

# Craving a Snack: Half (49%) of Canadians Eat in Between Meals at least Once a Day

*With 45% Saying that they're busier than they used to be,  
Canadians are routinely skipping Meals*

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## **Craving a Snack: Half (49%) of Canadians Eat in Between Meals at least Once a Day**

***With 45% Saying that they're busier than they used to be, Canadians  
are routinely skipping Meals; Four in ten (36%) Say their Snacks  
Becoming less Healthy***

**Toronto, ON** – Many Canadians appear to be forfeiting a regular eating schedule in favour of snacking, with the results of a new Ipsos Reid poll finding that one half (49%) of Canadians claim to eat in between meals at least once a day. More specifically, one quarter (24%) of Canadians claim to snack once a day, two in ten (20%) indulge a few times a day, and one in twenty (5%) maintain that they're 'almost always snacking on something'. With nearly one half (45%) of Canadians indicating that they are busier than they used to be, the high incidence of snacking can be partially explained by increased time constraints that Canadians are experiencing. Attributing their increased snacking habits to time constraints, three in ten (27%) Canadians agree that they find themselves snacking more than they used to because of time constraints.

In fact, nearly one in two (44%) Canadians claim to often skip eating a meal a breakfast, while four in ten (37%) report that they often skip eating a meal at lunch. With two thirds (63%) of Canadians indicating that their favourite meal is at dinnertime, most (93%) disagree that they often skip a meal at dinnertime. However nearly one in ten (7%) Canadians still report that

they often skip eating dinner. Interestingly, three in ten (27%) Canadians disagree that they have enough time to eat breakfast, lunch and dinner each day.

So when is it that Canadians are snacking? Despite the fact that four in ten (37%) Canadians claim to feel guilty when they snack, it appears that Canadians enjoy munching on something at various times throughout the day, with the most popular time being in the evening. Six in ten (60%) Canadians say that they typically snack in the evening, while nearly half (45%) report that they typically snack in the afternoon, and one in eight (13%) typically snack in the morning. With nearly one half (47%) of Canadians agreeing that they like to have a bedtime snack, nearly one quarter (24%) of Canadians say that when they do snack, they typically do so before bedtime. Furthermore, four in ten (38%) Canadians either 'strongly' (9%) or 'somewhat' (29%) agree that they find themselves snacking more than they used to, and a similar margin (36%) either 'strongly' (7%) or 'somewhat' (29%) agree that the snacks that they are eating are generally becoming less healthy.

And what is it that Canadians are snacking on? The most popular item – a healthy one at that – is fruit, with two thirds (65%) of Canadians indicating that within the past week they have snacked on fruit. Despite indicating that their healthiest choices for snacking include whole-grain cereals (82%), granola bars and other cereal bars (71%), crackers (16%), fruits (11%) and vegetables (5%), Canadians are not eating these snacks with the most frequency. After fruit (65%), Canadians report having snacked on the following: chips (48%), cheese and crackers (42%), candy or chocolate (39%), cookies (39%), vegetables (38%), yogurt (34%), granola bars (27%), and cereal and milk (24%).

*These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Dairy Farmers of Canada from July 13 to July 16, 2007. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1000 was interviewed online via Ipsos Reid's Isay Panel. 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 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 that the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data.*

### ***Half of (49%) Canadians snack at least once a day***

Many Canadians appear to be forfeiting a regular eating schedule in favour of snacking, with the results of a new Ipsos Reid poll finding that one half (49%) of Canadians claim to eat in between meals at least once a day. More specifically, one quarter (24%) of Canadians claim to snack once a day, two in ten (20%) indulge a few times a day, and one in twenty (5%) maintain that they're 'almost always snacking on something'. Only 16% of Canadians say they 'rarely' eat between meals.

- Ontarians (54%) are most likely to snack at least once a day, followed by Albertans (50%) and residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (48%). Atlantic Canadians and British Columbians (46%) are equally likely, and Quebecers (42%) are the least likely to snack of any region.
- Six in ten (61%) of Canadians 18 to 34 snack at least once day, followed by under half (46%) of Canadians 35-54 and four in ten (42%) of Canadians over 55.
- Women (51%) are more likely to snack at least once a day than men (47%).

