

Shopping behaviours of different food and drinks consumption groups

Background

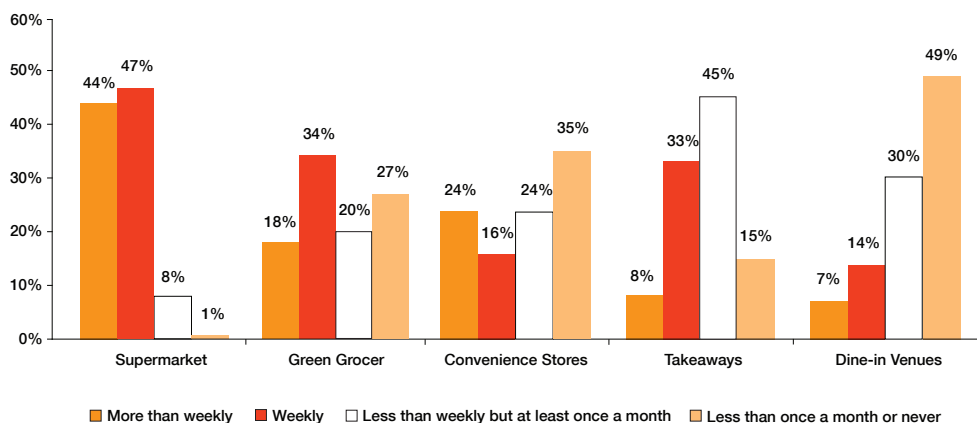
The cost of healthier foods is thought to be a barrier to healthy eating, but recent research commissioned by the Health Sponsorship Council (HSC) found that there is little difference in overall food spend between households with 'healthier' and 'less healthy' eating habits (Synovate, 2009; see, 'Comparisons between different households' for how households were grouped). One possibility is that people with less healthy diets have different shopping behaviours than people with healthier diets.

This fact sheet describes findings from the parents and caregivers' sample of the HSC's Health and Lifestyles Survey (HLS). The HLS is a national biennial face-to-face survey.

To examine shopping behaviours in more detail the HSC's 2010 HLS included questions about:

1. how frequently households bought food and drinks at different locations
2. how much households spend on food and drinks each week

Figure 1. The frequency with which households buy food and drinks from different shopping locations, 2010 (n = 820)



3. influences on shopping decisions, such as 'cost' and 'healthiness'.

Measured shopping behaviours

Frequency of household shopping at different locations

Parents/caregivers were asked how frequently their households bought food and drinks from five locations – supermarkets, green grocers and other fruit and vegetable retailers (eg, farmers' markets), convenience stores (eg, petrol stations or dairies), takeaways (including food courts), and dine-in venues (eg, restaurants or bars).

How often households shopped was grouped into 'more than once a week', 'weekly', 'less than weekly but at least once a month', and 'less than once a month or never'.

Figure 1 presents the overall frequency of shopping at each location for the parents/caregivers.

Spend on food and drinks at different types of locations

For the weekly spend on food and drinks two location categories were used:

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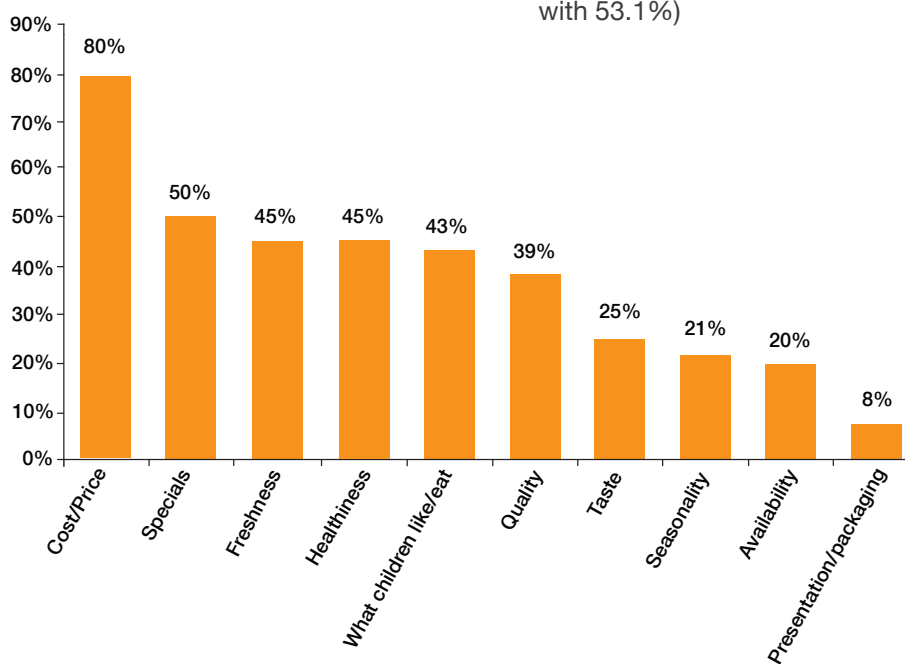
- 'Grocery', including supermarkets and green grocer-type retailers.
- 'Non-grocery', including convenience stores, takeaways, and dine-in venues.

