

National Diet and Nutrition Survey Report for Northern Ireland Published

The National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS) is a continuous cross-sectional survey, designed to assess the diet, nutrient intake and nutritional status of the general population aged 18 months and over living in private households in the UK.

To provide a representative sample of the Northern Ireland population, each fieldwork year, Department of Health, FSA and Safefood, fund the additional recruitment of around 100 adults, aged 19 years and older and 100 children, aged 18 months to 18 years living in Northern Ireland to be surveyed.

Key Findings

Fruit and Vegetables

- Fruit and vegetable intake was below the '5 A Day'* recommendation in all age and sex groups.
- Only 4% of 11- to 18-year-olds meet the '5 A Day' recommendation for fruit and vegetable intake.
- As income increased, the percentage of those meeting the '5-A-Day' recommendation for fruit and vegetable intake also increased.

Fibre

- Fibre intake was below government recommendations for all age groups.
- In men aged 65 years and over, fibre intake increased with increasing income.

Sugar

- 11- to 18-year-olds were the highest mean consumers of sugary, fizzy drinks and squashes at 167mls/day.
- Mean consumption of confectionary was highest in 11- to 18-year-olds, at 14g/day for boys, and 20g/day for girls.

Red Meat

- 11- to 18-year-old boys were the highest mean consumers of meat products (67g/day).
- Women aged 65 years and over were the lowest mean consumers (17g/day).
- Apart from 4- to 10-year-olds mean daily consumption was higher for males than females.

Chips and Fried Foods

- The highest mean consumption of chips and other fried foods was among 11- to 18-year-olds (37g/day for boys and 50g/day for girls).

- Consumption was lowest for 65-year-olds and over (16g/day for men and 8g/day for women).

Saturated Fat and Free Sugars

- In all age groups, recommendations for intake of mean saturated fatty acids and free sugars were exceeded.

Total Energy

- Mean daily intakes of total energy in 18 months to 3-year-olds exceeded the Estimated Average Requirement (EAR) and were close to the EAR for 4- to 10-year-olds.

Out of Home Food Consumption

- 88% of 11- to 18-year-olds reported buying food or drink from the out of home sector (for example cafes, pubs, takeaways) in the last 7 days followed by 84% of 19- to 64-year-olds and 80% of 4- to 10-year-olds.

Discussing the survey and what the findings mean Naomi Davidson, Head of Science and Surveillance, Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland said:

The NDNS report provides the only source of nationally representative data on the types and quantities of foods consumed by individuals, from which estimates of nutrient intake for the population are derived. The findings indicate that in Northern Ireland we are eating too much sugar, saturated fat, red and processed meat and not enough fruit and vegetables, oily fish or fibre.

The survey is important as results are used by government to monitor progress toward diet and nutrition objectives of UK Health Departments and to develop policy interventions, for example, work to monitor progress towards a healthy, balanced diet as visually depicted in the Eatwell Guide.”

Naomi Davidson, Head of Science and Surveillance at the FSA

Read the report here: <https://www.food.gov.uk/research/national-diet-and-nutrition-survey/national-diet-and-nutrition-survey-2017-to-2023-report-for-northern-ireland>