

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Study reveals that a third of British children eat crisps every day

A YouGov SixthSense study into the nation's snacking habits has revealed that almost two-thirds of British children aged 8-15 regularly snack on crisps, with a third doing so every day.

The report found that the total number of 8-15 year-olds who eat any healthy snacks (i.e. fruit, vegetables, seeds or rice cakes) is significantly outnumbered by those who eat any 'standard' snack (i.e. crisps, biscuits, confectionery and cakes), with 89% eating the latter and 58% the former.

In addition, confectionery as a whole proves more popular than fruit, with 63% of children having it as a snack against 54% opting for fruit.

Almost seven in 10 8-15 year-olds snack at least once a day, with 16% doing so twice a day or more. Older children, who are more likely to purchase snacks for themselves, are the most frequent snackers – especially boys (22% of those aged 12-15). Girls are the most likely to snack at someone else's house (20% versus 13% of boys), suggesting they are more likely to see it as a social activity.

Adult snacking

Fruit is the most popular snack amongst British adults (51%), followed by crisps (43%), sweet/chocolate biscuits (40%), chocolate bars (36%) and other chocolate confectionery (27%).

The YouGov SixthSense study found that women tend to snack more for enjoyment, to satisfy cravings, or to cheer themselves up, while men are most likely to snack because they are hungry. For instance, 46% of male crisp eaters say they eat them because they are hungry, while 36% of women say they eat them to satisfy cravings. Similarly, older girls are much more likely than any other children to cite cheering themselves up as a reason for eating confectionery.

Weight concerns

The vast majority of consumers believe that their weight is about right or that they are 'slightly overweight', and only 16% say they are 'very overweight'. Older people are more likely to see themselves as overweight than younger (72% of over-55s versus 29% of those aged 16-24).

Only 14% of adults consider their children to be slightly overweight and just 1% very overweight. Only a tiny proportion of 8-15 year-olds (2%) are currently on a diet.

Commenting on the report, YouGov SixthSense Research Director James McCoy said: "Anyone concerned about childhood obesity in Britain will likely find this report alarming. While it's encouraging that fruit rates highly as a snack choice for children, they are still eating far more crisps and confectionery products. With a third of 8-15 year-olds eating crisps every single day it's clear that more needs to be done to make healthier snack options more appealing to children."

The YouGov SixthSense report looked at three key snack food markets – confectionery, crisps/savoury snacks and cakes/biscuits – which are estimated to have generated £13billion in retail sales in the UK in 2012.

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Notes to editors:

For this report, a survey was commissioned among a nationally representative sample of 2,100 adults aged 16+, with a further survey among a nationally representative sample of 502 children aged 8-15. Fieldwork for the Adult's Snacking Survey was undertaken 23-26 January 2013. Fieldwork for the Children's Snacking Survey was undertaken 18-24 January 2013.

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Bespoke data is collected through YouGov's proprietary panel of over 350,000 UK consumers. Highly qualified analysts use this data to deliver insight, comment, opinion and advice on the latest market trends and conditions.

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