

HALF UK WOMEN HAVE ADDED 'HEALTH BOOSTING' FOODS TO DIET

26 JANUARY 2018: A major study shows that 50% of women aged 18 and over in the UK have incorporated foods such as oily fish, nuts, seeds and dairy products into their diet to improve health. This compares to 41% of men.

More than 2,100 UK adults were questioned in the online survey conducted by Leatherhead Food Research. Findings also reveal that 30% of Brits have excluded food types such as gluten, dairy or carbohydrates, believing they contribute to a health condition. Again, women are more likely to take this approach (33%) than men (26%).

Age is another factor that appears to influence the likelihood of people purposefully incorporating foods. Half of all people aged 55+ say they have eaten certain foods to boost health. The figure is 39% in the 18-24 age bracket.

Jenny Arthur, Head of Nutrition and Product Development at Leatherhead Food Research, says the findings provide useful insights for the food industry, but also raise concerns.

"People increasingly want to personalise their diet to suit their own needs and health goals," she explains. "Food brands are gearing up to meet the demand. But it is vital that the industry works with this trend responsibly and intelligently."

Ms Arthur points to the fact that the study also shows a fifth of all UK adults, and over a quarter of women (26%), have created their own meal plan or diet based on research. She believes it's important that people can easily access credible, unbiased information on the relationship between food and health. With 39% of 35-44 year olds and 26% of all UK adults saying they've used an app or wearable device to count steps or measure burned calories, digital technologies could play an important role here.

"Making healthy choices is a good thing. But excluding whole food groups without professional advice could be harmful. It's vital that people make informed choices, based on their nutritional needs and considering the full context of their food and beverage intake. This is an area that's ripe for innovation, and I suspect we'll see some interesting collaborations between food brands, nutritionists and consumers over the coming years."

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Notes to editors

About research: The total sample size was 2,104 adults. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 18+).

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About Leatherhead Food Research

Leatherhead Food Research provides expertise and support to the global food and drinks sector with practical solutions that cover all stages of a product's life cycle from consumer insight, ingredient innovation and sensory testing to food safety consultancy and global regulatory advice. Leatherhead operates a membership programme which represents a who's who of the global food and drinks industry. Supporting all members and clients, large or small, Leatherhead provides consultancy and advice, as well as training, market news, published reports and bespoke projects. Alongside member support and project work, our world-renowned experts deliver cutting-edge research in areas that drive long-term commercial benefit for the food and drinks industry.

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