

The 2014

# FOOD and YOU

Survey

Scotland Bulletin  
Executive Summary

# Food and You 2014: Scotland Bulletin

## Executive summary

### **Authors:**

Emily Pickering, TNS BMRB  
Gillian Prior, TNS BMRB  
Rachel Phillips, TNS BMRB  
Catherine O'Driscoll, TNS BMRB

# Acknowledgments

First and foremost our thanks go to all of the respondents who gave up their time to take part in the survey.

We would also like to thank colleagues at TNS BMRB who made a significant contribution to the project, the TNS Operations team and especially the many interviewers who worked on this study.

We also thank the Food and You Working Group – Joy Dobbs, Professor Anne Murcott, and Professor Richard Tiffin – for their valuable direction and guidance.

© Crown Copyright 2014

This report has been produced by TNS BMRB under a contract placed by the Food Standards Agency (the Agency). The views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Agency. TNS BMRB warrants that all reasonable skill and care has been used in preparing this report. Notwithstanding this warranty, TNS BMRB shall not be under any liability for loss of profit, business, revenues or any special indirect or consequential damage of any nature whatsoever or loss of anticipated saving or for any increased costs sustained by the client or his or her servants or agents arising in any way whether directly or indirectly as a result of reliance on this report or of any error or defect in this report.

# Executive summary

This summary presents the key findings for Scotland from Wave 3 of the Food and You survey, commissioned by the Food Standards Agency (FSA or the Agency). The Food and You survey is used to collect information about reported behaviours, attitudes and knowledge relating to food safety issues. It provides data on people's reports of their food purchasing, storage, preparation, consumption and factors that may affect these, such as eating habits, influences on where respondents choose to eat out, experiences of food poisoning, knowledge of healthy eating recommendations and attitudes towards healthy eating.

Wave 1 of the survey was carried out in 2010, Wave 2 in 2012 and Wave 3 in 2014.

Wave 3 consisted of 3,453 interviews with a representative sample of adults aged 16 and over across the UK. In total, 475 interviews were conducted in Scotland on which this report is based.

In addition to this executive summary, descriptive overviews of the key findings for Scotland from Wave 3 have been published in six separate bulletins, one for each of the following main topics:

- Eating, cooking and shopping
- Food safety in the home
- Eating outside the home
- Experience of food poisoning and attitudes towards food safety and food production
- Advice on healthy eating
- Eating and health

## Eating, cooking and shopping

Around six in ten respondents (63%) reported that they cooked or prepared food for themselves every day. Women were more likely to report preparing food for themselves (76%) and others (53%) on a daily basis compared with men (48% and 21% respectively). Those aged 16-24 (20%) and 75 and over (20%) were less likely than respondents aged 25-74 (42%) to report cooking for others on a daily basis.

The majority of respondents (73%) said that they did not have any specific dietary restrictions. Seven per cent reported being on a diet to lose weight, six per cent reported avoiding certain foods for medical reasons and five per cent said that they avoided foods for other reasons, such as foods that did not agree with them. Five per cent of respondents reported that they had a food allergy, and 11% reported living in a household where someone had a food allergy (not necessarily clinically diagnosed).

Respondents were most likely to report having learnt to cook from a family member (77%), with 62% saying this was the main way they had learnt. One in five (20%) reported that their cooking was mainly self-taught. There was greater variety in the

main ways respondents reported having learned about food safety: 45% reported learning about food safety from family and friends, 38% reported being self-taught, 31% learnt at school and 15% learnt on a course.

While respondents were most likely to report currently finding information about food safety from food TV shows (33%), family and friends (25%) and product packaging (22%), they were most likely to say that, in the future, they would use internet search engines to find information on food safety (reported by 45% of respondents). The proportion using internet search engines at present (16%) was similar to Wave 2 (15%).

The proportion of respondents saying they would ask family and friends in the future for information about food safety (14%) was lower than at Wave 2 (25%), as was current use of family and friends (25% at Wave 3 compared with 34% at Wave 2). Similarly, the proportion of respondents saying they would use product packaging in the future for finding information about food safety (12%) was lower than at Wave 2 (24%), as was reported current use of product packaging (22% at Wave 3 compared with 33% at Wave 2).