Shopping spend was equivalised to take into account family size (see Devlin, 2010). Parents/caregivers were divided into low and high spend groups for grocery and non-grocery shopping locations, as well as for overall spend.

Influences on food and drink purchasing choice

Parents/caregivers were asked an unprompted question - Generally when you are buying food or drink for your household, what things do you think affect your choices? Only parents/caregivers who shop for their household are included in the following figures (n = 808). The most commonly mentioned influence was 'cost/price'. Figure 2 presents the frequency that each influence was mentioned by the parents/caregivers.

Figure 2. Percentage of New Zealand parents and caregivers reporting what affects their food and drink purchasing choices, 2010 (n=808). Multiple responses allowed



Comparisons between different households

Parents/caregivers were asked how often specific foods and drinks were available in their household, and how often their children consumed these foods and drinks. Based on their responses to these questions parents and caregivers were classified as part of:

- high or low fat-consuming households
- high or low empty-sugar¹-consuming households
- high fruit and vegetable or low fruit and vegetable-consuming households (Synovate, 2009).

Fat consumption

Shopping frequency

Parents/caregivers from low fat-consuming households, compared with parents/caregivers from high fat-consuming households, are:

- less likely to say their household bought food and drinks from supermarkets 'more than once a week' (34.3%, compared with 53.1%)

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- less likely to say their household bought food and drinks from convenience stores 'more than once a week' (22.8%, compared with 34.5%)
- more likely to say their household bought food and drinks from takeaways 'less than once a month or never' (29.3%, compared with 4.3%).

Shopping spend

Parents/caregivers from low fat-consuming households, compared with parents/caregivers from high fat-consuming households, are more likely to have households in the low spend group for:

- grocery (eg, supermarket) locations (45.2%, compared with 32.4%)
- non-grocery (eg, dairy, takeaway) locations (43%, compared with 21.9%).
- overall spend (42.2%, compared with 31.3%).

Influences on shopping

Parents/caregivers from low fat-consuming households, compared with parents/caregivers from high fat-consuming households, are more likely to say 'seasonality' is an influence (21.6%, compared with 12.8%).

There were no other differences for influences on shopping related to fat consumption group.

Key points

Low fat-consuming households, compared with high fat-consuming households:

- shop less frequently at supermarkets and convenience stores
- spend less on food and drinks overall.

Empty-sugar consumption

Shopping frequency

Parents/caregivers from low empty-sugar-consuming households, compared with parents/caregivers from high empty-sugar-consuming households, are:

- more likely to say they bought food and drinks from supermarkets 'more than once a week' (46.3%, compared with 36.6%)
- less likely to say their household bought food and drinks from convenience stores 'more than once a week' (17.9%, compared with 32.3%)
- more likely to say their household bought food and drinks from takeaways 'less than once a month or never' (19.4%, compared with 9.4%)
- more likely to say their household bought food and drinks from dine-in venues 'less than once a month or never' (57.8%, compared with 43.4%).

Shopping spend

Parents/caregivers from low empty-sugar-consuming households, compared with parents/caregivers from high empty-sugar-consuming households, are:

- more likely to be in the high grocery (eg, supermarket) spend group (38.9%, compared with 22.8%)
- more likely to be in the high overall spend group (37.1%, compared with 25.7%).

Influences on shopping

Parents/caregivers from low empty-sugar-consuming households, compared with

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parents/caregivers from high empty-sugar-consuming households, are more likely to list the following as influences on their shopping choices:

- 'Freshness' (50.5%, compared with 37.8%).
- 'Healthiness' (50.4%, compared with 34.5%).
- 'Quality' (46.3%, compared with 26.9%).
- 'Seasonality' (26.7%, compared with 14.9%).
- 'Availability' (24.4%, compared with 11.5%).

