

CANADIANS ON HEALTHY EATING

*Nine In Ten Canadians Say They Try To Eat Healthfully, But
Want To Do Better*



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CANADIANS ON HEALTHY EATING

Nine In Ten Canadians Say They Try To Eat Healthfully, But Want To Do Better

Toronto, ON – According to a new Ipsos-Reid survey conducted on behalf of President's Choice, 87% of Canadians agree that they are "trying to eat healthfully but still want to do better," with half (49%) who "strongly agree" with this statement. And when it comes to eating healthfully, eight in ten (78%) Canadians would prefer to make lifestyle changes than to go on a quick-fix diet.

The perceived difficulty of healthy eating and lack of time may be some of the reasons why Canadians are not eating as healthfully as they'd like. Half (51%) of Canadians agree that "it's important to make healthy food choices, but find it difficult to do so" and 41% find it hard to include healthier food options on a daily basis because their life is so hectic.

Confusion about what is and what is not a better choice and about nutrition labels may also hinder healthier eating. Six in ten (61%) Canadians agree that "there are so many different things that you are supposed to look out for when buying foods...that it is impossible for an ordinary person to figure out what the right choice is," with one-third (34%) who "strongly agree." Moreover, 40% of Canadians disagree that "reading nutrition labels on food packages is a quick and easy thing to do." In fact, 83% of Canadians agree that "it would be very helpful if food and beverage packages clearly distinguished between regular and healthier options," with half (52%) who "strongly agree." However, the labels would have to come from a reputable source as 78% of Canadians agree with the following statement:

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“these days, lots of food and beverage manufacturers claim their products are healthier but I don’t believe they really are.”

Perceived cost of healthier food and beverage options is another issue that may prevent Canadians from eating more healthfully. Six in ten (61%) disagree that “healthier food options cost the same as regular ones,” with one-third (34%) who “strongly disagree.”

And what about taste? Half (49%) of Canadians say they and their family “would eat more healthfully if the nutritious options tasted better” and 61% say they’d “like to eat healthier but they don’t want to give up eating their favourite foods.”

Respondents were also asked which of a series of eight features in foods they look for when shopping for groceries: Less fat, less sugar, more fibre, less calories, no hydrogenated oils, less sodium or salt, less carbs, and more soy protein. Of these eight healthier options asked about, a majority looks for six. Products with “less fat” are most sought after (76%) followed by products with “less sugar” (66%), products with “more fibre” (62%), and products with “less calories” (56%), “no hydrogenated oils” (55%) and “less sodium or salt” (53%). A substantial minority (40%) of Canadians look for products with “less carbs” when grocery shopping and one-quarter (26%) look for products with “more soy protein.”

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/President’s Choice poll conducted from January 4th to January 6th, 2005. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1000 adult Canadians was interviewed by telephone. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 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 weighted to ensure the sample’s regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 2001 Census data.

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Nine In Ten Canadians Say They Try To Eat Healthfully, But Want To Do Better

Nine in ten (87%) Canadians agree (49% “strongly”, 37% “somewhat”) that they are “trying to eat healthfully but still want to do better.” One in seven (13%) disagree (5% “strongly”, 7% “somewhat”) with this statement and 1% doesn’t know.

- There are no statistically significant demographic findings with respect to this question.

Most Would Prefer Lifestyle Changes Over A Quick-Fix Diet

Eight in ten (78%) Canadians disagree (58% “strongly”, 20% “somewhat”) with the following statement: “When it comes to eating healthfully, I would prefer to go on a quick-fix diet than to make lifestyle changes.” Two in ten (20%) agree (8% “strongly”, 12% “somewhat”) with the statement and 2% “don’t know.”

- Residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (88%) are most likely to disagree with the statement, closely followed by residents of Quebec (84%), British Columbia (80%), Alberta (80%), and Atlantic Canada (79%), while residents of Ontario (72%) are less likely to disagree.
- Women are more likely than men to disagree with the statement (83% vs. 73%).
- Canadians with a university education are more likely than others to disagree with the statement (84% vs. 76%).

Perceived Difficulty Of Healthy Eating And Lack Of Time

Half (51%) of Canadians agree (22% “strongly”, 29% “somewhat”) with the following statement: “I know it’s important to make healthy food choices, but I find it difficult to do so.” The other half (48%) disagree (26% “strongly”, 26% “somewhat”) with the statement.

- Residents of Atlantic Canada (66%) and Quebec (59%) are most likely to agree, followed by residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (51%) and Alberta (51%), while residents of British Columbia (43%) and Ontario (47%) are less likely to agree.
- Canadians with less than a university degree are more likely than those with a university degree to agree with the statement (56% vs. 43%).
- Canadians with an annual household income of less than \$30,000 are more likely than others to agree with the statement (65% vs. 48%).

Four in ten (41%) Canadians agree (18% “strongly”, 23% “somewhat”) that their “life is so hectic they find it hard to include healthier food options on a daily basis.” The remaining six in ten (58%) Canadians disagree (36% “strongly”, 22% “somewhat”) with the statement.

