Claims, Changes to Diet and What's for Dinner – Canadians Get Cooking with Supper Options during a Typical Week*

#### *Eating More Vegetables and Fruits Biggest Diet Change*

**Toronto, ONTARIO** - According to an Ipsos-Reid/CTV/Globe and Mail poll released today, four in ten (41%) Canadians claim to “eat healthy all or most of the time”. This number compares to the one-quarter (23%) who do not care what they eat and say that they “eat whatever I feel like eating”. A further one-third (36%) can be described as “being careful but who like to indulge on occasion”.

- Older Canadians (55%) and women (44% vs. 38% for men) are more likely to say they eat healthy.
- Younger Canadians (31%) and men (27% vs. 18% for women) are more likely to eat whatever they feel like eating.
- Residents of Quebec (47%) are more likely than those in any other region to say they are careful, but like to indulge on occasion. This compares to residents of British Columbia (36%), followed by those in Ontario (32%), the Atlantic Provinces (31%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (30%). Albertans (25%) are least likely to describe their eating habits this way.



## ***Four-in-ten (43%) would purchase a Product with a Health Claim on Label***

Four-in-ten (43%) Canadians report that they would be likely to purchase a product with a health claim such as “A diet low in fat may reduce the risk of heart disease . . .this food is low in fat”. One-third (32%) would purchase a product with a nutrient content claim like ‘fat free’, while one-in-five (22%) would purchase a product with no claim at all.

- Half of Quebecers (51%) and residents of the Atlantic Provinces (49%) are more likely to prefer a product with a diet-related health claim than those in other regions. Residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (29%) are least likely.
- Those with less than high school (51%) and a high school (48%) education are most likely to prefer a product with a diet-related health claim. Those with post secondary (40%) or a university education (42%) are less likely.

## ***Three-quarters (74%) of Canadians Have Made Changes to their Diet in the Last Year***

Three-quarters (74%) of Canadians report having made changes to their diet over the past year.

- This trend is stronger among women (81%) than among men (68%).
- Residents of British Columbia (79%), and Atlantic Canada (78%) are the most likely to have instituted a change in their diet over the last year. Followed by those in Ontario (74%), Quebec (73%), Alberta (72%), and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (69%).



## ***Vegetables (24%) and Fruits (17%) are the Top Additions to Canadian Diets***

The lessons that parents have always taught about eating your veggies and fruit appear to be taking stock with some Canadians more than others. Eating more vegetables (24%) and fruit (17%) are the top additions to diets.

- Vegetables are more popular additions for women (28%) than for men (19%)
- Younger Canadians (28%) are also more likely to be eating more vegetables than their counterparts in middle age (21%) or older (21%) groups

Other items added to their diets include fibre or whole grains (9%) and dairy products or calcium-rich foods (5%).

## ***While Cutting Fat (20%) and Reducing Sweets (18%) are the Items Most Targeted for Reduction***

One-in-five (20%) Canadians has attempted to limit or remove fat from their diet and 18 percent have targeted sweets for reduction in their diets.

- Older Canadians (29%) are more likely to target fat in their diet than younger (15%) and middle aged (17%) Canadians.
- Women (21%) more than men (15%) have cut back on sweets this year.

Other items limited or removed from diets include red meat (11%); and salt/salty snacks (7%).



## ***Most Canadians still Prepare Some Meals from Scratch (80%) or Partially from Scratch (61%)***

Control over what food Canadians include in their diet is apparent in their preparation of meals. When asked to describe their past seven dinners/suppers, eight-in-ten (80%) Canadians report that some of their meals were prepared entirely from scratch, while six-in-ten (61%) report that some were prepared partially from scratch and partially from ready-made ingredients.

- Older (86%) and middle aged (83%) Canadians are more likely than younger (71%) Canadians to have prepared some meals from scratch.
- Canadians from households with incomes over \$30,000 (82%) are more likely than those from households with incomes below \$30,000 (74%) to have prepared some of their meals from scratch.

Eating at restaurants is still popular with Canadians. Four in ten (44%) report eating at least one of their last seven dinners/suppers at a restaurant, while one-third (35%) report having a take-out or delivery from a restaurant. This trend appears stronger among younger and more affluent Canadians.

- Younger (53%) Canadians are more likely than their middle aged (38%) or older (43%) counterparts to have eating in a restaurant.
- This trend repeats itself regarding take-out/delivery meals, with younger (50%) Canadians being more likely than middle aged (35%) or older (17%) Canadians to have eaten take-out over there last seven dinners/suppers.



- Canadians from the highest income households (52%) report eating in restaurants more, than those in middle (42%) or lower (38%) income households.
- Those with children in the household (42%) are more likely, than those without children (31%) to have had take-out/delivery meals.

At the bottom of the list, three in ten Canadians report eating ready-made food from the grocery store (29%) or packaged food that requires fresh ingredients (29%). One in five (21%) report to having frozen entrees.

*These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/Globe and Mail/CTV poll conducted between September 25<sup>th</sup> and September 27<sup>th</sup>. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 1,000 adult Canadians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 1996 Census data.*

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