

Children's attitudes towards food

Omnibus Research Report Prepared for the Food Standards Agency by COI April 2007

Key findings

Diet

- Most children (69%) said they choose just some of the food they eat at home, with one in six (16%) saying 'all' and one in ten (11%) children 'very little' of it. Only 3% of children said they choose none of the food they eat at home.

Attitudes towards food and healthy eating

Concerns about food

- Almost six in ten children (58%) had no worries about foods, with those aged 7 to 9 least likely of all children to worry about food (66% of this age group had no worries).
- The top five concerns mentioned covered food-related disease and / or illnesses like bird flu (of which there was an outbreak in England during fieldwork) (11%) and food poisoning (9%), as well as nutritional issues such as the amount of fat (12%), sugar (6%) and salt (5%) in food.

General attitudes & sources of information about food

- Overall, children agreed that a healthy diet was important: 95% agreed that eating healthy food would help them grow and be healthier. Eight in ten agreed that healthy eating was very important *to them* (82%) and that their parents and/or other grown-ups *made them* eat healthy food (84%).
- Younger children (aged 7-12) were significantly more likely to agree strongly with these statements than older children (aged 13-16)
- Children also had generally positive feelings towards cooking and mealtimes. Seven in ten (71%) children really enjoyed cooking and two thirds (66%) normally sat at the table with their family when eating meals at home. Again it was the younger children (aged 7-12) who were significantly the most likely to agree strongly with these statements.
- Just over half of children interviewed (57%) agreed that TV and/or magazine ads made them want to eat certain foods.
- Mass media was a common source of information about healthy eating for children. Around seven in ten (69%) children said they got information about healthy eating from the TV, one in ten (12%) from the radio and just under a quarter (23%) from magazines.

- Encouragingly, the vast majority (79%) of children said they saw or heard information about healthy eating at school and three in ten (31%) said they got information from their family and friends.

Eating habits

Awareness of 5-a-day

- The majority of children (70%) were aware that they should eat five portions of fruit and vegetables every day.

Food types children were trying to consume more or less of

- Most children (72%) said they were trying to cut down on, or cut out, at least one type of food from their diet.
- The most common types of food that children said they were cutting down on were foods containing sugar (42%) and fizzy drinks (39%), with almost six in ten (58%) saying they were trying to cut down on at least one type of sugar (in food, fizzy drinks and/or other drinks containing sugar).
- Over a quarter (27%) were trying to cut down on salt (27%) and foods containing fat (26%), whilst one in five said they were trying to cut down on ready meals (19%).
- Around seven in ten (72%) said they were trying to eat more fresh fruit, with half (49%) trying to eat more fresh vegetables. Just over four in ten (44%) were trying to eat more yogurt and a similar proportion (38%) were trying to eat more salad.
- Just under three in ten (28%) said they were trying to eat more wholemeal or wholegrain bread, while a quarter (27%) were trying to eat more fish (20% white fish = 20%, oily fish = 15%).

Whether eat breakfast and/or snack between meals

- The majority of children (83%) had eaten breakfast the day before they were interviewed, with just 17% saying they had not. Those aged 7 to 9 were most likely (94%) of all age groups to eat breakfast.
- Three quarters (77%) also had eaten between meals the day before they were interviewed. Those who had eaten between meals (n=674) were also asked what they had eaten. The top two choices were crisps and/or savoury snacks (34%) and fresh fruit (32%), followed by baked goods, such as biscuits and cakes, (26%) and chocolate bars (25%).

Whether interested in joining a cooking club

- Just under half (46%) were not interested in joining a cooking club that happened after school or at weekends, even if it was near to home. Just under four in ten (37%) said they were interested, while 15% said they were 'maybe interested'.

Background and methodology

The Food Standards Agency is committed to conducting research on consumer attitudes towards food issues, in order to inform future activity. It conducts an annual Consumer Attitudes Survey of 3,500+ UK adults (aged 16+), as part of a wider consumer engagement programme that includes regular visits to School Councils across the UK to listen to the views of children. However to gather some quantitative data about their views on food, they conducted a survey amongst children.

Questions were placed on a GB-wide children's omnibus survey run by GfK NOP and are detailed in Appendix 1. The Omnibus interviews were conducted face-to-face utilising multimedia CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing). A sample of 883 children aged 7 to 16 across Great Britain was interviewed between the 8th February and 13th March 2007. Each interviewer was provided with quotas set on gender, age and working status in order to achieve a representative sample within each sampled area. The data was weighted at the analysis stage to ensure that the final sample was demographically representative across Great Britain (in terms of age, sex, number of adults in household, social class and working status of adults and region). Appendix 2 has the full sample profile (weighted), including demographic and regional breakdowns.

The social grade definitions referred to throughout this report are based on the Chief Income Earner in the household of the respondent. In most cases this would be the primary carer of the child interviewed. Brief explanations of the social grade definitions are shown in the table below:

Social Grade	Definition
A	Higher managerial, administrative or professional
B	Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional
C1	Supervisory or clerical, and junior managerial, administrative or professional
C2	Skilled manual workers
D	Semi and unskilled workers
E	State pensioners or widows (no other earner), casual or low grade workers

There are some references throughout the report to the Agency's Consumer Attitudes survey (CAS 2006). Whilst the same questions were used in both surveys (with some degree of language simplification for children in this survey), it should be noted that CAS has a much larger sample size (n=3513), was conducted throughout the UK (rather than GB as with this survey) and fieldwork for this survey was carried out during a different time period (between August and October 2006). However, it is still useful to draw some comparison for illustrative purposes only and, where possible, this has been carried out.

The map shown below illustrates the nine government regions across England that are referred to in this report. Respondents from Scotland and Wales were also included in this research.



All significant sub-group differences referred to in this report are statistically significant at a 95% confidence level (statistical significance=0.05). Due to the fact that a representative sample, rather than the entire population was interviewed, the results are subject to sampling tolerances. For example where 50% of the people in our sample respond with a particular answer, there is a 95% probability that this result would not vary more than 2% from the results that would have been obtained from a census of the entire population. Sample tolerances or 'confidence limits' vary by the percentage response and the sample size, hence why the percentage difference required to produce a significant result will vary throughout the report.

1. Diet

This chapter looks at the external factors that affect children’s diets, considering how much choice they have when it comes to the food that they eat at home, and whether they have any special dietary requirements.

Chart 1 Amount of choice in food eaten at home (%)



As Chart 1 shows, one in six children (16%) felt they choose all of the food they eat at home, while the majority (69%) choose just some of their food. One in ten (11%) had very little choice in their food and just 3% said they had no choice in the food they eat at home.

Overall, 85% of children felt they had a choice in some or all of the food they ate at home, but girls were more likely (89%) to have this level of choice than boys (82%).

Table 1 Amount of choice in food eaten at home by age (%)

	All children	7-9	10-12	13-16
Base	883	265	272	346
I choose all	16	6	12	26
I choose some	69	72	74	64
I choose very little	11	18	12	6
I do not choose any	3	4	2	4

Significant differences between the groups are highlighted on the table.

As Table 1 demonstrates, the level of freedom children had in choosing the food they eat at home increased steadily with age. Those aged 10 to 12 were twice as likely (12%) as those aged 7 to 9 (6%) to choose all the food they eat at home; furthermore, those aged 13 to 16 were twice as likely (26%) as those aged 10 to 12 to choose all their food.

