

Dietary habits during Covid-19

Dietary habits during the covid-19 pandemic have changed significantly. Surveys and analyses have been published investigating the changes to consumer purchasing, consumption and shopping habits. Key findings across the surveys include;

- Consumers are purchasing more food, especially long-life goods such as tinned or frozen vegetables, pasta and rice. This was very prevalent in March/April.
- Consumers are planning meals in advance and cooking more from scratch.
- Consumers are purchasing locally from farm shops or vegetable boxes more than before lockdown.
- Consumers are snacking more frequently on products like crisps, cakes and biscuits.
- Data on takeaways is conflicting, some surveys note that takeaway consumption has increased however, when looking at data by age group – younger groups buy takeaways more frequently.
- Consumers are eating together as households more frequently than before lockdown.

Please find below details of surveys exploring dietary habits during Covid-19. As further surveys are published this document will be updated.

.

Survey	Further Detail
BNF – Healthy Eating at Home	<p>The survey aims to explore how changes to daily lives resulting from the coronavirus outbreak have impacted eating habits and activity levels.</p> <p>Survey conducted between 3rd-4th June 2020 with 2,067 respondents.</p>
BNF – Healthy Eating Week 2020 survey	<p>The survey aims to analyse how the healthy eating habits and physical activity levels of adults and children had been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, both throughout the lockdown period and when restrictions had eased.</p> <p>Survey conducted from 1st to 15th September 2020 with 1,082 respondents. 324 primary school children (aged 7+), 405 secondary school students and 352 adults across the UK</p>
Impact of Covid-19 on retail purchasing patterns in Scotland	<p>The aims of the survey were to detail the difference in purchasing from 2019 to 2020 for January to July.</p>
OHA - How are COVID-19 measures affecting the food environment?	<p>The Obesity Health Alliance commissioned polling to understand more about the potential effect of the Covid-19 pandemic and public health measures to manage the situation, on the food environment and what people are eating.</p> <p>Survey conducted online from 17th to 20th April with 2025 UK adults.</p>
Hubbub - How has Covid-19 changed our eating habits?	<p>Hubbub undertook public polling of 2000 people across the UK asking how covid-19 has changed their eating habits.</p>
The Free School Meal Voucher Scheme: What are children actually eating and drinking?	<p>A research study conducted by academics within the Healthy Living Lab, at Northumbria University, has revealed lower fruit and vegetable consumption, and an increase in the consumption of sugar sweetened beverages in school-aged children, eligible for free school meals during the Covid-19 lockdown.</p> <p>Study involved 57 9 to 12 year olds living with a parent/guardian using free school meal vouchers to buy food. Children completed 'Day in the Life Questionnaire' across 6 days. Three consecutive days the week prior to school closures and three consecutive days two months following closure of schools.</p>
FSA Covid-19 Consumer Tracker	<p>The data from April to November 2020 has been published in waves 1 to 8.</p> <p>Additional data will be published in due course</p>

WRAP - Citizens Responses to the Covid-19 Lockdown – Food Purchasing, Management and Waste	<p>The survey was undertaken to understand the latest insights and the impact of covid-19 lockdown on planning, purchasing, storage and consumption.</p> <p>The survey was conducted online from 6 to 9 April 2020. Two weeks after the UK went on lockdown. 4197 UK adults (18+) were interviewed.</p>
RSA's Food, Farming and Countryside Commission (FFCC)	<p>The survey was conducted online to a panel of 4343 individuals from 7th – 9th April 2020.</p> <p>This was commissioned by RSA's Food, Farming and Countryside Commission (FFCC), and The Food Foundation.</p>
Premier Foods – The Kitchen Cooking Index	<p>The data from the survey was from Kantar Usage panel for a 52-week period ending on 29th November 2020. The second source of data was a YouGov survey conducted between 4-5th February 2021, 2,084 adults (aged 18+) were surveyed.</p>
FSA Food and You 2: Wave 1	<p>The Food and You 2 is the new biannual official statistic survey commissioned by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). It replaces the existing surveys Food and You Survey and Public Attitudes Tracker.</p> <p>The survey was conducted online between 29 July and 6 October 2020. A total of 9,319 adults from 6,408 households across England, Wales and Northern Ireland completed the survey. As the survey was taken during the Covid-19 pandemic it records the reported attitudes and behaviours which have had a significant impact on how and where people buy and eat food and levels of household security.</p>
Institute for Fiscal Studies: The dietary impact of Covid-19 pandemic	<p>This study looked to quantify the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on diet. To do this they used multiple sets of data sources to quantify the effect including; food and non-alcoholic drinks purchases, information on takeaways and eating out, information on how different households were impacted by the pandemic and the Living Costs and Food Survey (LCFS).</p>
National Diet and Nutrition Survey: Diet, nutrition and physical activity in 2020. A follow up study during COVID-19	<p>This study aimed to describe and assess the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on the diet and physical activity of people in the UK in 2020. The study followed up on participants of the National Diet and Nutrition Survey Rolling Programme. Self-reported diet and physical activity data was collected for 1,000 adults and children and compared to diet and physical activity data obtained from their previous NDNS interview. A web questionnaire was provided to collect data on food security, financial security and changes in dietary and health-related behaviours since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>

BNF – Healthy Eating at Home

Summary

- Half of respondents did not report any change in their eating habits, of those who had been eating less healthily reasons included; boredom, lack of motivation, stress, anxiety or tiredness
- People were concerned about gaining weight, getting unfit and eating too many unhealthy snacks.
- People reported planning more meals in advance and trying new recipes.