- Atlantic Canadians (60%) are more likely than others to agree with the statement: 31% of residents of British Columbia agree, 37% of Albertans agree, 40% of Quebecers agree, 41% of residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba agree, and 43% of Ontarians agree.
- The propensity to agree decreases with age: 52% of Canadians 18-34 years of age agree, 42% of Canadians 35-54 years of age agree, and 30% of Canadians 55 and older agree.



- Men are more likely to agree with the statement than women (44% vs. 38%).
- Canadians with an annual household income of less than \$30,000 are more likely than others to agree with the statement (50% vs. 40%).

Confusion About What Is And What Is Not The Right Choice And About Nutrition Labels

Six in ten (61%) Canadians agree (34% “strongly”, 27% “somewhat”) that “there are so many different things that you are supposed to look out for when buying foods, like fat content, sugar, calories, fibre, and so on, that it is impossible for an ordinary person to figure out what the right choice is.” The remaining 39% of Canadians disagree (20% “strongly”, 19% “somewhat”) with this statement.

- Atlantic Canadians (74%) are most likely to agree with the statement, followed by residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (68%), Ontario (61%), Quebec (59%), Alberta (59%), and finally British Columbia (55%).
- Canadians with less than a university degree are more likely than those with a university degree to agree with the statement (67% vs. 47%).
- The propensity to agree decreases with level of annual household income: 72% of Canadians with an annual household income of less than \$30,000 agree, 63% of those with an income of \$30,000-\$59,999 agree, and 53% of Canadians with an annual household income of \$60,000 or greater agree with the statement.



Four in ten (40%) Canadians disagree (20% “strongly”, 20% “somewhat”) that they “find reading nutrition labels on food packages a quick and easy thing to do.” Six in ten (59%) Canadians agree (29% “strongly”, 30% “somewhat”) with the statement and 1% doesn’t know.

- Albertans (68%) and Ontarians (67%) are most likely to agree with the statement, followed by residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (58%), Atlantic Canada (57%), and British Columbia (56%), while Quebecers (45%) are least likely to agree.
- Canadians 18-34 years of age are more likely than their elders to agree with this statement (69% vs. 54%).

Eight in ten (83%) Canadians agree (52% “strongly”, 32% “somewhat”) that “it would be very helpful if food and beverage packages clearly distinguished between regular and healthier options.” One in seven (15%) disagree (6% “strongly”, 9% “somewhat”) with this statement and 1% doesn’t know.

- There are no statistically significant demographic findings with respect to this question.



Eight in ten (78%) Canadians agree (37% “strongly”, 41% “somewhat”) with the following statement: “these days, lots of food and beverage manufacturers claim their products are healthier but I don’t believe they really are.” Two in ten (21%) Canadians disagree (7% “strongly”, 14% “somewhat”) with this statement and 1% doesn’t know.

- Atlantic Canadians (88%), residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba, (87%), Albertans (87%), and residents of British Columbia (86%) are more likely than Quebecers (70%) and Ontarians (74%) to agree with the statement.
- Canadians 18-54 years of age are slightly more likely than their elders to agree with this statement (80% vs. 74%).

Perceived Cost Of Healthier Food And Beverage Options

Six in ten (61%) disagree (34% “strongly”, 27% “somewhat”) that “healthier food options cost the same as regular ones.” Approximately four in ten (37%) agree (17% “strongly”, 20% “somewhat”) with the statement and 2% “don’t know.”

- Ontarians (43%) are most likely to agree with the statement, followed by residents of Alberta (40%), British Columbia (37%), Atlantic Canada (33%), Quebec (30%), and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (29%).
- The propensity to agree increases with age: 30% of Canadians 18-34 years of age agree, 36% of Canadians 35-54 years of age agree, and 44% of Canadians 55 and older agree.
- Men are more likely than women to agree with the statement (40% vs. 34%).



And What About Taste?

Half (49%) of Canadians agree (24% “strongly”, 25% “somewhat”) that they and their family “would eat more healthfully if the nutritious options tasted better,” while half (50%) disagree (24% “strongly”, 26% “somewhat”). The remaining 1% doesn’t know.

- Residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (57%), Ontario (54%), and Atlantic Canada (54%) are most likely to agree with the statement, while residents of British Columbia (43%), Quebec (44%), and Alberta (45%) are the least likely to agree.
- Men are more likely than women to agree with the statement (57% vs. 43%).
- The propensity to agree decreases with level of annual household income: 57% of Canadians with an annual household income of less than \$30,000 agree, 51% of those with an income of \$30,000-\$59,999 agree, and 45% of Canadians with an annual household income of \$60,000 or greater agree with the statement.

Six in ten (61%) Canadians agree (27% “strongly”, 34% “somewhat”) that they would “like to eat healthier but they don’t want to give up eating their favourite foods.” Four in ten (39%) disagree (18% “strongly”, 21% “somewhat”) with the statement and 1% doesn’t know.

- Atlantic Canadians (71%) are most likely to agree with the statement, followed by residents of Ontario (64%), British Columbia (60%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba, (59%), and Quebec (58%). Albertans (49%) are least likely to agree.
- The propensity to agree nominally decreases with age: 65% of Canadians 18-34 years of age agree, 61% of Canadians 35-54 years of age agree, and 56% of Canadians 55 and older agree.