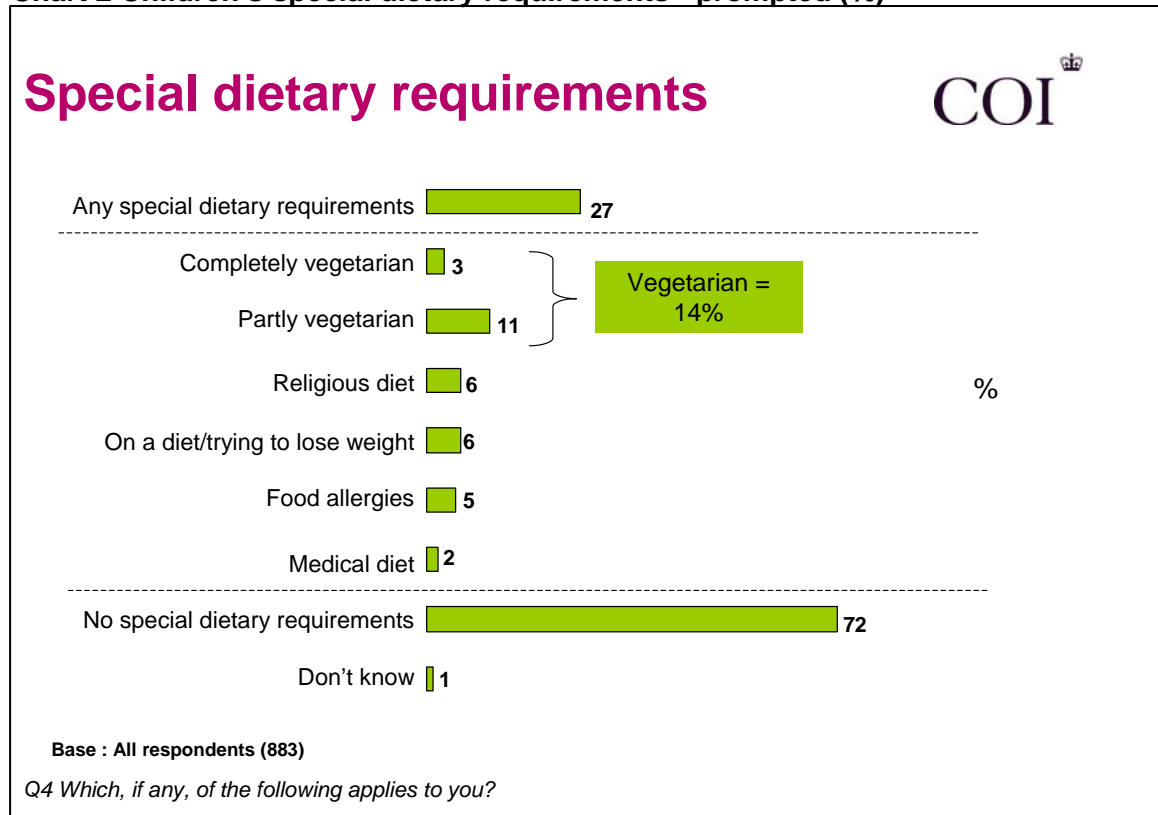
There was also a difference between children from different socio-economic backgrounds. Firstly, children with DE parents were more likely (30%) to choose all their food than those with AB parents (18%). Secondly, those who were from single parent families were also more likely (30%) to choose all their food at home than those whose parents were married (11%) or widowed/separated/divorced (20%)¹. There was, however, some correlation between the social grade and the marital status of parents, as shown in Table 1 in the Appendix 3, which explains this in part.

Children from London were more likely (24%) than average (16%) to choose all the food they eat, while those from the South West were more likely (12%) than average (3%) to say they choose none of the food they eat at home.

¹ Adults interviewed were asked whether they considered themselves to be married, single, or widowed/separated/divorced.

All children were shown a list of special diets and asked which applied to them, if any.

Chart 2 Children's special dietary requirements - prompted (%)



As Chart 2 shows, most children (72%) had no special dietary requirements. One in seven (14%) said they were vegetarian (although just 3% were completely vegetarian), one in twenty were on a religious diet (6%), trying to lose weight (6%) or had a food allergy (5%). Just 2% were on a diet for medical reasons.

The Agency's Consumer Attitudes Survey (CAS)² indicates that adults are more likely (39%) than children (28%) to have at least one special dietary requirement, and in particular they were more likely to have a medical diet to follow (16% compared with 2% of children).

² Full details of the survey can be found at <http://www.food.gov.uk/science/surveys/foodsafety-nutrition-diet/cas07>.

The background and methodology section of this report points to the main differences between these surveys.

Table 2 Children's special dietary requirements by age (%)

	All children	7-9	10-12	13-16
Base	883	265	272	346
Any	27	30	31	22
Vegetarian (completely/partly)	13	16	16	10
Special diet (allergies/medical/religious)	12	15	16	6
On a diet/ trying to lose weight	6	3	4	8
None of these	72	69	68	77

Significant differences between the groups are highlighted on the table.

There were some differences across the age groups, with younger children more likely to be excluding particular types of foods from their diets (Table 2). Indeed, those aged 7 to 9 and 10 to 12 were more likely (30% and 31% respectively) than 13 to 16 year olds (22%) to have any special dietary requirement.

In particular, younger children were more likely to be partly or completely vegetarian (16% compared with 10% of 13 to 16 year olds) and more likely (16%) to have special diets (allergy/medical/religious) than 13 to 16 year olds (6%). However, those aged 13 to 16 were twice as likely (8%) as younger children (4%) to say they were on a diet or trying to lose weight.

Children living in London were twice as likely (53%) as average (27%) to have at least one special dietary requirement, while those living in Wales and Scotland were less likely (17% and 13% respectively) than average to.

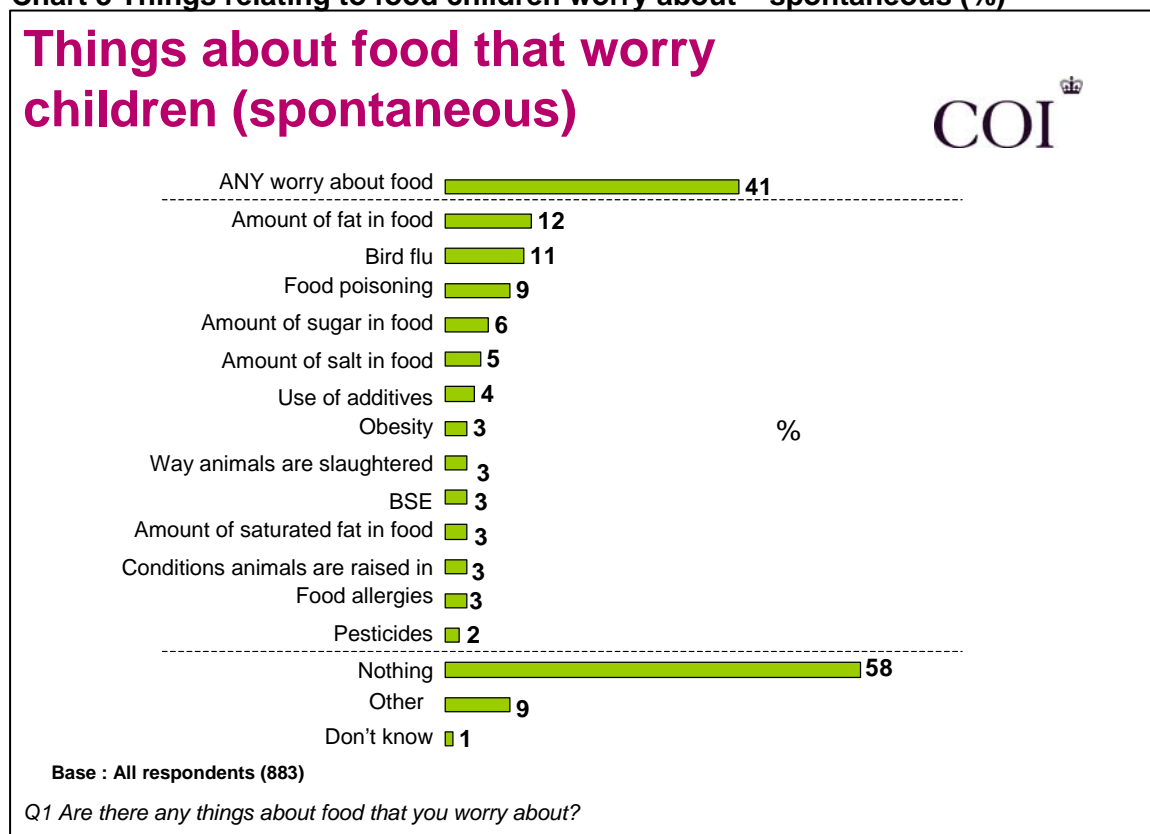
There were no differences by parental social grade or marital status.

2. General attitudes towards food and healthy eating

This chapter looks at whether there were any things about food that worry children, the attitudes they have towards food generally and whether they know how many portions of fruit and vegetables they should eat every day. Finally, it considers where children get information about healthy eating from.

Chart 3 shows the wide range of food-related issues that were top of mind for children in Spring 2007.

Chart 3 Things relating to food children worry about – spontaneous (%)



Four in ten (41%) children could name at least one aspect of food that they worried about, whilst almost six in ten (58%) children had no worries/concerns. Around one in ten (12%) worried about the amount of fat in food, about bird flu (11%) (of which there was an outbreak in England during fieldwork) and about food poisoning, such as salmonella (9%).

As well as worrying about the amount of fat in food, around one in twenty were concerned about some other nutritional aspects of food, including the amount of sugar (6%) and the amount of salt (5%) in food. Other worries raised included: additives in food (4%); obesity (3%); animal welfare (slaughtering – 3% and conditions – 3%); BSE (3%); the amount of saturated fat in food (3%); allergies (3%) and the use of pesticides (2%).

CAS indicates that adults were as likely (46%) as children (42%) to worry about at least one food issue, however adults worried about a different range of issues, including their children's diets (6%). The most top of mind issue for adults in 2006 was additives and preservatives in food (10%), which just 4% of children mentioned.

Girls were more likely (7%) than boys (3%) to raise concerns about where the food comes from, in particular about how animals are slaughtered (girls = 5%, boys = 1%). Children aged 7 to 9 were least likely of all age groups to worry about any aspects of food, with around one third (32%) having at least one food-related concern (compared with an average of 41%). Table 3 shows the differences by age group in more detail.