Around six in ten respondents (57%) said their household did a 'main' food shop on a weekly basis and 92% said large supermarkets were used for their household's main shopping trip. Over a third of respondents (36%) relied solely on large supermarkets for their household's food shopping.

Women were more likely than men to say they were responsible for all or most of their household's food and grocery shopping (68% compared with 33%).

Respondents were most likely to report usually buying raw meat that was fresh (92%) rather than frozen (28%), not specifically free range or organic (77%) and pre-packaged (76%). This was most likely to be from a large supermarket (71%), although around a third (35%) reported usually buying meat from an independent butcher.

Overall, 46% of respondents at Wave 3 said that they had made at least one change in their buying or eating arrangements in the last six months for financial reasons; similar to the proportion at Wave 2. Respondents reported buying items on special offer more (24%), eating at home more (19%), eating fewer takeaways (16%), eating out less (15%), making packed lunches more (14%), preparing food that could be kept as leftovers more (13%) or cooking at home more (12%). These findings were similar to those at Wave 2, although compared with Wave 1 fewer respondents reported eating out less (15% at Wave 3 compared with 25% at Wave 1), cooking at home more (12% at Wave 3 compared with 21% at Wave 1) and buying items on special offer more (24% at Wave 3 compared with 33% at Wave 1).

## **Food safety in the home**

The extent to which reported food safety practices were in line with Agency recommendations varied depending on the type of practice.

Around eight in ten respondents (79%) reported **cleaning** behaviours in line with recommended practices, saying they always washed their hands before starting to prepare or cook food and after handling raw meat, poultry or fish.

Around half (56%) of those who reported storing raw meat and poultry in the fridge reported practices in line with those recommended to avoid **cross contamination**. This meant that they reported storing raw meat and poultry separately from ready-to-eat foods and in sealed containers or at the bottom of the fridge. Around four in five respondents (79%) reported keeping certain foods in certain parts of the fridge, and, of these, 84% said this was for reasons of food safety, hygiene, or to stop cross contamination.

Other behaviours that risk cross contamination were also explored. Around half of respondents (51%) said they always used different chopping boards for different types of food. Fifty-two per cent of respondents reported that they never washed raw meat or poultry, excluding chicken and 38% said that they never washed raw chicken.

Around half of respondents who had a fridge (49%) said the fridge temperature should be between 0°C and 5°C (the recommended temperature). In total, 12% of respondents who had a fridge reported behaviour in line with recommended practice for **chilling** (i.e. checking that their fridge temperature is between 0°C and 5°C, at least monthly, using a thermometer). Just under half of respondents who had a fridge (45%) reported never checking their fridge temperature.

The majority of respondents reported always **cooking** food until it is steaming hot throughout (88%) in line with recommended practice. Ninety-two per cent of respondents reported that they never ate chicken or turkey if the meat was pink or had pink or red juices, similar to the proportions at Waves 1 and 2. The majority said they would reheat food only once (84%), or not at all (nine per cent) in line with recommended **reheating** practice.

Around four in five respondents (84%) reported that they would eat leftover food within two days of cooking it, in line with recommended practice.

Women were generally more likely than men to report food safety practices in line with recommended practice. For example, women were more likely than men to report always washing their hands before preparing food (87% compared with 77%). Women were also more likely to report always cooking food until it is steaming hot throughout (93% compared with 82% of men) and always using different chopping boards for different foods (57% compared with 45%). Women were, however, more likely than men to report sometimes washing raw chicken (14% compared with five per cent).

Older respondents were less likely to report some practices in line with recommended practice compared with younger age groups. For example, those aged 75 and over were more likely than those aged 16-74 to report never checking the use by date when preparing or cooking food (21% compared with six per cent).

## **Eating outside the home**

In line with Waves 1 and 2, 76% of respondents reported eating out or buying food to take away in the last week. Around one in ten respondents (eight per cent) reported eating out six times or more in the last week.

