

85% of Canadians Say Their Eating Habits Need Some Improvement

*To Improve Their Fitness Levels, Seven in Ten (68%) Have
Changed their Eating Habits in the Last Year*

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*To Improve Their Fitness Levels, Seven in Ten (68%) Have Changed
their Eating Habits in the Last Year*

Toronto, ON – A new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Dietitians of Canada has revealed that many Canadians admit to needing improvement when it comes to their eating habits. Eighty-five percent ‘agree’ (27% strongly/58% somewhat) that their eating habits could use ‘some improvement’ and fully one half (50%) of Canadians ‘agree’ (17% strongly/33% somewhat) that their eating habits need a ‘lot of improvement’.

- Residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (57%) are most likely to believe that their eating habits need a lot of work, compared with those in Atlantic Canada (55%), Alberta (50%), Quebec (50%), British Columbia (49%) and Ontario (48%).

Canadians appear to understand that what they eat can help them in leading a healthy life. Eight in ten (78%) ‘agree’ (31% strongly/47% somewhat) that their ‘eating habits will help them live a long and healthy life’. However, four in ten (43%) suggest that their ‘eating habits are probably hurting their overall health’.

- Atlantic Canadians (50%) are most inclined to suggest that their eating habits are probably hurting their health, while residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (47%), Ontario (46%), British Columbia (41%), Alberta (40%) and Quebec (39%) are less likely to think that this is the case.

- Men (48%) are more likely than women (39%) to believe that their eating habits are hurting their health.
- Middle-aged Canadians (47%), aged 35 to 54, are more likely than their younger, aged 18-34, (44%) or older counterparts, over 55 (38%) to say that this applies to them.

Perhaps a result of knowing the importance of eating healthily, and the apparent lack of some to be doing so, a majority (56%) of Canadians 'agree' (14% strongly/42% somewhat) that they 'spend a lot of time trying to improve their eating habits'. Furthermore, seven in ten (68%) say that over the last year, they have changed their eating habits in an effort to improve their fitness level.

- Women (72%) have a higher propensity than men (65%) to say they've changed their eating habits in the last year.

Among those who indicate that they have made changes to their eating habits to improve their fitness level, 39% say the most notable change they have made is eating better quality food. Others say the most notable change in habits they have made is cutting out junk food (26%), while 17% are simply eating an amount of food that matches their energy output (17%). Of the remaining respondents who have made changes to their eating habits, 15% are eating less food, overall, while 3% say that they are eating more food, overall, in order to improve their fitness level.

Thinking about nutrition and healthy eating for an active lifestyle, most (91%) Canadians 'agree' (40% strongly/50% somewhat) that 'when and what they eat and drink can help them get the most from their workout'. Similarly, eight in ten (82%) believe that 'following Canada's Food Guide helps them meet energy and nutrient needs to fuel an active lifestyle'.



What Canadians apparently do not need are stimulants, muscle-building or weight-loss supplements, with eight in ten (81%) 'agreeing' (52% strongly/29% somewhat) that these 'are not needed to get the most out of their activity or to gain muscle or lose weight'. In a similar vein, just 13% 'agrees' (2% strongly/12% somewhat) that 'downing an energy drink on the way to the gym is the best way to keep their energy-levels up during a workout'. Most (87%) 'disagree' (46% strongly/41% somewhat) with this idea.

Interestingly, 80% 'agree' (34% strongly/46% somewhat) that they 'need to drink as much water' as they possibly can before, during and after exercise to perform their best'.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Dietitians of Canada from December 9 to December 15, 2008. This online survey of 1495 Canadians was conducted via the Ipsos I-Say Online Panel, Ipsos Reid's national online panel. The results of this poll are based on a sample where quota sampling and weighting are employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data. Quota samples with weighting from the Ipsos online panel provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample. Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls, however, an unweighted probability sample of this size, with a 100% response rate, would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had the entire adult population of Canada been polled.

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