Healthy Eating:

- 50% of respondents reported that their eating habits were about the same as before
- 27% said they had been eating less healthily
 - Of those that said they had been eating less healthily 63% reported eating more out of boredom, 43% did not feel motivated to eat healthily and 45% were stressed, anxious or tired.
- 22% said they ate more healthily

Concerns since lockdown began

- 39% of people were concerned about gaining weight
- 34% of people were concerned about getting unfit
- 27% were eating too many unhealthy snacks
- 32% said they were not concerned about their current diet/fitness

Changes in habits

- Of the reported changes in cooking and eating habits;
 - 29% planned more in advance
 - 23% tried new recipes
 - 20% baked more
 - 32% reported that they had not changed the way they cooked/ate since lockdown began
- Of the reported changes to activity/exercise;
 - 32% of respondents had been sitting down more and 29% had been less active
 - 19% had been more active in the home and a quarter of respondents had started going for regular walks
 - 24% reported that their activity levels had not changed

Priorities for health/wellbeing as restrictions are lifted

- 47% of respondents said their biggest priority as restrictions are lifted is becoming more active
- 43% said losing weight and 29% said eating more healthily overall.
- 22% of people reported no health or wellbeing priorities once restrictions are lifted.

BNF – Healthy Eating Week 2020 survey

Eating Habits throughout the covid-19 pandemic

- 46% of adults and 43% of secondary school students say they have consumed more chocolate when feeling tired, stressed, bored or anxious throughout the covid-19 outbreak
- 41 % of adults and 35 % of secondary school students have consumed more cakes or biscuits;
- 33 % of adults and 41 % of secondary school students have eaten more crisps;
- 13 % of adults and 28 % of secondary school students have drunk more sugary drinks.
- 35 % of all adults say that they have consumed more alcohol when feeling tired, stressed, bored or anxious during the pandemic.
- 37 % of secondary students and 18 % of adults report eating more fruit
- 21 % of secondary students and 12 % of adults report eating more vegetables when feeling tired, stressed, bored or anxious.

Feelings of Health and Wellbeing:

- 50% of primary school children and 26% of secondary students feel healthier since they returned to school
- 27% of adults say they feel healthier since lockdown restrictions eased in July compared to during lockdown
- 56% of primary school children and 50% of secondary students say they are more active now that they are back at school
- 11% of primary and secondary students say they feel less active since they went back to school
- 29% of adults are less active now that before lockdown started in March

Social Eating habits

- 50% of primary school children said they ate with other people in their home 5 or more nights a week, with 42% of these eating with others every night of the week.
- 53% of secondary students reported eating with people without technology 5 or more nights a week, with 38% of these eating with others every night of the week.
- 29% of adults eat with other family members every night of the week without distractions and 42% said they eat with others 5 or more nights each week.
- 20% of all respondents said they never eat at home without the distraction of technology

Consumption of Fruit and Vegetables

- 52 % of primary school children, 53 % of secondary school students and 44 % of adults say they usually eat three or more portions of fruit each day.
- 53% of primary school children, 58% of secondary students and 64% of adults reported eating three or more portions of vegetables each day.
- 1 in 10 primary school children and 7% of secondary students reported that would not eat vegetables if they could and 20% of primary and 14% of secondary would choose to only ever eat one type of vegetable

- The favourite vegetables for primary children were carrots (68%), beetroot (36%), cauliflower (32%) and cucumber (31%). Parsnips, swede and pak choi were joint last at 0.3%.
- When secondary students were asked which vegetables they had eaten in the last 2 weeks, carrots ranked first (86%) followed by onions, broccoli, cucumber and peas (over 60%).
- For adults, tomatoes can top (89%) followed by carrots, onions and peppers (over 80%). Over 70% reported eating beans, broccoli, cucumber, lettuce and peas. Okra and celeriac were the least consumed vegetables.