Table 3 Food-related issues children worry about by age group (%)

	All children	7-9	10-12	13-16
Base	883	265	272	346
Any concern	41	32	40	47
At least one comment about diet/nutrition	18	11	20	22
At least one comment about disease/illness	17	8	18	22
At least one comment about the ingredients in food	7	5	5	10
At least one comment about food source	5	5	5	5

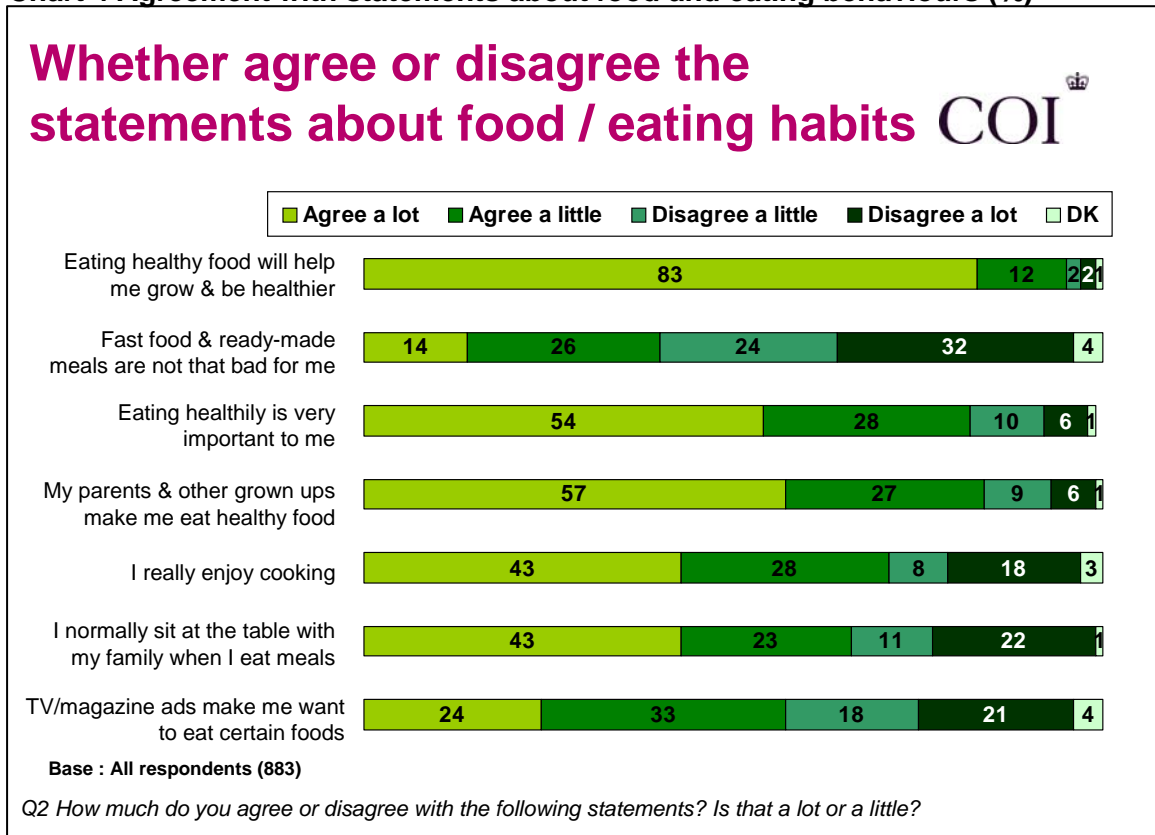
Significant differences between the groups are highlighted on the table.

Looking across the regions, those living in East England were more likely (23%) than average (18%) to say they were worried about diet/nutrition issues, whilst those living in the West Midlands and the North West were more likely (28% and 27% respectively) than all other regions to mention food-related diseases that they were worried about. Children in East Midlands, the South West and Yorkshire & Humberside were twice as likely (10%) as others (average = 5%) to say they were concerned about where food came from.

There were no differences by the social grade or marital status of the children's parents.

Children were shown seven statements and asked whether they agreed or disagreed (a lot or a little) with each statement. Chart 4 shows the results.

Chart 4 Agreement with statements about food and eating behaviours (%)



Overall, children agreed that a healthy diet was important. The majority (95%) agreed that eating healthy food would help them grow and be healthier, while four in ten (40%) said that fast food and ready-made meals were not that bad for them (agreed a lot or a little). Encouragingly, children were just as likely to agree that healthy eating was very important *to them* (82%), as they were to agree that their parents and/or other grown-ups *made them* eat healthy food (84%).

Children also had generally positive feelings towards cooking and mealtimes. Seven in ten (71%) children agreed that they really enjoyed cooking, with over four in ten (43%) agreeing a lot with this statement. Two thirds (66%) had traditional meal times at home, agreeing that they normally sit at the table with their family when eating meals.

Just over half of children interviewed (57%) agreed that TV and/or magazine ads made them want to eat certain foods.

CAS 2006 indicates that adults were slightly more likely (89%) than children (82%) to agree that eating healthily is very important to them, while children were more likely (71% compared with 66%) to agree that they really enjoy cooking.

Table 4 Percentage who agree a lot with each statement about food by age group (%)

	All children	7-9	10-12	13-16
Base	883	265	272	346
Healthy food will help me grow & be healthier	83	89	87	77
Fast food & ready-made meals are not that bad for me	14	17	10	14
Eating healthily is very important to me	54	69	60	40
My parents & other grown ups make me eat healthy food	57	72	62	42
I really enjoy cooking	43	48	50	33
I normally sit at the table with my family at mealtimes	43	52	43	37
TV/magazine adverts make me want to eat certain foods	24	27	22	23

Significant differences between the groups are highlighted on the table.

As Table 4 illustrates, younger children, especially those aged 7 to 9, were more likely to agree strongly (a lot) with most of the healthy eating messages. In particular, they were more likely than average to agree strongly that healthy food helps them to grow (89%) and that eating healthily is important to them (69%). Perhaps unsurprisingly, younger children were also more likely to be influenced by their parents, with 72% strongly agreeing that their parents and other adults make them eat healthy food (average = 57%) and 52% strongly agreeing that they normally sit at the table with their family at mealtimes (average = 43%).

Table 5 Percentage who agree a lot with each statement about food by parents' social grade (%)

	All children	AB	C1	C2	DE
Base	883	150	247	202	284
Healthy food will help me grow & be healthier	83	88	83	84	80
Fast food & ready-made meals are not that bad for me	14	8	11	13	22
Eating healthily is very important to me	54	54	59	54	50
My parents & other grown ups make me eat healthy food	57	64	53	59	54
I really enjoy cooking	43	55	40	41	39
I normally sit at the table with my family at mealtimes	43	58	44	44	33
TV/magazine adverts make me want to eat certain foods	24	21	22	21	28

Significant differences between the groups are highlighted on the table.

Children's attitudes towards food also varied depending on the social grade of their parent/guardian. As Table 5 indicates, children of AB parents were more likely than average to strongly agree with statements about health eating, and were more likely to be influenced by their parents (58% sit with their family at mealtimes compared with 33% of DEs). Children from DE families were twice as likely (22%) as those from other social grades (11%) to strongly agree that fast food and ready-made meals are not that bad for them.

Children from the London region were more likely than average to agree strongly with several statements about food and their eating behaviour:

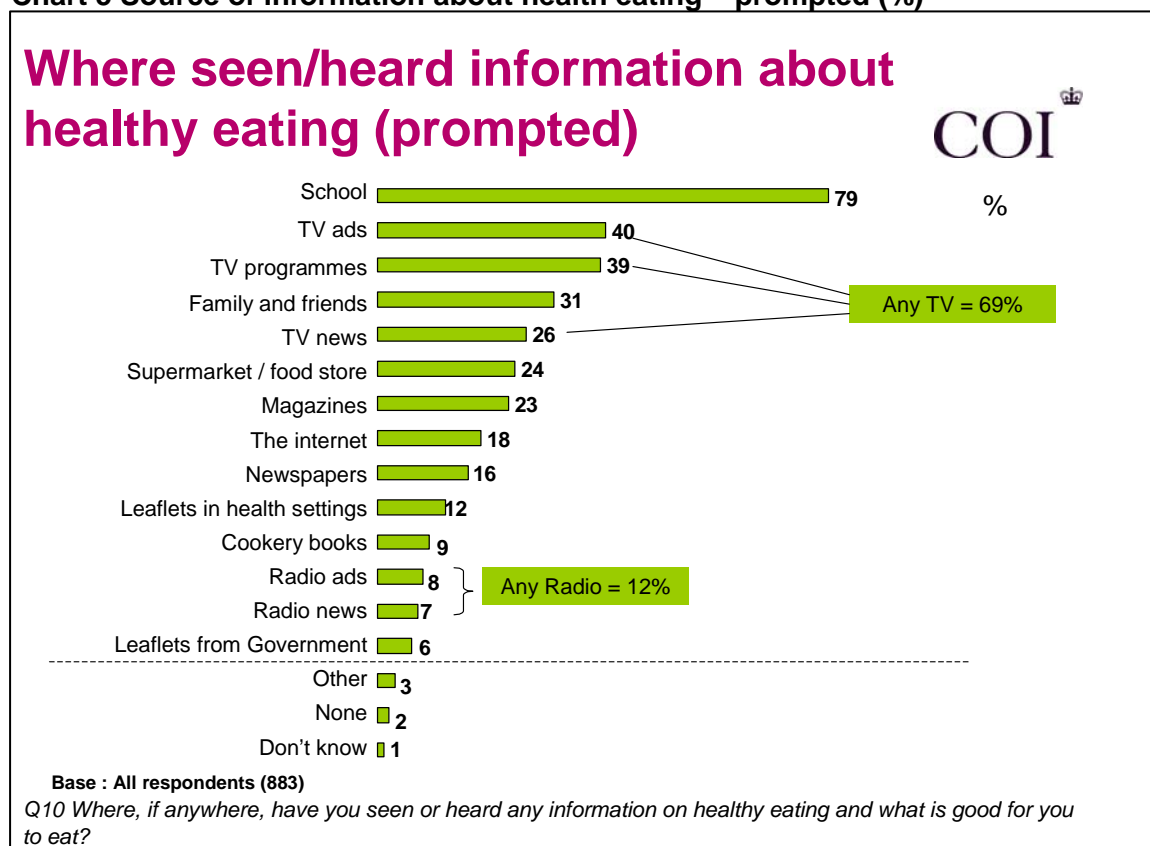
- 67% strongly agreed that eating healthily was very important to them (average = 54%);
- 96% strongly agreed that eating healthy food would help them to grow and be healthier (average = 83%);
- 53% strongly agreed that they sit with their family at mealtimes (average = 43%);
- 72% strongly agreed that parents and other grown-ups make them eat healthy food (average = 57%).

Children whose parents were married were more likely to agree that their parents influenced their diet, which reflects the finding that children whose parents were married were less likely to choose all their own food than those with single parents (discussed in to Chapter 1). Half (48%) of children with married parents strongly agreed that they normally sit with their family at mealtimes, compared with a third (32%) of those with single parents. Similarly, 60% of those with married parents strongly agreed that their parents made them eat healthy food compared with 44% of those with single parents.

There were very few differences in attitude between the sexes, although girls were more likely (53%) than boys (33%) to strongly agree that they really enjoy cooking and they were slightly more likely (36%) than boys (29%) to strongly disagree that fast food and ready-made meals are not that bad for them.

Before investigating children’s eating behaviour, it is also important to understand where they get information about healthy eating from (as seen in Chart 5).

Chart 5 Source of information about health eating – prompted (%)



The vast majority (79%) of children said they saw or heard information about healthy eating at school.

Mass media was also a common source of information amongst children. In total, around seven in ten (69%) children said they got information about healthy eating from the TV – with two in five (40%) getting it from TV ads, two in five (39%) from TV programmes and quarter (26%) from TV news. One in ten (12%) got healthy eating information from the radio – with 8% saying it was from ads on the radio, and 7% saying it was from radio news – and just under a quarter (23%) got it from magazines. Around one in five (18%) children said they got information from the Internet, and one in six (16%) read about healthy eating in the newspapers.

Three in ten (31%) said they got their information from family and friends, whilst a quarter (24%) got it from the supermarket or food store. One in ten (12%) read about it in leaflets they got in health settings (for example at the doctors surgery) and one in ten (9%) read about it in cookery books. Just 6% said they got information from leaflets distributed by the Government.

In CAS 2006, adults in the UK were most likely to say they got their information from the TV (53%), magazines (31%) and press (25%). CAS also reveals that adults were less likely (22%) than the children in this survey (31%) to say they got information about healthy eating from their friends and family.

There were very few differences in opinion between girls and boys, although girls were slightly more likely (82%) than boys (76%) to say they got information from school and from magazines (28% compared with 18%).

In general, children aged between 7 and 9 were less likely than those older than them to get information from most sources. The differences by age are shown in more detail in Table 6 below. School, family and friends, and cookery books were the only three that were just as likely to be sources of information across all age groups.

Table 6 Source of information about health eating by age group (%)

	All children	7-9	10-12	13-16
Base	883	265	272	346
School	79	78	84	76
At least one TV source	69	54	71	77
TV ads	40	24	40	52
TV programmes	39	27	42	44
TV news	26	17	22	36
Family and friends	31	31	33	29
Supermarkets / food stores	24	12	26	31
Magazines	23	8	22	33
Internet	18	11	17	24
Newspapers	16	8	17	22
Leaflets from health settings	12	8	10	16
At least one radio source	12	9	10	15
Radio ads	8	2	8	12
Radio news	7	7	4	10
Cookery books	9	9	8	11
Leaflets from government	6	#	5	10

Significant differences between the groups are highlighted on the table.

indicates a value less than 1%.

Children whose parents were ABC1s were more likely (45%) than those whose parents were C2DEs (33%) to say they got information about healthy eating from TV programmes. They were also more likely (20%) to say they got it from newspapers (C2DEs =13%).

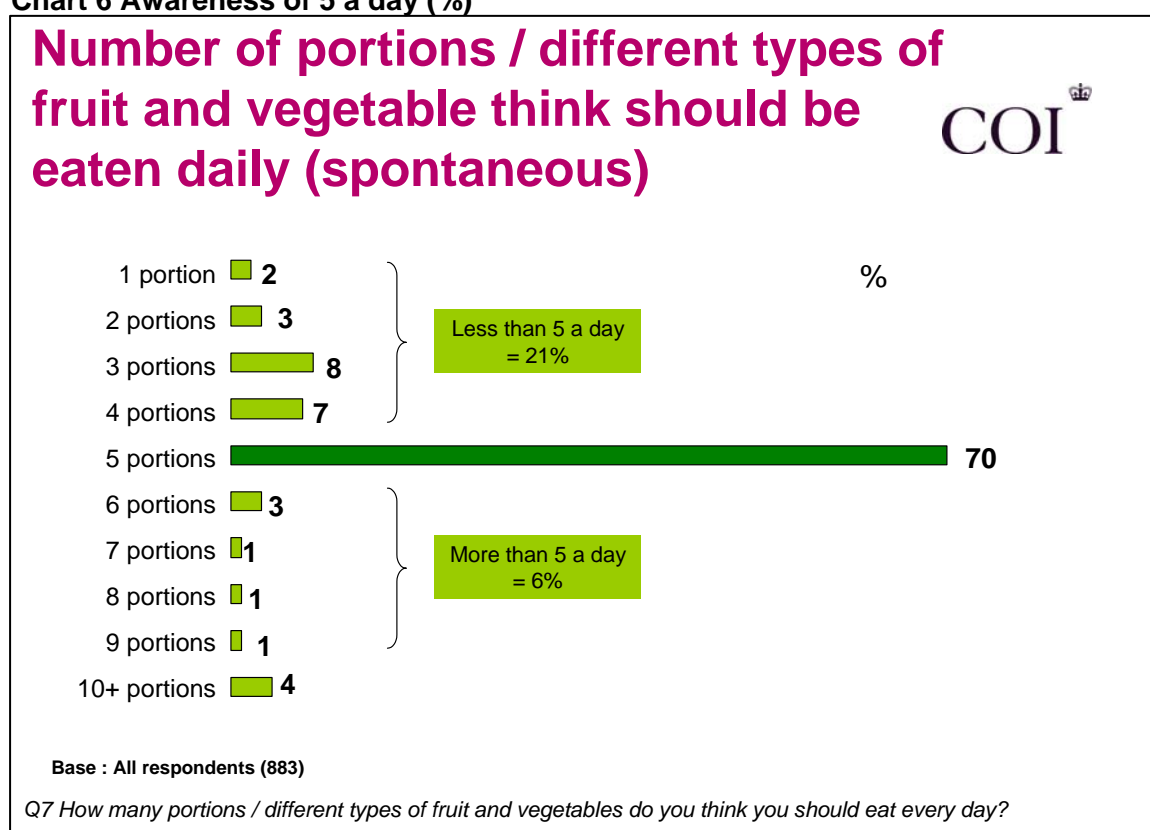
There were no differences by region or by the marital status of the children's parents.

3. Eating behaviour

Bearing in mind that 85% of children said they had a choice in all or some of the food they eat, it is important to consider what types of food choices they are making or trying to make. This chapter first examines children's awareness of the 5-a-day recommendation on fruit and vegetables, before considering what types of food children were trying to consume less of, as well as what types they were trying to eat more of. It also reveals whether children eat breakfast and whether they snack between meals (and what they snack on).

As Chart 6 shows, the majority of children (70%) said that they should eat five portions of fruit and vegetables every day. This reflects the CAS 2006 finding that 69% of adults in the UK were aware that they should eat 5-a-day.

Chart 6 Awareness of 5 a day (%)



One in five (21%) children thought it was less than 5-a-day and one in twenty (6%) thought they should eat more than five portions of fruit and vegetables in a day. Just 4% said they did not know how many portions they should eat daily.