Key points

Low empty-sugar-consuming households, compared with high empty-sugar-consuming households:

- shop less frequently at convenience stores
- shop more frequently at supermarkets
- spend more on food and drinks overall
- are more likely to list 'healthiness' and 'freshness' as influences on their shopping.

Fruit and vegetable consumption

Shopping frequency

Parents/caregivers from high fruit and vegetable-consuming households, compared with parents/caregivers from low fruit and vegetable-consuming households, are less likely to say their household bought food and drinks from:

- convenience stores 'more than once a week' (21%, compared with 32.2%)
- takeaways 'weekly' (29%, compared with 43.1%).

Parents/caregivers from high fruit and vegetable-consuming households are more likely

to say their household bought food and drinks from takeaways 'less than once a month or never' (20.8%) compared with parents/caregivers from low fruit and vegetable-consuming households (4.9%).

Parents/caregivers from low fruit and vegetable-consuming households are more likely to say their household bought food and drinks from green grocers 'less than once a month or never' (46.9%), compared with parents/caregivers from high fruit and vegetable-consuming households (25.7%).

Shopping spend

There were no differences between high fruit and vegetable-consuming households and low fruit and vegetable-consuming households for shopping spend.

Influences on shopping

Parents/caregivers from high-fruit and vegetable-consuming households, compared with parents/caregivers from low fruit and vegetable-consuming households, are more likely to list the following as influences on their shopping choices:

- 'Specials' (52.8%, compared with 33%).
- 'Healthiness' (52.4%, compared with 24.5%).
- 'Freshness' (50.4%, compared with 23.8%).
- 'Seasonality' (27.4%, compared with 4.7%).

Key points

High fruit and vegetable-consuming households, compared with low fruit and vegetable-consuming households:

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- shop less frequently at convenience stores and takeaways
 - shop more frequently at green grocers (as expected)
 - do not differ on spend for food and drinks
 - are more likely to list 'healthiness' as an influence on their shopping.
- with parents/caregivers from the more healthy consumption households tend to:
- have households that shop more frequently at convenience stores and takeaways
 - be less likely to say 'healthiness' influenced their food and drinks shopping behaviours (except for fat consumption).

Overall key points

Overall, parents/caregivers from the less healthy consumption households, compared

There were no consistent differences between household types for spend at grocery stores (eg, supermarket) an non-grocery stores (eg, dairy, takeaways), or for overall spend

About the Survey

- The HLS is a nationwide in-home face-to-face survey conducted every two years, starting in 2008. The 2010 HLS included a sample of 820 parents and caregivers with children aged 5- to 16-years-old. This sample provided information about their health behaviours and attitudes relating to tobacco, sun safety, healthy eating, and alcohol, and also answered questions about one of their children.
- In 2010, the parents and caregivers' sample, with a response rate of 54.8%, included 334 people of European/Other ethnicity, 232 Māori, 193 Pacific peoples and 61 Asian people (prioritised Māori ethnic groups).
- The data have been adjusted (weighted) to ensure they are representative of the New Zealand population.
- Appropriate statistical analyses were used to test for differences in responses by food and drinks consumption groups.
- A full description of the 2010 HLS survey methodology, questionnaire and further HLS publications can be found online at www.hsc.org.nz/researchpublications.html.

About the HSC

The HSC is a crown entity that uses health promotion initiatives to promote health and encourage healthy lifestyles, with a long-term focus on reducing the social, financial and health costs of a number of health behaviours.

References

Devlin, M. (2010). *Methodology Report for the 2010 Health and Lifestyles Survey*. Wellington: Health Sponsorship Council. Retrieved from <http://www.hsc.org.nz/researchpublications.html>

'Empty-sugar' is sugar consumed in products that contain few or no other nutrients (eg, full-sugar sweetened drinks).

Synovate. (2009). *Audience Segmentation for health promotion & social marketing initiatives relating to children's food & drink*. Report prepared for the Health Sponsorship Council. Auckland: Synovate.

Citation

Murray, S. J. (2012). *Shopping behaviours of different food and drinks consumption groups* [In Fact]. Wellington: Health Sponsorship Council.