<u>Impact of Covid-19 on retail purchasing patterns in Scotland</u>	
Survey Details	Further information:
<p>Data provided by Kantar</p> <p>The data relates to retail purchasing in Scotland, referring to take home purchasing and not including food and drink purchased for consumption outside the home (OOH).</p> <p>The aims of the survey were to detail the difference in purchasing from 2019 to 2020 for January to July.</p> <p>A further report will be published in 2021 for data between July and December 2020.</p>	<p><u>Summary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall there were considerable changes in volume of food and drink purchased from retail in the weeks leading up to lockdown compared to 2019. • Purchasing of food and drink in total was 44% higher in the week before lockdown • The average number of retail trips per household was 42% higher in the week preceding lockdown compared to the same week in 2019. From April to July 2020, the number of retail trips remained consistently lower compared to 2019, ranging from 10% to 24% lower. • Compared to 2019, discounters and small retailers/convenience stores generally grew their share of total retail food and drink purchased in Scotland between March and July 2020. In contrast, supermarkets had a lower share of volume compared to 2019. • Purchase of calories, total carbohydrates, total sugar, fibre, total fat, saturated fat and sodium was considerably higher throughout March 2020 compared to March 2019. • All food and drink categories explored demonstrated a steep increase in purchase during the week immediately before lockdown compared to same week in 2019. This was particularly prominent within sweet home cooking (90%), canned goods (115%), savoury home cooking (121%) and ambient carbohydrates and snacks (130%). <p><u>Retail Trips</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The week before lockdown began showed the highest difference in retail purchasing of food and drink – this was 44% higher than 2019. Retail purchasing of food and drink remained consistently higher ranging between 7 and 17%. • Retail trips were 42% higher compared to 2019 in the week before lockdown. However, they were consistently lower in the following weeks – ranging from 10 to 24%. <p><u>Food and drink purchasing by retailer type</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discounters and small retailers/convenience shops grew their share of total retail food and drink purchased in Scotland between March and July 2020. Conversely, supermarkets had a lower share of volume compared to 2019. • Non-grocers increased their share by 4 and 7% in March and April respectively. In May and June this decreased and the share was lower than in 2019. <p><u>Purchasing of calories and nutrients</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchasing of calories, total carbohydrates, total sugar, fibre, total fat, saturated fat and sodium was considerably greater throughout March compared to the previous year. This remained consistently high.

- Compared to 2019, purchasing of all nutrients were higher following the announcement of lockdown. It was highest in the 4th week of March for each of the nutrients; 53% for calories, 51% for total carbohydrates, 43% for total sugar, 58% for fibre, 55% for total fat, 53% for saturated fat, 56% for sodium and 51% for protein
- There was a greater percentage increase in the purchase of calories, total fat, saturated fat, total sugar, carbohydrates and sodium compared to total food and drink purchased.

Individual food and drink categories

- Purchasing of fruit was higher in 2020 compared to 2019, however this tended to be lower than the percentage increase for total food and drink.
- Purchasing of vegetables was higher in 2020 compared to 2019 – this peaked at 49% higher in week 4 of March. This was also higher than total increase for food and drink purchased.
- Purchasing of biscuits was higher in 2020 compared to 2019 – it was 47% higher in the 4th week of March and then dropped to 12% lower in the 5th week of March.
- From May onwards purchase of confectionery was consistently higher compared to 2019, this was substantially higher than purchasing of total food and drink. This peaked in the 3rd week of July at 60% more than 2019.
- For crisps, purchasing in 2020 was higher compared to 2019. This was also higher than total food and drink purchasing.
- Canned goods peaked at 115% higher than 2019 the week before lockdown began. This was far above the percentage increase for total food and drink. This stayed consistently higher, below 30%.
- Purchasing of soft drinks was 33% higher in the 4th week of March, however this was consistently lower than the percentage increase for total food and drink purchasing except for week 5 in May.
- For ambient carbohydrates and snacks (rice, noodles, pasta, pulses, packet soup, cous cous, instant hot snacks) percentage difference compared to 2019 was higher since the 2nd week of February, peaking in week 3 and 4 (130% and just over 100%).
- Purchasing of bread compared to 2019 was consistently higher from the end of February, peaking at 30% on the 4th week of March. This tended to be lower than percentage increase for total food and drink.
- Sweet home cooking (cake and baking mixes, long life desserts etc) was higher from the last week in February. This peaked in the 4th week of March at 120%. It was consistently higher than food and drink purchasing.
- Meat and fish purchasing was higher overall compared to 2019, this peaked at 68% and 58% for meat and fish respectively in the week before lockdown.
- Purchasing of alcoholic drinks was lower before lockdown compared to the same time in 2019. It remained consistently high following lockdown, peaking at 59% the week before lockdown.

OHA - How are COVID-19 measures affecting the food environment?

Summary

- There has been a rise in people of all age groups and backgrounds eating more fruit and vegetables and cooking from scratch
- 1 in 7 people report eating less fruit and vegetables
- 49% of people are eating less takeaways/fast food
- People reported eating more discretionary foods, cakes, biscuits, crisps and confectionary – young people in particular.
- People are in agreement that supermarkets have a key role to play in helping people be healthier and 50% agree that supermarkets should focus promotions on foods that help people be healthier.