## *45% of Canadians Feel 'Busier'*

With nearly one half (45%) of Canadians indicating that they are busier than they used to be, the high incidence of snacking can be partially explained by increased time constraints that Canadians are experiencing. Attributing their increased snacking habits to time constraints, three in ten (27%) Canadians agree that they find themselves snacking more than they used to because of time constraints.

- The segments of Canadians most likely to say they feel busier are younger Canadians (67%), Albertans (59%), residents of Saskatchewan/Mantioaba (52%), those with children (59%), higher income earners (49%), those with some post secondary education (50%) and men (46%).
- Quebecers are most likely to say they are 'less busy' (31%) and 'about the same' (33%). About three in ten (29%) British Columbians and Ontarians say they are 'less busy'.
- Almost half (49%) of Canadians over 55 say they are 'less busy' and one third (33%) of Canadians between 35-54 say they are 'about the same'.
- Canadians with some high school education are most likely to say they are 'less busy' (38%) and 'about the same' (36%).
- One third of Albertans (33%) and British Columbians (32%) feel they are snacking more because they have less time; these regions are most likely to agree. Only two in ten (18%) Atlantic Canadians feel the same way, making Atlantic Canada the region least likely to agree.

- Canadians with higher income are less likely (21%) to agree with Canadians of middle (31%) or lower incomes (32%), that time constraints have forced them to turn to snacking more often.
- Over one third (34%) of households with children have been compelled to snack due to time constraints compared to under a quarter (24%) of childless homes.
- Canadians with less than a high school education (38%) are most likely to feel that time constraints have made them snack more, university graduates (28%) are least likely to agree. While about a quarter (26%) of those with high school diploma and some post-secondary education agree.
- Four in ten (42%) younger Canadians feel compelled by their busy schedules to snack more, only a quarter (26%) of 35-54 year olds agree and just 15% of older Canadians, those over 55, agree.
- Women (29%) are more likely to agree with this statement than men (25%).

### ***Canadians Are Most Likely to Skip Breakfast (44%) and Lunch (37%)***

In fact, nearly one in two (44%) Canadians claim to often skip eating a meal a breakfast, while four in ten (37%) report that they often skip eating a meal at lunch. With two thirds (63%) of Canadians indicating that their favourite meal is at dinnertime, most (93%) disagree that they often skip a meal at dinnertime. However nearly one in ten (7%) Canadians still report that they often skip eating dinner. Interestingly, three in ten (27%) Canadians disagree that they have enough time to eat breakfast, lunch and dinner each day.

- Albertans are most likely to skip meals across the board, with 52% skipping breakfast, 42% lunch and 13% dinner. One third (37%) say they do not have enough time for three meals a day. Quebecers are least likely to skip meals across the board, only 35% skip breakfast, 23% lunch and 8% dinner. It seems that the best-attended mealtime in the country is dinner in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, where only 1% say they skip this meal.
- Residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (53%) are most likely to skip breakfast, followed by residents of Alberta (52%), BC (47%), Atlantic Canada (46%) and Ontario (45%). At about one third (35%), Quebecers are least likely to skip their morning meal.
- Four in ten (42%) Albertans, British Columbians and Ontarians skip lunch. Over a third of residents of Atlantic Canada (37%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (36%) do the same. Again, at about a quarter (23%), Quebecers are least likely to skip.
- Younger Canadians (53%), low income earners, high school diploma holders (50%), and men (47%) are most likely to skip breakfast.
- Canadians with some high school education (51%), those aged 35-54 (44%), low income earners (40%) and women (37%) are most likely to skip lunch.
- Three in ten (27%) Canadians 'strongly' (10%) or 'somewhat' (18%) disagree that they have enough time to eat breakfast, lunch and dinner each day. One third (37%) of Albertans say they do not have enough time for three meals a day. On the other hand, one quarter (24%) of residents of BC, Saskatchewan/Manitoba and Quebec feel the same.

- Younger Canadians (41%) are most likely to think they don't have time for three meals, followed by one third (32%) of 35-54 year olds. Those 55 and older are by far more likely to feel they have enough time with the vast majority (92%) agreeing they have enough time for 'breakfast, lunch and dinner each day.'
- Men (27%) and women (27%) are equally likely to feel they don't have enough time for three meals a day.