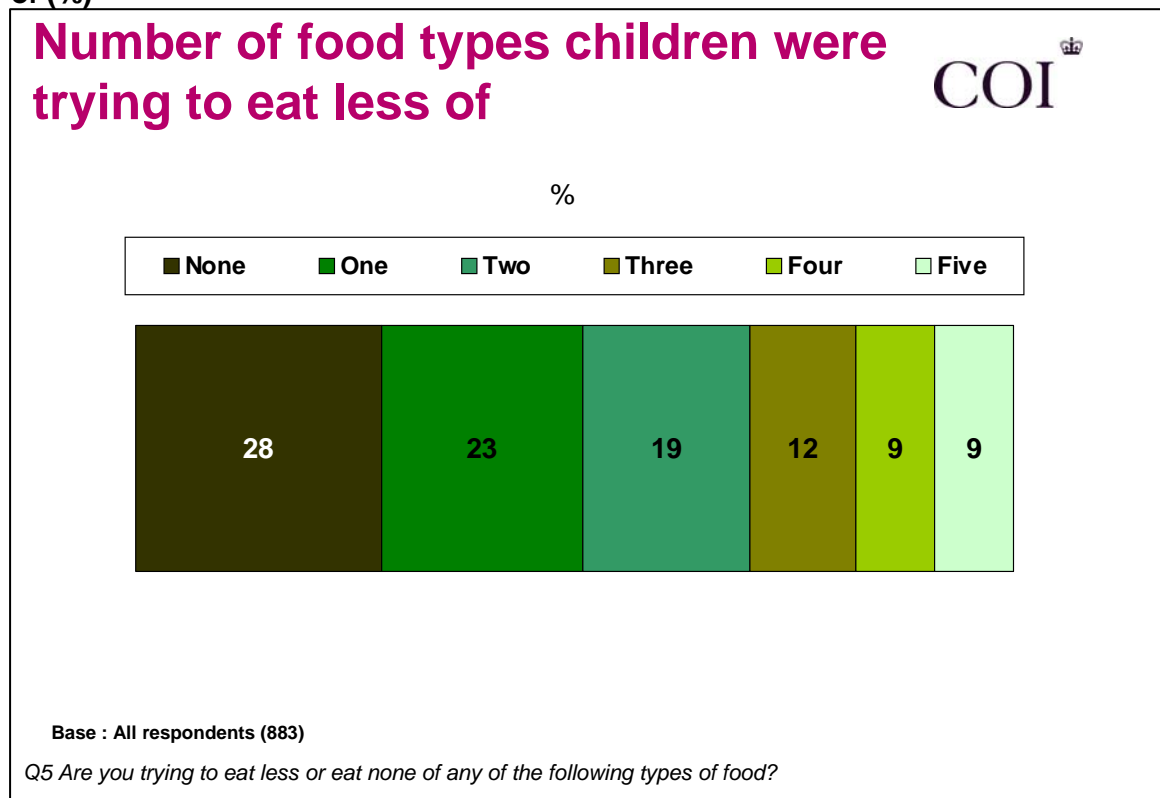
Children from certain demographic groups were more likely than others to correctly say they should eat 5-a-day:

- Girls were more likely (75%) than boys (65%);
- Children aged 10 to 12 were more likely (76%) than younger (66%) and older (68%) children;
- Those whose parents were ABC1 were more likely (74%) than those whose parents were C2DE (67%) to give the correct answer

All children were given a list of food types and asked which of them, if any, they were trying to eat less or none of. They were able to give more than one answer.

Most children (72%) said they were trying to cut down on, or cut out, at least one type of food from their diet. Chart 7 shows how many types of food children were trying cut out or cut down on.

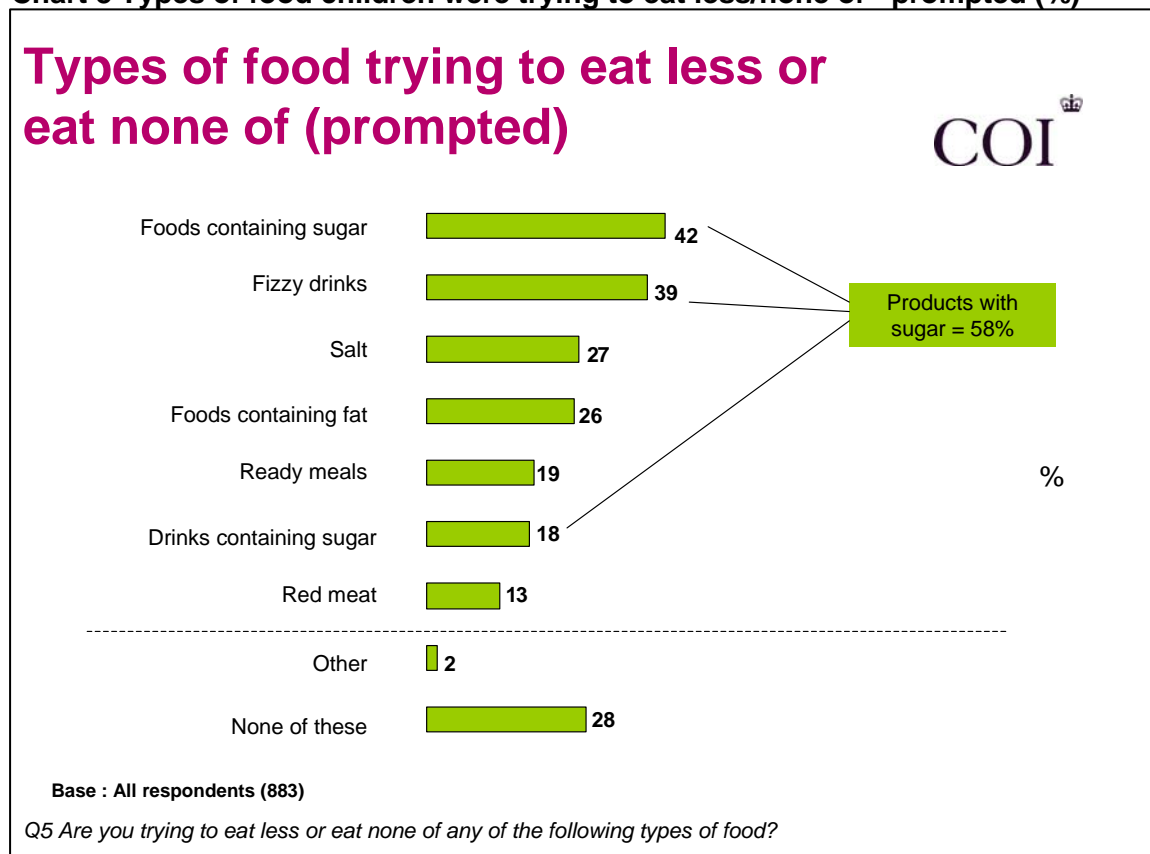
Chart 7 Number of different types of food children were trying to eat less / none of (%)



Around one in three (28%) children said they were not trying to eat less of any types of food, with a quarter (23%) trying to eat less of one type of food. Therefore, around half (49%) were trying to cut down more than one type of food. As Chart 7 shows, one in five (19%) were trying to cut down on two types and one in ten were cutting down on three (12%), four (9%) and five or more (9%) types of food.

Chart 8 (overleaf) shows the types of food that children were trying to reduce their consumption of.

Chart 8 Types of food children were trying to eat less/none of - prompted (%)



The most common types of food that children said they were trying to cut down on were foods containing sugar (42%) and fizzy drinks (39%). In fact, including the 18% of children who were trying to cut down on drinks containing sugar, over half (58%) of all children said they were trying to cut down on at least one type of food or drink containing sugar.

Over a quarter were trying to cut down on salt (27%) and foods containing fat (26%), whilst one in five said they were trying to cut down on ready meals (19%). Just over one in ten (13%) were trying to cut down on red meat (36% of those who were trying to cut down on meat also said they were partly vegetarian).

Interestingly, children in this survey were as likely (and in some cases more likely) to say that they were trying to eat less of certain foods, as parents who took part in CAS 2006 were to say that they were trying to cut down their children's consumption of certain foods. Table 7 shows this in more detail.

Table 7 Types of food adults were trying to reduce their children's consumption of, and types that children were trying to cut down on themselves (%)

	All children in this survey	Adults with children in household (CAS)
Base	883	1122
Food containing sugar	42	40
Fizzy drinks	39	24
Salt	27	18
Food containing fat	26	26
Ready meals	19	11
Drinks containing sugar	18	24
Red meat	13	4

**data from CAS 2006 and Children's Omnibus survey 2007

Children were more likely than parents to say they were trying to cut down their consumption of fizzy drinks, salt, ready meals and red meat.

Girls were more likely (75%) than boys (69%) to be trying to cut down on at least one type of food. Table 8 shows the particular types of food (sugar, salt and fat) that girls were more likely to be trying to cut down on than boys.