Types of food being eaten

- 40% of respondents said they have been eating more fruit and vegetables (including tinned and frozen) and 14% are eating less.
- When looking at age groups, 48% of 18-24 year olds are eating more fruit and vegetables compared to 31% of 45-54 year olds.
- Only 36% of people from more deprived backgrounds ate more fruit and vegetables compared with 43% of those from a more affluent background.
- 34% of respondents reported eating more shop bought and homemade cakes and biscuits, while 21% and 18% are eating less of shop bought and homemade cakes and biscuits.
- Close to half (48% and 44%) of respondents aged 18-24% said they are eating more shop bought and homemade cakes and biscuits (respectively).
- Those from more affluent backgrounds are more likely to report eating more homemade and shop bought cakes and biscuits (37% vs 30% for homemade and 39% vs 29% for shop bought)
- 39% of respondents are eating more sweets and confectionery, 20% said they were eating less.
- 51% of 18-24 year olds say they are eating more confectionary
- Those from more affluent backgrounds are slightly more likely to report eating more sweets and confectionary (41% vs 35%)
- Overall 48% of respondents are eating less fast/takeaway food and 17% are eating more.
- Younger people are much more likely to eat more fast/takeaway food – 34% vs 4% for 18-24 vs 65+
- Londoners (28%) ate more takeaways than those in the North West (13%)
- Half of respondents are eating more meals prepared from scratch, with all age groups reporting consuming more home cooked meals.

Perceptions of the food marketing environment

- 39% of respondents reported seeing less promotions in supermarkets
- 21% of respondents say they have seen more food advertising on TV, however close to half reported no difference
- 45% of people did not notice a difference in online food advertising, however younger people (aged 18-24) are more likely to report seeing more online advertising
- 62% of respondents agreed that supermarkets have an important role to play in encouraging healthy eating at the moment.
- 50% of people agreed that supermarkets should only put promotions or place food at checkouts that help healthy living.

Hubbub - How has Covid-19 changed our eating habits?

Summary

- Close to half of people are worried about the cost of providing food for their household
- Healthier habits developed during lockdown include; throwing away less food, buying less takeaways and eating more accurate portions.

Food Insecurity:

- 43% are worried about the extra cost of providing food for their household. This rises to 59% of those aged 35-44 and 54% of those aged 25-34.

Cooking and eating habits:

- 44% are enjoying cooking more and 47% are enjoying spending more time eating with their household
- A third of people see lockdown as an opportunity to improve their cooking skills, this rises to almost half for 16-24 year olds
- 48% say they are throwing away less food. Of those wasting less food, 51% are planning meals more carefully and 41% are getting better at using leftovers. People are also making better use of their freezer – 35% are using it more and 29% freeze a wider variety of food.
- Portion control is also a factor, with 27% now giving more accurate portion sizes and just over 1 in 4 (26%) are leaving less on the plate.
- 43% are buying less takeaways, due to worries about contamination. 42% are not buying takeaways as money is tight.

Purchasing habits:

- A quarter of people said they are buying better quality food as they are not going out or spending money on other things.
- more than a third of people are supporting smaller/local businesses more than ever before
- 29% said they were using their local corner shop/convenience store for the first time.
- 89% of those who've made changes say they will continue to use at least one of the new shopping alternatives to supermarkets once the restrictions have ended e.g. use local shops / home deliveries.

The Free School Meal Voucher Scheme: What are children actually eating and drinking?

Summary

- Due to the closure of schools many children that receive free school meals faced the possibility of missing meals or consuming meals of lower nutritional quality.
- At the end of March, the Department of Education developed a scheme to provide supermarket vouchers for children who receive free school meals.
 - Significant issues in accessing vouchers include;
 - being limited to certain supermarkets,
 - shops refusing to accept vouchers and
 - the length of time taken to receive vouchers.
- The Food Foundation estimates that 200,000 children have had to skip meals
- The study showed that the free school meal voucher scheme operating in England is failing disadvantaged children in society. This is an increase in children skipping meals, eating less fruit and vegetables and more snacks and sugar sweetened beverages.

Fruit and vegetable consumption:

- Children are consuming significantly fewer portions of fruit following school closures. Average intake across three days decreased from just over 1 portion to an average of half a portion per day.
- 45% of children reported they did not eat any fruit on the three days of the questionnaire following school closure.
- Mean vegetable intake dropped from just over 2 portions to approximately half a portion per day when schools closed.
- 55% of children reported they consumed no fresh vegetables on any of the three days of the questionnaire

Sugar sweetened beverages and discretionary foods

- Sugar sweetened beverages consumed increased 4-fold following school closures – the average consumption was 2 servings per day.
- Children's consumption of crisps, chocolates and sweets increased from an average of 1 portion across three days to an average of 6 portions across three days

Skipping meals:

- Before school closures, 25% of children skipped at least one meal a day, breakfast being the most frequent meal. Once schools closed this increased to 35% of children skipping one meal a day and 10% skipping more than one meal.