### ***Four in ten 37% of Canadians Feel Guilty About Snacking, Reserve it for Evening Hours***

Despite the fact that four in ten (37%) Canadians claim to feel guilty when they snack, it appears that Canadians enjoy to munch on something at various times throughout the day, with the most popular time being in the evening.

- Atlantic Canadians (41%) are most likely to feel guilty about snacking, followed by Ontarians (39%), Quebecers, British Columbians (38%), and residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (37%). Under a quarter (22%) of Albertans feel guilty about snacking.
- Four in ten (42%) older Canadians (age 55+) feel guilty, followed by 38% of younger Canadians and one third (38%) of Canadians 35-54.
- University graduates (42%) are most likely to feel guilty about snacking, followed by those with less than a high school diploma (38%), some post secondary education (37%) and those with a high school diploma (34%).
- Women (42%) are more likely to feel guilty than men (32%)

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Six in ten (60%) Canadians say that they typically snack in the evening, while nearly half (45%) report that they typically snack in the afternoon, and one in eight (13%) typically snack in the morning. With nearly one half (47%) of Canadians agreeing that they like to have a bedtime snack, nearly one quarter (24%) of Canadians say that when they do snack, they typically do so before bedtime.

- Albertans (53%) are most likely to snack in the afternoon while residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (39%) are least likely. Ontarians (29%) are most likely to snack before bed while Quebecers (19%) are least likely.
- Younger Canadians are most likely to snack in the afternoon (55%), evening (61%) and before bed (34%), than older Canadians.
- Women (50%) are more likely than men (41%) to snack in the afternoon. However, men are more likely to snack in the evening (64%) and before bed (28%) than women (56% and 21%, respectively).

Furthermore, four in ten (38%) Canadians either 'strongly' (9%) or 'somewhat' (29%) agree that they find themselves snacking more than they used to.

- Residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (45%), Alberta (43%) and Ontario (41%) are most likely to feel they are snacking more. Residents of BC (33%), Quebec and Atlantic Canada (34%) are least likely to agree.
- Almost half (47%) of younger Canadians feel they are snacking more compared to less than four in ten (38%) Canadians 35-54, and three in ten (30%) Canadians older than 55.

- Women (40%) are more likely than men (36%) to agree they are snacking more.

### ***Top Canadian Snack is 'Fruit' (65%); Healthiest Choice is 'Whole-Grain Cereal' (82%)***

The most popular snack item is fruit, with two thirds (65%) of Canadians indicating that within the past week they have snacked on fruit. After fruit (65%), Canadians report having snacked on the following: chips (48%), cheese and crackers (42%), candy or chocolate (39%), cookies (39%), vegetables (38%), yogurt (34%), granola bars (27%), and cereal and milk (24%).

- The top three snack choices for men are fruit (61%), chips (50%) and cookies (44%). The top three snack choices for women are fruit (70%), chips (46%) and cheese and crackers (45%).
- The top three choices for younger Canadians are fruit (66%), chips (58%) and candy/chocolate (48%). The top three choices for Canadians 35-54 are fruit (61%), chips (53%) and candy/chocolate (42%). The top three choices for Canadians 55 and older are fruit (71%), cheese and crackers (46%), and vegetables (36%).

Canadians say that their healthiest choices for snacking include whole-grain cereals (82%), granola bars and other cereal bars (71%), crackers (16%), fruits (11%) and vegetables (5%).

- Men (84%) named whole-grain cereal more than women (79%). They also were more likely to name granola/cereal bars (76% compared to 66%), fruits (11% to 9%) and vegetables (5% to 4%). Women were more likely than men to name crackers (18% to 13%).



- Young Canadians (86%) were most likely to name whole-grain cereals and Canadians 55 and older (79%) were the least likely. Canadians 35-54 (75%) were most likely to name granola/cereal bars and Canadians 55 and older (66%) were least likely. Canadians 55 and older (17%) were most likely to name crackers while younger Canadians (14%) were least likely.
- Fruit was named by an equal proportion of about one in ten (11%) 35-54 year old Canadians and Canadians 55 and older. Vegetables were named by an equal proportion of 6% of Canadians 55 and older and Canadians 18-34.

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