Table 8 Types of food children were trying to eat less/none of by sex (%)

	All children	Boy	Girl
Base	883	265	272
Food containing sugar	42	38	46
Fizzy drinks	39	37	41
Salt	27	24	31
Food containing fat	26	23	30
Ready meals	19	17	21
Drinks containing sugar	18	15	20
Red meat	13	11	14
None	28	31	25

Significant differences between the groups are highlighted on the table.

Children's propensity to cut down on certain types of food tended to decrease as they got older, with those aged 7 to 9 and 10 to 12 more likely (77% and 76% respectively) to be trying to cut down on at least one type of food than those aged 13

to 16 (65%). In particular, 7 to 12 year olds were more likely (63%) than 13 to 16 year olds (50%) to be trying to cut down on at least one type of sugar in their diet. Table 9 shows the differences amongst the age groups in more detail.

Table 9 Types of food children were trying to eat less/none of by age group (%)

	All children	7-9	10-12	13-16
Base	883	265	272	346
At least one type of sugar	58	64	63	50
Food containing sugar	42	42	46	38
Fizzy drinks	39	46	41	33
Drinks containing sugar	18	21	20	14
Salt	27	28	31	24
Food containing fat	26	27	24	28
Ready meals	19	19	17	19
Red meat	13	14	12	12
None	28	23	24	35

Significant differences between the groups are highlighted on the table.

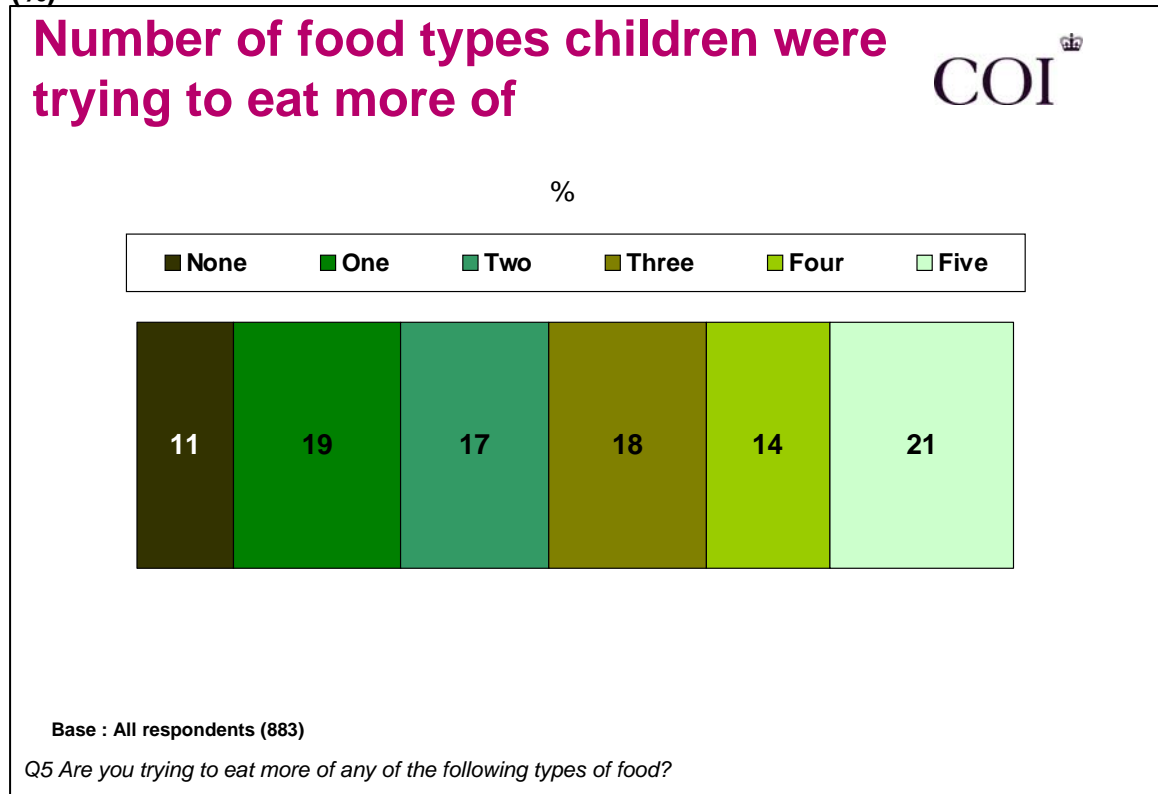
Those who chose all their own food at home were making less effort to cut down on any particular food type, with just 61% trying to cut down on at least one type of food (compared with an average 72%). Indeed, it was those who had just some or very little choice who were most likely (74% and 76% respectively) to say they were trying to cut down on at least one type of food.

Unsurprisingly, those who had spontaneously said they were worried about at least one aspect of nutrition earlier in the survey were more likely (88%) than average (72%) to be cutting down on at least one type of food.

There were no differences by the social grade or marital status of the children's parents.

Children were also prompted with a list of foods that they might be trying to eat more of. Interestingly, they were generally more likely to be trying to eat more of certain foods (89% were trying to eat more of at least one type of food) than they were to be trying to cut down in certain food types (72% for at least one type). Chart 9 shows how many types of food children were trying cut out or cut down on.

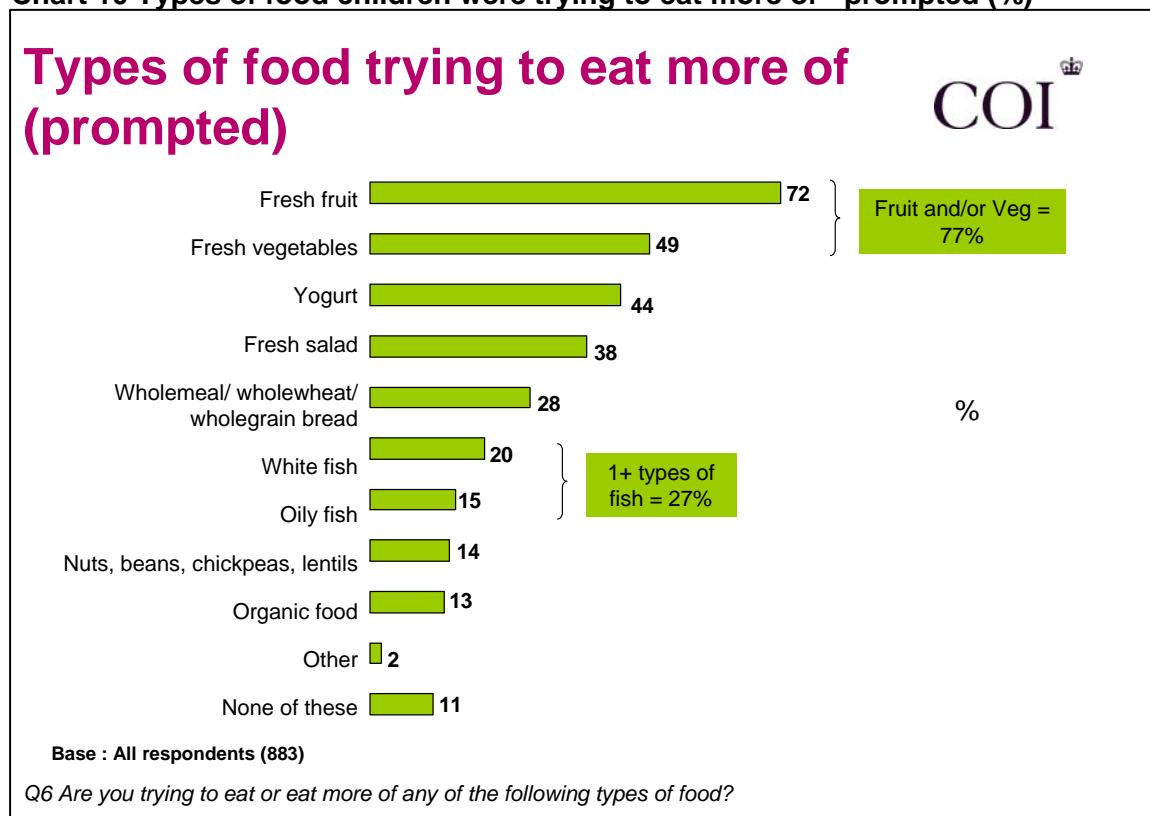
Chart 9 Number of different types of food children were trying to eat more of (%)



Most children (89%) were trying to eat more of at least one type of food, with just one in ten (11%) children saying they were not trying to eat more of any type of food. As Chart 9 illustrates, 19% were trying to eat more of one type of food, 17% more of two types, 18% more of three and 14% more of four. One in five (21%) children were trying to eat more of five or more types of food.

Chart 10 (overleaf) shows which types of food children were trying to eat more of.

Chart 10 Types of food children were trying to eat more of - prompted (%)



Around seven in ten (72%) children were trying to eat more fresh fruit, with half (49%) trying to eat more fresh vegetables. Overall, just over three quarters (77%) of children were trying to eat more fresh fruit and/or vegetables in their diet, which indicates that most of those who were trying to eat more fruit were also trying to eat more vegetables.