<u>FSA Covid-19 Consumer Tracker</u>	
Survey Details	Further information:
<p>FSA carried out the survey across England, Wales and Northern Ireland to monitor the experience and behaviours of consumers when it came to key food risks during the pandemic.</p>	<p><u>Summary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of food insecurity dipped in August (to 12% from 16% in July) but increased significantly in September (to 18%) and have remained steady since. In November 1 in 5 respondents (19%) reported cutting down on meals for financial reasons. • Many experienced positive changes to household food behaviours that they wished to continue as lockdown eased, for example increased home-cooking and food sharing and increased attention to diet.
	<p><u>Food Insecurity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food insecurity was relatively stable between April and July 2020 (16-18%). • In August, it fell to 12% - this could reflect the easing of lockdown restrictions and potential drop in financial concerns. With the increase in lockdown measures from October, food insecurity rose to 19% in November. • Across all months, households with children and young respondents aged 16 to 24 years reported highest levels of concern on food insecurity. • There is a slight upwards trend in people using food banks or food charities since August 2020. In November 8% reported using food banks/charities which is double August (4%) • Reasons for use of food banks/charities was economic hardship or self-isolation – this was the most common reason in November reflecting the peak of covid-19 cases. • Concerns about food availability and affordability peaked in April at the beginning of the first lockdown (28% and 31% respectively) and then fell steadily until a significant increase in September, when concerns about food affordability increased from 17% in August to 24%, and concerns about food availability increased from 16% in August to 27%.
	<p><u>Food purchasing behaviours</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the start of lockdown April to July) people reported ordering online from supermarkets more often. From August to November the proportion doing so increased from 37% to 41%. • The most common group ordering online in November were those self-isolating (74%), aged 16-24 (58%) and those with children in the household (51%).

- 31% of respondents reported buying more from local shops in July, this remains relatively stable through the summer and till November. 34% reported buying locally i.e. farm shops or veg boxes in November.
- In July 32% of respondents reported buying takeaways less than before, however 38% of respondents aged 16-24 reported buying takeaways more often since lockdown in July
- 26% of respondents who had not had a takeaway in the last month gave expenditure as a reason and 31% preferred to save money. 50% reported home cooking and 35% reported a desire to eat healthier as reasons for not ordering a takeaway.
- Those respondents accessing food from other sources such as Facebook marketplace or apps like Olio remained stable across all waves of the survey (7-9%).

Food consumption behaviour

- 4 in 10 respondents reported always checking use-by dates before preparing or cooking food – this remained very stable across the May to November period.
- When asked about eating food past the use-by date, 58% of respondents reported they or someone in their household had done this in April.
- Of the high-risk foods identified by FSA, respondents are more likely to consume out of date cheese (41%), bagged salad (41%), cooked meat (38%), and milk (36%) than smoked fish (20%).
- In October 1 in 10 respondents felt it was safe to eat out, this followed the upward trend since the summer.
- Factors that most commonly reassured respondents that it was safe to eat out include;
 - Appropriate social distancing measures (38%);
 - Good hygiene and safety measures (31%);
 - Visible and regular cleaning (27%); and
 - Good handwashing facilities, including provision of hand sanitiser (26%).
- 21% of respondents reported that they had no intention to eat out in the foreseeable future – this remained stable following a significant drop in August (from 31% in July)
- Behaviours around consumption at home have remained relatively stable between August and November;
 - 1 in 6 respondents report wasting or throwing food away
 - 1 in 6 respondents reporting cooking food to freeze for later

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 in 8 respondents reporting eating together with the family in the last month, with 25% of respondents eating with family everyday • The trend that 16-24 year olds are wasting more food (77% of respondents in this age group reported wasting food) contrasts with the finding that 16-24 year olds show greater levels of concern about food affordability. • Nutrition behaviours remained stable between August and November; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 9 in 10 respondents cooking from scratch in the last month (with two thirds doing so at least once a week); ○ 9 in 10 eating healthy meals in the last month (around three quarters doing so at least once a week) and, ○ • 9 in 10 snacking on cakes, biscuits and confectionary in the last month (around two thirds doing so at least once a week)
--	---

WRAP - Citizens Responses to the Covid-19 Lockdown – Food Purchasing, Management and Waste

