

# Only a Slim Majority (53%) of Canadians Believe Health Claims Made on Food Product Labels

*While Most Believe Probiotics (72%) and Omega-3 Fatty Acids (79%) Improve Their Health, Just Four in Ten (44%) Canadians are Willing to Pay More for Products Which Make Health Claims*

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**Ipsos Reid**

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## Only a Slim Majority (53%) of Canadians Believe Health Claims Made on Food Product Labels

*While Most Believe Probiotics (72%) and Omega-3 Fatty Acids (79%) Improve Their Health, Just Four in Ten (44%) Canadians are Willing to Pay More for Products Which Make Health Claims*

**Toronto, ON** – Canadians are mixed on the believability of health claims made on food product labels, according to a new poll conducted by Ipsos Reid on behalf of Global National. Only a slim majority (53%) of Canadians ‘agree’ (5% strongly/48% somewhat) that they ‘believe the health claims made on food labels’. Conversely, nearly one half (47%) ‘disagree’ (9% strongly/39% somewhat) that they believe health claims made on food labels.

Despite the hesitation of many Canadians to believe food health claims, seven in ten (72%) ‘agree’ (14% strongly/58% somewhat) that they ‘believe probiotics added to food products improve their health’, and eight in ten (79%) ‘agree’ (20% strongly/59% somewhat) that they ‘believe omega-3 fatty acids added to food products improve their health’. In fact, eight in ten (77%) believe that the impact of including foods in their diet that are high in probiotics and omega-3 fatty acids is ‘positive’ (14% very/63% somewhat), while few (2%) believe that the impact is negative (1% very/1% somewhat). Two in ten (21%) think there’s no impact at all.

Furthermore, three in ten (28%) Canadians ‘disagree’ (5% strongly/24% somewhat) that probiotics added to food products improve their health, and two in ten (21%) ‘disagree’ (4% strongly/17% somewhat) that omega-3 fatty acids do this.

While most believe that probiotics and omega-3 fatty acids can help improve their health, just four in ten (44%) 'agree' (6% strongly/38% somewhat) that they are 'willing to pay more for products which make health claims'. The majority (56%) of Canadians 'disagree' (14% strongly/42% somewhat) that they are willing to pay more. Those over the age of 55 (48%) and those between 18 and 34 years of age (45%) are more likely than middle-aged Canadians (39%) to say they'd be willing to pay more for these types of products.

Among those who are willing to pay more, the average they are willing to pay for products which make health claims is 13% more. But 36% of those willing to pay more wouldn't pay more than a 5% premium, and 73% wouldn't be willing to pay more than 10% more to buy products that make health food claims. On average, younger adults are willing to pay a higher premium (16%) than middle-aged (12%) or older (11%) Canadians.

### ***Health Claims: Fact or Fiction?***

Although a slim majority of Canadians say they believe health claims on food product labelling, the numbers vary quite a bit from coast to coast.

- Residents of Quebec (59%) are most likely to believe health claims followed by residents of Atlantic Canada (54%), Ontario (53%), British Columbia (47%), Alberta (47%) and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (47%).
- Six in ten (58%) younger Canadians believe the health claims made on food labels compared to fewer middle aged (52%) and older (50%) Canadians.

### ***Probiotics and Omega-3 Fatty Acids...***

Canadians' opinions of probiotics and Omega-3 fatty acids vary across the demographics studied:

- Women (76%) are more likely than men (67%) to believe probiotics improve their health.
- Younger Canadians (78%) are more likely than middle-aged (70%) and older (68%) Canadians to believe so.
- Residents of Ontario (76%) are the most likely to believe that probiotics added to their food products improve their health, followed by those living in Alberta (74%), Quebec (72%), Atlantic Canada (67%), British Columbia (65%), and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (59%).
- Regarding omega-3 fatty acids, Ontarians (83%) and Albertans (83%) are most likely to believe that foods with omega-3 fatty acids improve their health, followed by those living with Atlantic Canada (81%), British Columbia (76%), Quebec (75%) and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (67%).
- Residents of Atlantic Canada (85%) are most likely to believe that the impact on their health of including in their diet foods high in probiotics or omega-3 fatty acids is 'positive', followed by those living in Alberta (82%), Ontario (80%), British Columbia (75%), Quebec (74%) and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (66%).

*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between January 12 to 14, 2011, on behalf of Global National. For this survey, a sample of 1,012 adults from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-3.0 percentage*

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*points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults who drive and have a car in Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.*

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