Just over four in ten (44%) were trying to eat more yogurt and a similar proportion (38%) were trying to eat more salad. Just under three in ten (28%) said they were trying to eat more wholemeal or wholegrain bread in their diet. Just over a quarter (27%) were trying to eat more fish, with 20% trying to eat more white fish and 15% trying to eat more oily fish. Around one in eight were trying to eat more nuts, beans, chickpeas and lentils (14%) and more organic food (13%).

Parents who took part in CAS 2006 were less likely to say they were trying to increase their children's consumption of certain foods, than children in this survey were to say they were trying to do so themselves. Table 10 shows this in more detail.

Table 10 Types of food adults were trying to increase their children's consumption of, and types that children were trying to eat more of themselves (%)

	All children in this survey	Adults with children in household (CAS)
Base	883	1122
Fresh fruit	72	51
Fresh vegetables (excluding potatoes)	49	53
Yogurt	44	16
Fresh salad	38	21
Wholegrain bread	28	10
White fish	20	12
Oily fish	15	10
Lentils, nuts, beans, chickpeas	14	5
Organic food	13	4

**data from CAS 2006 and Children's Omnibus survey 2007

Table 10 seems to indicate that children have a greater desire to increase their consumption of all the options on this list (excluding vegetables) than adults do on their behalf, but this is especially true for fresh fruit, yogurt and wholegrain bread. Given that most children have a limited amount of choice in the food they eat at home, however, this may mean that the high proportion of children trying to eat more of these foods will not become a reality unless they choose them outside of the home.

Children's propensity to eat more of certain types of food was also affected by their age. Those aged 7 to 9 and 10 to 12, who were more likely to be trying to cut down on certain types of food, were also more likely (94% and 93% respectively) to be trying to eat more of at least one type of food, than those aged 13 to 16 (83%). Table 11 (overleaf) shows the differences amongst the age groups by type of food in more detail.

Table 11 Types of food children were trying to eat more of by age group (%)

	All children	7-9	10-12	13-16
Base	883	265	272	346
Fruit and/or vegetables	77	81	76	74
Fresh fruit	72	77	71	69
Fresh vegetables (excluding potatoes)	49	56	50	44
Yogurt	44	55	49	33
Fresh salad	38	43	37	36
Wholegrain	28	32	27	25
White fish	20	25	20	17
Oily fish	15	20	18	10
Lentils, nuts, beans, chickpeas	14	18	14	11
Organic food	13	17	13	9
None	11	6	7	17

Significant differences between the groups are highlighted on the table.

As Table 11 demonstrates, 7 to 9 year olds (and to some extent 10 to 12 year olds) were more likely than those aged 13 to 16 to be trying to eat more fresh fruit & vegetables, yoghurt, white & oily fish, lentils/nuts etc. and organic food.

Whilst girls were more likely than boys to be trying to cut down on many food types (see Table 7), there were fewer differences when looking at whether they were trying to eat more of certain foods. Girls were marginally more likely (80%) than boys (74%) to be trying to eat more fruit and/or vegetables.

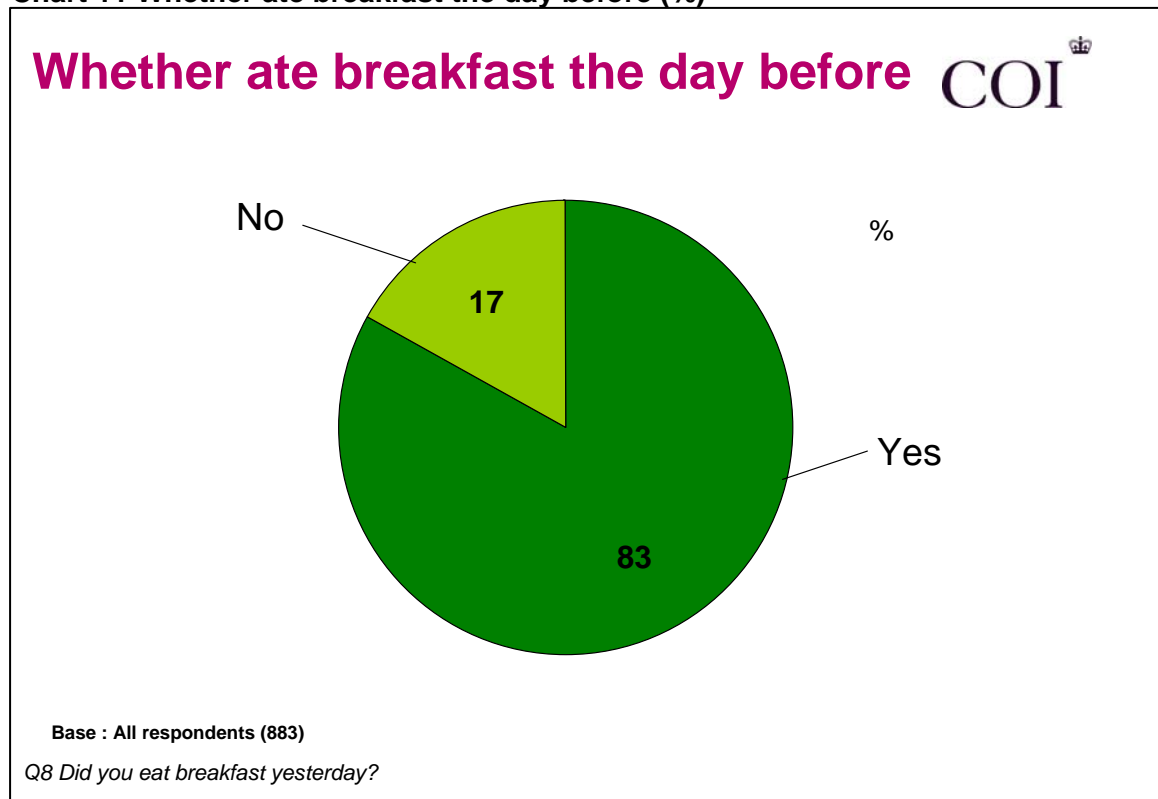
Children with AB parents were more likely than average to be trying to eat more oily fish (23% of AB's, 15% average) and organic food (19% of AB's, 13% average). There were no other significant differences by the parents' social grade.

The amount of influence children had on their own diet played little part here. Those who had more choice in the food that they eat at home were no more or less likely than those who had very little or no choice to say they were trying to eat more of certain food types.

There were also no differences by the marital status of the children's parents, or by region.

Children were also asked about their mealtimes, starting with whether they ate breakfast the day before they were interviewed (Chart 11).

Chart 11 Whether ate breakfast the day before (%)



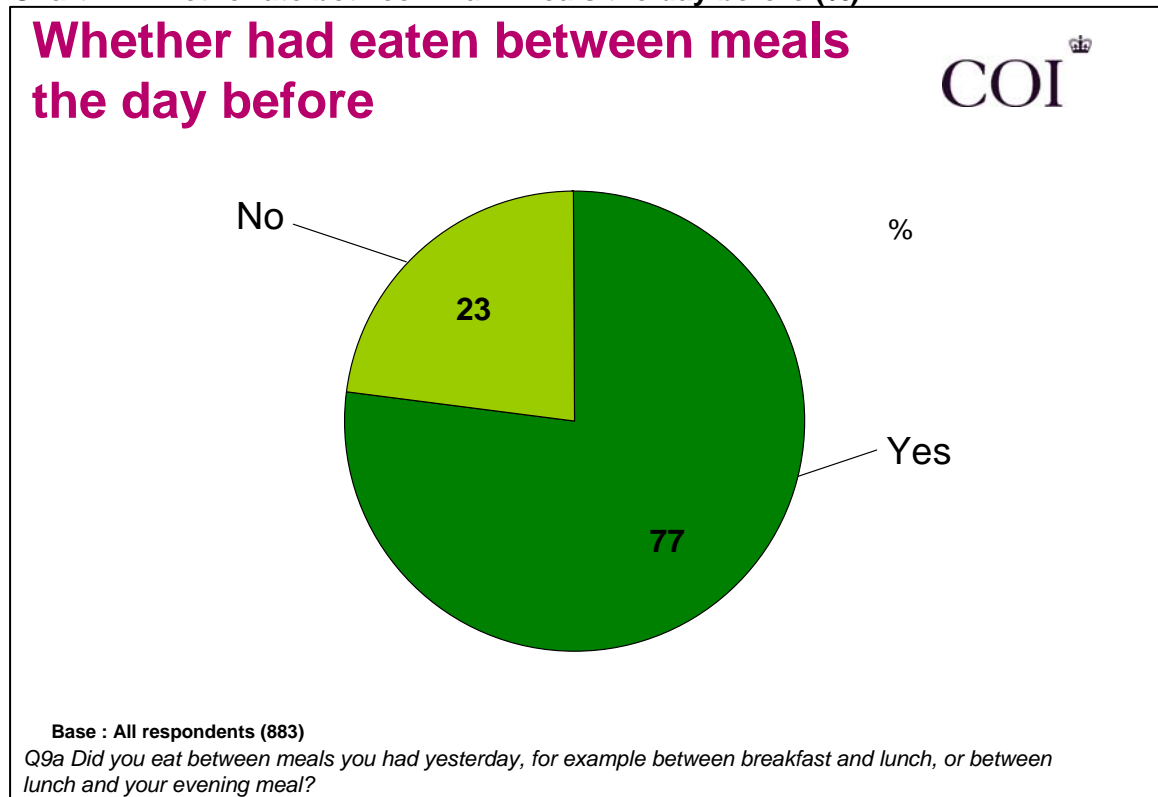
As Chart 11 shows, the majority of children (83%) reported they had eaten breakfast the previous day, with just 17% saying they had not. Girls were just as likely to have eaten breakfast as boys.