Survey Details	Survey Information
<p>WRAP undertakes an annual citizen survey that tracks knowledge, attitudes and behaviours relevant to household food management and waste.</p> <p>The data presented is statistically significant to the 99% confidence level.</p>	<p><u>Summary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of shopping has decreased substantially whereas the amount of food purchased has increased • The proportion of citizens eating takeaway meals has also fallen significantly which would indicate that more meals are being prepared and consumed in the home. • People are managing food better by making lists, better in-home storage and more creative approaches to food preparation. • Four key products – potatoes, bread, chicken and milk were thrown away by 13.7% of respondents on average. This is a significant reduction in self-reported food waste compared to 2018-19. • There are still knowledge gaps in the population on food storage, this is the same across all sub-groups of the population • 51% of respondents had seen or heard information about food waste in the past year – either more generally about the amount of food that is thrown away/wasted (48%) or more specifically about how to plan, buy, store or prepare food to help reduce the amount that gets thrown away (23%)
	<p><u>Food shopping and management behaviours</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 37% UK citizens agree with the statement: I am concerned that the current situation with Coronavirus could lead to supermarkets running out of food. In contrast, a slightly larger proportion (43%) disagree with this statement • Frequency of shopping has decreased (63% report shopping less frequently) whereas the amount of food purchased has increased (59% report purchasing more items) • 25% said they shop with the same frequency as before; while 30% reported no increase in the amount purchased • 22% reported shopping online more representing an increased demand but also the constraints on capacity of online shopping. • Food items being purchased more include; tinned and frozen vegetables, pasta, rice, bread and milk. • Decreases in purchase of salad packs, pre-cut vegetables and ready meals has been observed. • 34% of people say they are eating less take away meals. • UK citizens had adopted on average, 5.9 more food management behaviours over March/April 2020 • Variations across population group in adopting more food management behaviours include; people who shop more frequently and buy more food adopted more food management behaviours. Younger age groups, those with young children at home and those who have above average levels of food waste adopted more food management behaviours
	<p><u>Food Waste</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36% of respondents said they threw away less uneaten food, 24% reported more and 34% reported no change.

RSA's Food, Farming and Countryside Commission (FFCC)

Summary

- The poll found that majority of people want to maintain the personal and social changes they have experienced after lockdown is lifted.
- 51% of respondents noticed cleaner air and 27% noticed more wildlife since lockdown began
- 40% felt a stronger sense of local community
- 39% were more in touch with friends and family, 10% shared food or shopping with a neighbour for the first time
- 42% say the outbreak made them value food more
- 38% cooked more from scratch and 33% threw away less food
- 6% tried a veg box scheme or ordered food from a local farm for the first time
- 9% felt fitter and 27% were getting more exercise but 36% said they got less exercise than before.

Premier Foods – Kitchen Cooking Index

Consumption at home

- 73% have enjoyed home cooking since February 2020
- Hot lunches have increased 52% since the pandemic
- 1/3 of UK households have added a dish to their 'go-to' evening meals since the start of the pandemic
- 51% of people have used their freezer more to store batch cooked food and 53% to reduce food waste
- Italian food is the nation's favourite with UK households cooking 140 million more Italian dishes than the year before
- There has been a drive to add new flavours to meals with curry pastes and powders, Mexican meal kits and cooking sauces with a 23% increase in world ingredients used.

Takeaway and Out of Home eating

- People have been looking to recreate the eating out experience at home, with a 25% increase in Friday and Saturday night dinners and 54% have tried their hand at a 'fakeaway'.
- There has been a 350% growth in monthly restaurant delivers compared to pre-lockdown – this has been driven by consumers aged 45+
- 75% of consumers are expected to continue buying takeaways as much or more once restrictions lift – there is room for this to grow as 57% of the population has yet to use a deliver service for takeaway food

Post-lockdown intentions

- 81% want to eat more healthily over the year ahead
- 91% intend to cook the same amount or more over the year ahead
- Drivers to cook at home over the next year are; 58% cost saving, 55% health benefits, 42% enjoyment and 16% to spend more time with friends/family

Health trends

- 81% of people want to meet healthily over the next year
- The trend towards vegan and vegetarian meals continued to grow, with an increase of 46% plant based meals consumed compared to the previous year
- A key health choice for consumers is the desire to choose ingredients with specific health and other benefits.

FSA Food and You 2: Wave 1

Food we can trust

- 92% respondents reported that they had confidence that the food they buy is safe to eat.
- 86% respondents reported that they had confidence that the information on food labels is accurate.
- 78% reported that they had confidence in the food supply chain.
- Respondents were more likely to report confidence in farmers (90%), and shops and supermarkets (86%) than in take-aways (51%), and food delivery services (39%).

Concerns about food

- 84% reported they had no concerns about the food that they eat, and only 16% of respondents reported that they had a concern.
 - Younger respondents were more likely to report they had no concerns about the food they eat than older adults (89% of respondents aged 16-24 had no concerns vs 77% of those aged 75+)
 - 90% of respondents in larger households reported they had no concerns vs 80% of respondents in a single household
- Respondents who reported a concern about the food they eat were asked to briefly explain what their concerns related to. Food production methods (29%), environmental and ethical concerns (26%) and food provenance (21%) were the most mentioned concerns.
- When all respondents were asked to indicate if they had concerns about the food they eat, from a list of given options, the most common concerns related to the amount of sugar in food (59%), food waste (58%) and animal welfare (57%).