When asked what was important to them when deciding where to eat out, 63% of respondents said that the cleanliness and hygiene of eating establishments was important. Around one in five said a good hygiene rating was important (21%). Good service (57%), recommendations and reviews (43%) and price (40%) were also selected as important factors when deciding where to eat out.

Forty-one per cent of respondents who ate out said that food was less safe when eating out compared with eating at home, similar to the proportion at Wave 2.

While three quarters (75%) of respondents said they were aware of standards of hygiene when eating out, 14% said they were not. Respondents aged 16-44 were less likely than those aged 45 and over to say that they were aware of hygiene standards (67% compared with 81%).

As at Waves 1 and 2, respondents were most likely to report judging the hygiene standards of food establishments from their appearance or the appearance of their staff (62% and 41% respectively at Wave 3). A quarter (25%) said they used a hygiene certificate or sticker to judge hygiene standards, similar to the proportion at Wave 2, compared with 17% at Wave 1

Seven in ten respondents (70%) reported having seen the stickers and certificates belonging to different food hygiene rating schemes, compared with 54% at Wave 2. Recognition of the Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS) in Scotland was reported by 59% of respondents, compared with 44% at Wave 2. The vast majority of those who recognised the FHIS Scotland sticker or certificate at Wave 3 said they had seen it in the window or door of a food establishment (91%).

Overall, around one in ten respondents (12%) reported having used a hygiene rating scheme in the past 12 months to check an establishment's rating before deciding to eat there, compared with six per cent at Wave 2. Among these respondents using a scheme, almost all (97%) said they had used the information in the establishment's door or window. Six per cent reported that they had checked the rating on the internet. Of those who had used a scheme, 88% said they found it helpful.

## **Food poisoning and attitudes towards food safety and production**

Around a third of respondents (32%) reported experiencing food poisoning in the past, with 11% reporting having had it more than once (compared with 19% at Wave 1). Four per cent of respondents reported having had food poisoning in the past year, with one per cent reporting having had it more than once during this time. Women were no less likely than men to report having ever experienced food poisoning, but they were more likely to report having had it just once (27% of men reported having food poisoning more than once compared with 16% of women). As a consequence of having had food poisoning, 32% of respondents reported that they had stopped eating at certain food establishments.

Around three-quarters of respondents (78%) agreed with the statement 'I am unlikely to get food poisoning from food prepared in my own home' and twenty-three per cent agreed that 'it is just bad luck if you get food poisoning'. Around four in ten respondents (38%) agreed that 'if you eat out a lot you are more likely to get food poisoning'. Around seven in ten respondents (71%) agreed with the statement 'restaurants should pay more attention to food safety and hygiene', compared with 82% at Wave 2.

Around half (54%) of respondents said they always avoid throwing food away, similar to Wave 2 and compared with 43% at Wave 1. Around six in ten (58%) agreed with the statement 'a little bit of dirt won't do you any harm' compared with half (50%) at Wave 2, and around one in five respondents (19%) agreed that they often worried about whether the food they have is safe to eat compared with 26% and 27% at Waves 1 and 2 respectively.

Respondents were more likely to express concern about food imported from outside the UK (64%) than about food produced in the UK (34%). Greater concern was reported about meat than about fruit and vegetables: 64% of respondents said they were concerned about imported meat and 31% that they were concerned about meat produced in the UK, while 37% said they were concerned about imported fruit and vegetables and 20% about UK produced fruit and vegetables.

## **Advice on healthy eating**

Respondents were shown a picture of a blank plate with the eatwell plate sections marked but not labelled, and were asked to place cards showing each of the food groups in the recommended sections on the plate to represent what they thought was the recommended balanced diet. Sixteen per cent of respondents placed all five food groups in the recommended sections of the eatwell plate. Two-thirds (67%) placed three of the five food groups in the recommended sections, nine per cent placed two food groups in the recommended sections, five per cent placed one food group in the recommended section and two per cent placed none of the food groups in the recommended sections. The foods least frequently placed in their recommended sections were protein (33%) and starchy foods (32%).

