

NewsLetter



Changes in food purchasing behaviour

Study shows we're eating more calories, fat and salt but less sugar

The [Office for Health Improvement and Disparities](#) has published a new report highlighting how food and drink purchasing changed between 2021 and 2023 and the impact this had on diet and nutrition.

The backdrop to this study was a nation emerging from the pandemic and facing a cost-of-living crisis. This was most markedly evident in the data for take home shopping, such as supermarket purchases, where food inflation in 2023 rose to 25%. A small decline in both the variety and volume of foods purchased was observed.

Those who considered themselves struggling, in less affluent households (C2DE) and those households with young families saw the largest impact on their expenditure. This may be because relatively more of their expenditure was on categories which have seen higher price increases compared to more affluent households.

In contrast the "out of home" sector, which includes restaurant and take-away purchases, saw an increase in sales in 2023 as the hospitality industry continued its post-covid recovery.

Impact on nutrition

When looking at take home and out of home purchasing combined there was an increase in the amount of calories purchased (up 1.4% on 2022), saturated fat (up 3.1% on 2022) and salt (up 1.4% on 2022), while there was a decrease in the amount of sugar purchased (down 0.7%).

For the eating out of home nutrition analysis, it is possible to look at the "coping strategies" to determine the reasoning behind any increase or decrease in the specific nutrient.

For all the nutrients looked at, the main driver for the increases was "repeat volume", signifying that people were eating out of home more. When looking at take home and out of home combined, the increase in calories purchased (up 1.4% on 2022) was bigger than the increase in volume purchased (0.6%) indicating that people's diets were more calorific.

The increase in calories, salt and saturated fat purchased are greater than the overall increase in volume purchased, suggesting that, in 2023, people's diets contained more calories, and proportionally more fat and salt than one year previously.

More information

- [Changes in food and drink purchasing behaviour and the impact on diet and nutrition: 2021 to 2023](#)