Food Security

- Across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, 84% of respondents were classified as food secure (72% high, 12% marginal) and 16% of respondents were classified as food insecure (9% low, 7% very low).
 - Older adults were more likely to report they were food secure than younger adults
 - Food insecurity was more likely to be reported in households with lower incomes
- Food security levels were comparable across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Over three quarters of respondents were food secure (high, marginal) in England (84%), Wales (83%) and Northern Ireland (85%). Approximately 1 in 6 respondents were food insecure (low, very low) in England (16%), Wales (17%) and Northern Ireland (15%).
- Almost three-quarters (73%) of respondents who had changed their eating habits in the last 12 months reported the changes were, at least partly, due to COVID-19 and lockdown.
 - 56% of respondents ate out less, 55% ate at home more, 53% cooked at home more 43% ate fewer takeaways
 - The main cause of change in habits was due to; covid-19 and lockdown (73%) health reasons (43%) and financial reasons (36%)

- Older respondents were less likely to have changed their eating habits for financial reasons compared to those in other age groups. For example, 9% of respondents over 75 years changed their eating habits for financial reasons, compared to 41% of those aged 16-24 years.
- 30% of respondents in 2-person households had changed their eating habits for financial reasons compared to 44% of those in 3-person households and 42% of those in 4-person households.
- 48% of respondents with children in the household changed their eating habits for financial reasons compared to 31% of those with no children in the household.
- Respondents with a lower income were more likely to have changed their eating habits for financial reasons compared to those with a higher income. For example, 51% of those with an income below £19,000 changed their eating habits for financial reasons compared to 28% of those with an income of £64,000-£95,999.
- Respondents who were not working (48%) or working (39%) were more likely to have changed their eating habits for financial reasons compared to retired respondents (14%).

Food Shopping

- Most respondents reported that they have often (i.e. once a week or more frequently) bought food from a supermarket or mini supermarket (85%). Convenience shops (e.g. corner shops) (44%), and independent shops (e.g. greengrocers') (51%) were typically used on an occasional basis (i.e. '2-3 times a month' or less often). A small number of respondents (6%) have used Facebook marketplace to buy food.
- When shopping, respondents reported they often checked the use-by (80%) or best before date (78%).
- Most respondents (79%) who go food shopping and take into consideration a person who has a food allergy or intolerance were confident that the information provided on food labelling allows them to identify foods that will cause a bad or unpleasant physical reaction.
- Respondents who buy food sold loose were more confident in identifying foods that will cause a bad or unpleasant physical reaction when buying this food in-store at a supermarket (74%), when buying food from a supermarket online (71%) and when shopping at independent food shops (68%). Respondents were less confident when buying food from food markets or stalls (56%).

Eating at Home

- Almost three quarters (71%) of respondents identified the use-by date as the information which shows that food is no longer safe to eat. • Almost two thirds (64%) of respondents stated that they always check use-by dates before they cook or prepare food. A third (33%) of respondents check use-by dates at least occasionally and just 2% never check use-by dates.
- Many respondents reported that they never ate cooked meats (64%), smoked fish (85%), cheese (52%), bagged salads (49%) or milk (67%) past the use-by date. Conversely, some respondents reported that they had eaten those foods past the use-by date. For example, almost half of respondents had eaten bagged salad past the use-by date (6% every week, 21% some weeks and 17% just one week in the last month).
- Around a quarter (27%) of respondents reported that they always follow the on-pack instruction.

Institute of Fiscal Studies: The dietary impact of covid-19

Timeline and aggregate patterns

- 3rd March 2020 there was a large spike in at home calories purchased, reflecting the hoarding in the few weeks before the national lockdown was announced
- 23rd March 2020, at home calorie consumption was 30% higher than the start of 2020 and 10% higher than March 2019. Out of home calorie consumption dropped sharply due to the closure of non-essential businesses
- When dine in hospitality re-opened in July 2020 and the Eat Out to help Out scheme launched in August, out of home calorie consumption peaked in August and was at a similar level to the previous year. The initial rise in OOH calories was driven by a rise in take away calories. This was double the value at the start of August 2020 compared to 2019
- 5th November was the start of the second lockdown, there was a drop in OOH calories but high levels of takeaways meant the decline was not as severe

Shift in dietary patterns

- The pandemic led to a shift in consumption of calories towards ingredients and away from ready to eat foods. This peaked in the first lockdown but the trend continued into summer. The percentage change in calorie intake for ingredients exceeded that for total calories, indicating the substantial shift towards cooking from scratch
- With the Eat Out to Help Out scheme in August 2020, the shift reversed and people ate more calories from ready to eat foods than ingredients. However, with the announcement of the second lockdown this shift reverted
- Calories consumed overall rose during the pandemic, and the share of calories from snacks and treats did not change
- The rise in calorie consumption at home was so great that it offset the calorie reduction from OOH and there was still a positive increase in total calories consumed

Food insecurity

- 25% of households experienced a decrease in total calories consumed in the first month of the national lockdown. This could be due to drawing on stores built up in the previous weeks of hoarding.
- 10% of households experienced a decrease in calorie consumption of more than 10% in the first few months of lockdown – this could be attributed to the minority of households that experience food insecurity

Socioeconomic status

- In working age households, those from higher socioeconomic groups had a larger increase in calories compared to lower groups, peaking at 25% above normal levels from April to May 2020
- Retired households had the smallest increase in calories
- Households in the higher socioeconomic group were more likely to switch to working at home and less likely to have suffered from employment shocks. This indicates that the change in working pattern (to working at home) is a driver of increasing calorie intake.