A number of measures were included in the survey related to the Government's '8 tips for eating well' advice. Eating fruit and vegetables (82%), drinking plenty of water (81%) and eating breakfast every day (71%) were the factors most commonly rated as being very important for a healthy lifestyle. Between 60% and 70% of respondents said that it was very important to limit foods high in sugar, fat and saturated fat. Around six in ten respondents said keeping to a healthy weight (63%) or eating less salt (62%) was very important. Forty-five per cent thought that it was very important to eat fish and 26% said this about starchy foods.

In terms of awareness of dietary guidelines, around three in ten (29%) stated that the recommended daily intake of calories for women was 2,000 calories per day, and 27% said this was 2,500 calories per day for men. Younger respondents aged 16-34 were more likely to give an answer in line with the FSA recommendations than those aged 35 or over. Overall, 71% of respondents stated that the recommended number of portions of fruit and vegetables to eat per day was five, compared with 86% at both Waves 1 and 2. At least six in ten respondents identified that frozen vegetables (93% compared with 82% at Wave 1), pure fruit juice (84%), dried fruit (84%



compared with 77% at Wave 1), tinned fruit or vegetables (79%), fruit smoothies (75%), baked beans (63% compared with 53% at Wave 1) and pulses (62%) count towards the recommended minimum of five portions of fruit and vegetables per day, in line with FSA guidance.

Eight per cent of respondents stated that the recommended daily intake of salt was 6g, in line with FSA recommendations. Similarly, a small proportion of respondents said that the maximum daily intake of total fat is 95g for men (reported by two per cent of male respondents) and 70g for women (seven per cent of female respondents), in line with guidance. After being told the recommended maximum daily intake of total fat, six per cent of male respondents and 12% of female respondents said the maximum daily intake for saturated fat was 30g or 20g respectively, in line with Agency recommendations.

## **Eating and health**

Almost all respondents agreed that what you eat makes a big difference to how healthy you are (94%) and that small dietary changes can lead to benefits for future health (91%). The majority (82%) of respondents thought that the food that they usually ate was very or fairly healthy and over half (56%) agreed with the statement 'I do not need to make any changes to the food I eat, as it is already healthy enough'.

Around four-fifths of respondents (81%) agreed that the experts contradict each other over what foods are good for you (compared with 74% at Wave 1) and around two-fifths (37%) agreed that they get confused over what is supposed to be healthy and what isn't.

The types of food that respondents most frequently reported eating at least once a day were milk and dairy foods (77%), starchy foods (73%) and fruit and vegetables (65%), and around two-fifths (41%) reported eating five or more portions of fruit and vegetables on the day before they were interviewed. Three in ten respondents (30%) reported eating biscuits, pastries and cakes at least once a day and around half (55%) said they ate these foods three or four times a week or more often.

When asked about changes they may have made to the food they ate over the past six months, 28% of respondents said that they were eating more fruit and vegetables and a fifth said that they were eating smaller portions (20% compared with 30% at Wave 1). Around one in seven said that they were eating less salt (16%), eating less food high in fat in general (16%), eating less food high in saturated fat (14%), eating fewer calories (15%) or eating less starchy foods (14%).

Around two-fifths of those who reported that they had made changes to their diet in the past six months said that they had done so to be healthier or have a healthier lifestyle (42%) or to lose weight or maintain their weight (40%). A quarter (25%) said that they had made changes for health reasons. The most common difficulty mentioned by respondents which could prevent them from eating more healthily was the cost of food (18%). Forty-three per cent said that they would not have any difficulties in trying to eat more healthily (compared with 23% at Wave 1).

Around half of respondents (55%) said that the food they ate outside of the home was less healthy than the food they ate when at home and 65% named at least one

type of food establishment where they would like to see more information about healthy options. Around a third (35%) said that they would not like to see more information in any of the places listed (compared with 26% at Wave 2 and 19% at Wave 1). Looking at the specific places where respondents said they would want to see more information, respondents were most likely to mention restaurants (46% compared with 62% at Wave 1), takeaway outlets (41% compared with 50% at Wave 2 and 59% at Wave 1) and fast food outlets (38% compared with 47% at Wave 1).