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- Men are more likely than women to agree with the statement (64% vs. 57%).

What Features In Foods Do Canadians Look For When Shopping For Groceries?

Respondents were also asked which of a series of eight features in foods they look for when shopping for groceries: Less fat, less sugar, more fibre, less calories, no hydrogenated oils, less sodium or salt, less carbs, and more soy protein.

Three-quarters (76%) of Canadians look for products with “less fat” when grocery shopping.

- Quebecers (83%) are most likely to look for products with “less fat,” followed by residents of British Columbia (77%), Alberta (76%), Atlantic Canada (74%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (72%), and Ontario (72%).
- The propensity to look for products with “less fat” increases with age: 65% of Canadians 18-34 years of age look for products with “less fat,” 77% of Canadians 35-54 years of age look for products with “less fat,” and 86% of Canadians 55 and older look for products with “less fat.”
- Women are more likely than men to look for products with “less fat” (81% vs. 70%).

Two-thirds (66%) of Canadians look for products with “less sugar” when grocery shopping.

- Quebecers (74%) are most likely to look for products with “less sugar” followed by residents of Alberta (69%), and British Columbia (68%). Atlantic Canadians (59%), Ontarians (61%), and residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (62%) are less likely do so.



- The propensity to look for products with “less sugar” increases with age: 53% of Canadians 18-34 years of age look for products with “less sugar,” 69% of Canadians 35-54 years of age look for products with “less sugar,” and 76% of Canadians 55 and older look for products with “less sugar.”
- Women are more likely than men to look for products with “less sugar” (74% vs. 57%).

Six in ten (62%) Canadians look for products with “more fibre” when grocery shopping.

- The propensity to look for products with “more fibre” increases with age: 45% of Canadians 18-34 years of age look for products with “more fibre,” 65% of Canadians 35-54 years of age look for products with “more fibre,” and 77% of Canadians 55 and older look for products with “more fibre.”
- Women are more likely than men to look for products with “more fibre” (67% vs. 57%).

More than half (56%) of Canadians look for products with “less calories” when grocery shopping.

- Canadians 55 years of age or older are more likely than those 18-54 years of age to look for products with “less calories” when grocery shopping (66% vs. 52%).
- Women are more likely than men to look for products with “less calories” (63% vs. 48%).



- Canadians with an annual household income less than \$30,000 are more likely than those with an annual income of \$30,000 or more to look for products with “less calories” (63% vs. 53%).

More than half (55%) of Canadians look for products with “no hydrogenated oils” when grocery shopping.

- British Columbians (63%) are most likely to look for products with “no hydrogenated oils” followed by residents of Ontario (58%), Alberta (53%), Quebec (53%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (51%), and finally Atlantic Canada (45%).
- The propensity to look for products with “no hydrogenated oils” increases with age: 38% of Canadians 18-34 years of age look for products with “no hydrogenated oils,” 59% of Canadians 35-54 years of age look for products with “no hydrogenated oils,” and 68% of Canadians 55 and older look for products with “no hydrogenated oils.”
- Women are slightly more likely than men to look for products with “no hydrogenated oils” (59% vs. 52%).
- The propensity to look for products with “no hydrogenated oils” when grocery shopping increases with level of annual household income: 46% of Canadians with an annual household income of less than \$30,000 look for products with “no hydrogenated oils,” 55% of those with an income of \$30,000-\$59,999 look for products with “no hydrogenated oils,” and 60% of Canadians with an annual household income of \$60,000 or greater look for products with “no hydrogenated oils.”



Just over half (53%) of Canadians look for products with “less sodium or salt” when grocery shopping.

- The propensity to look for products with “less sodium or salt” increases with age: 39% of Canadians 18-34 years of age look for products with “less sodium or salt,” 56% of Canadians 35-54 years of age look for products with “less sodium or salt,” and 65% of Canadians 55 and older look for products with “less sodium or salt.”
- Women are more likely than men to look for products with “less sodium or salt” (58% vs. 49%).

Four in ten (40%) Canadians look for products with “less carbs” when grocery shopping.

- Half (52%) of Quebecers look for products with “less carbs,” this compares to 26% of Atlantic Canadians, 32% of residents of British Columbia, 35% of Albertans, 39% of Ontarians, and 40% of residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba.
- Canadians 35 years of age or older are more likely than those 18-34 years of age to look for products with “less carbs” (43% vs. 34%).
- Women are more likely than men to look for products with “less carbs” when grocery shopping (44% vs. 36%).



One-quarter (26%) of Canadians look for products with “more soy protein” when grocery shopping.

- One-third (34%) of Quebecers look for products with “more soy protein,” this compares to 15% of Albertans, 18% of residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba, 19% of Atlantic Canadians, 25% of residents of British Columbia, and 26% of Ontarians.
- Canadians with an annual household income less than \$30,000 are more likely than those with an annual income of \$30,000 or more to look for products with “more soy protein” (39% vs. 22%).

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