National Diet and Nutrition Survey: Diet, nutrition and physical activity in 2020. A follow up study during COVID-19

Eating, shopping and food preparation habits during the web questionnaire reference period of the COVID-19 pandemic

- 19% of households report cutting down or skipping meals, the most common reason (14%) was due to food they wanted being unavailable
- 10% of households reported being somewhat worried and 1% very worried about being able to afford feed in the next month. This is more likely in households with children (15% compared to 9% of participants from adult-only households)
- 22% of participants reported their household was just about getting by (17%), finding it quite difficult (4%) or finding it very difficult financially (1%). This was more likely in households with children (26% vs 19% adult-only household)
- 28% of participants reported their financial situation had worsened during the reference period.
- 68% of participants reported their household physically went to grocery shops less often, 34% reported doing more grocery shopping online, 29% changed to more local alternatives and 18% bought more items on special offer.
- 59% of participants reported they cooked at home more since February 2020, 38% reported their household ate less takeaways and 11% reported they had more.
- 36% of households reported eating more fruit and vegetables, 33% snacked more between main meals.

Changes in food consumption and nutrient intake

- Mean consumption of fruit and vegetables was below the recommendation in all age or sex groups. With adults consuming 0.7 portions less per day when compared to NDNS Years 9 to 12
- Mean consumption of total and oily fish was well below the recommendation in all age and sex groups. There was little difference between this study and previous NDNS results
- The downward trend in consumption of sugar sweetened soft drinks continued in this study, however for girls aged 11-18, mean consumption was 25g per day higher in this study.
- There was little difference in the mean consumption of sugar and chocolate confectionery between this study and the previous NDNS data. However, there was a downward shift in the proportion of consumers.
- There was little difference in the mean consumption of sweet and savoury biscuits, however, for boys aged 11 to 18 years mean consumption was 13g higher.
- There was also little difference in mean intake of crisps and savoury snacks between this study and previous assessments
- The difference in mean daily intakes for total energy were not significantly different between this study and previous assessments.
- The mean consumption of free sugars exceeded the recommendation for all age and sex groups with children aged 11 to 18 having the highest consumption (12% of total energy)
- The mean consumption of total and saturated fat exceeded recommendations in all sex and age groups.
- The mean intake of fibre was below recommendations for all age and sex groups with adults aged 19-64 consuming significantly less than previous assessments (by 2.1g)

- The mean intake of vitamin D was lower in this study compared to previous assessments across all age and sex groups.
- The mean intake of folate, iron and calcium were close to or above the recommended nutrient intake in all age or sex groups apart from iron in girls aged 11 to 18 and women aged 19 to 64.
- The mean intake of sodium was significantly lower in this study compared to previous assessments for women aged 19 to 64 and men aged 65 and over.
- Cereals and cereal products contributed the main source of total energy for all age groups with meat and meat products and milk and milk products next largest contributors.

Food consumption and nutrient intake in relation to financial security and food security

- The mean consumption of fruits and vegetables was lower for participants in households who reported managing less well financially (2.7 portions) compared to those households who reported living comfortably/doing alright financially (4.3 and 4 portions per day respectively)
- The mean consumption of total meat, red and processed meat was higher in households that reported managing less well financially.
- Participants that reported living less well financially also consumed less total fish and oily fish
- Mean consumption of sugar sweetened soft drinks was higher in households that reported they were managing less well financially.
- Mean consumption of sugar and chocolate confectionery, biscuits, buns, cakes and pastries, and crisps and savoury snacks was similar across all financial security categories
- There was little difference in mean total energy intake, total carbohydrate, protein, fat and saturated fat across financial security categories
- Free sugar intake as a percentage of total energy was high for participants who reported being less financially secure (11.7% compared to 9.5% and 10.4% for households living comfortably or doing alright financially)
- Mean fibre intakes were also lower in households that reported being less financially secure.

Changes in physical activity

- There was a total increase in energy expenditure from physical activity in this study compared to previous assessments, however this varied considerably at an individual level
- There was a consistent small decrease in energy expenditure from physical activity at work across all age and sex groups but a corresponding increase in energy expended in home activities.
- When asked, a higher proportion of participants reported a decrease in their physical activity compared to before the start of the pandemic in February 2020.