Younger children (aged 7 to 9) were most likely (94%) to report they had eaten breakfast the day before the interview, followed by 10 to 12 year olds (87%) and then 13 to 16 year olds (73%). Children from ABC1 families were also more likely (86%) than those from C2DE families (81%) to say they had eaten breakfast, and those living in London were most likely (91%) of those from all other regions (average = 83%) to say they had eaten breakfast. Those who chose all the food they eat at home were less likely (73%) than average (83%) to have had breakfast.

CAS 2006 indicates that adults are slightly less likely (77%) than children (83%) to report they have eaten breakfast.

They were also asked whether they had eaten anything between the main meals that they had the day before, for example between breakfast and lunch or between lunch and their evening meal (Chart 12).

Chart 12 Whether ate between main meals the day before (%)

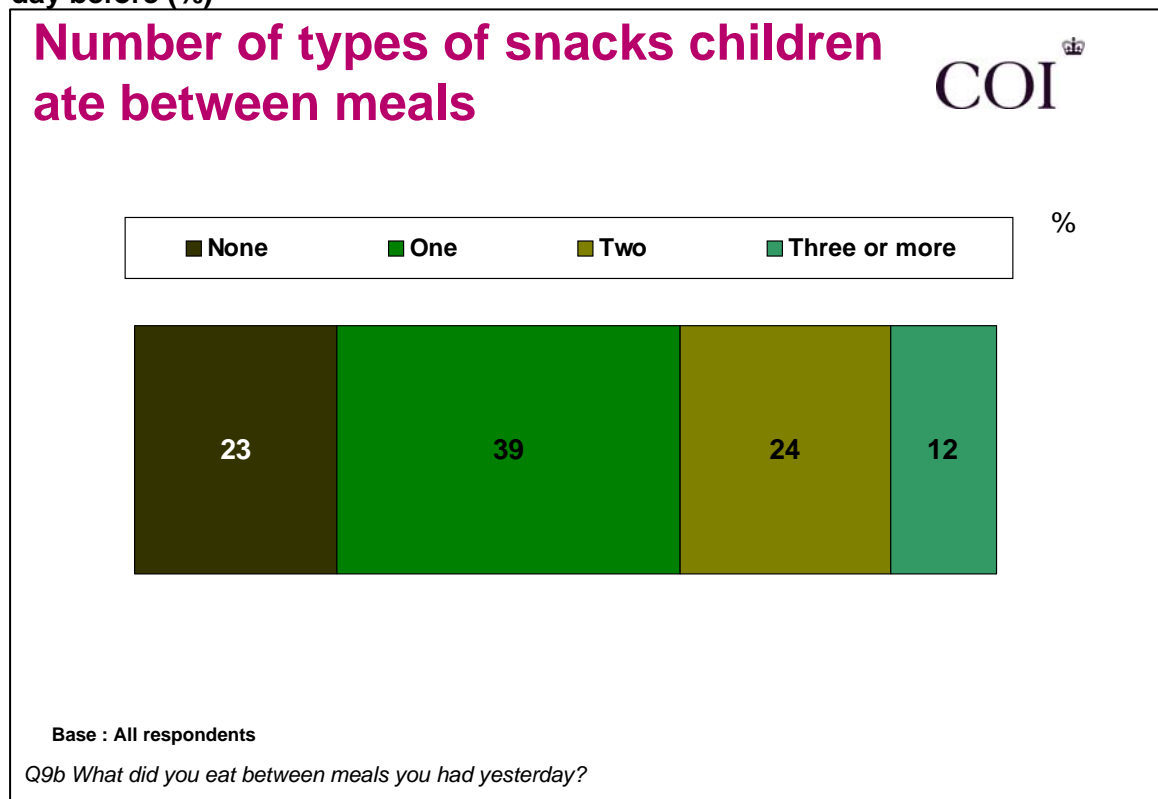


Around three quarters (77%) of children reported they had eaten some food between their main meals the day before they were interviewed. Children aged between 10 and 16 were more likely (79%) to say they had eaten between meals than those aged 7 to 9 (72%), as were children from ABC1 families (80%) compared with those with C2DE parents (74%).

There were no other significant differences in children's likelihood to report they had eaten between meals.

Chart 13 shows the number of different *types* of snacks children ate between meals.

Chart 13 Number of different types of snack children ate between meals the day before (%)

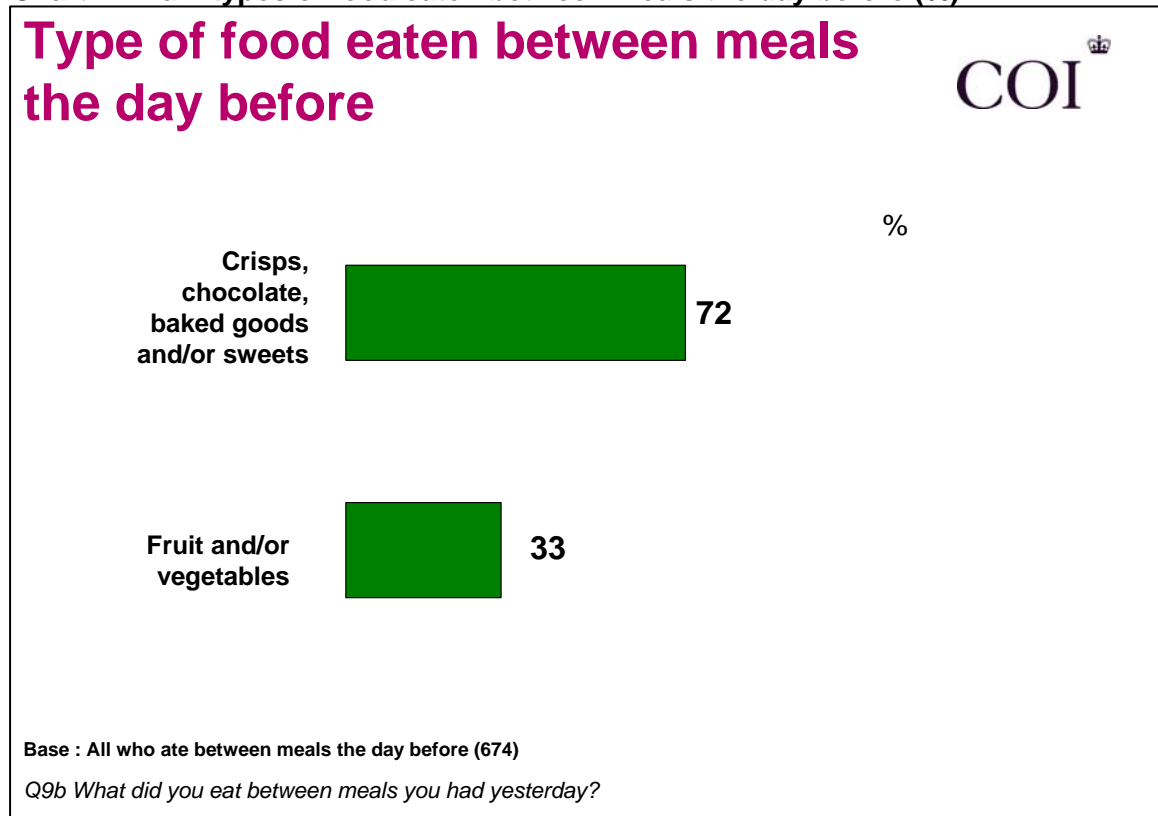


Two in five children (39%) reported having just one type of snack, a quarter (24%) reported two types of snack and one in ten (12%) reported three or more types of snack the day before they were interviewed.

Those who had eaten at least one snack between meals (n=674) were also asked what they had eaten (unprompted). They were able to give more than one answer.

Before looking in detail at the specific choices children made for their snacks, Chart 14 shows the proportion of children who had eaten at least one piece of fruit and/or vegetable, compared with the proportion who had had at least one of the 'less healthy' options, including crisps, baked goods such as biscuits and cakes, chocolate bars and/or confectionary and sweets.

Chart 14 Main types of food eaten between meals the day before (%)



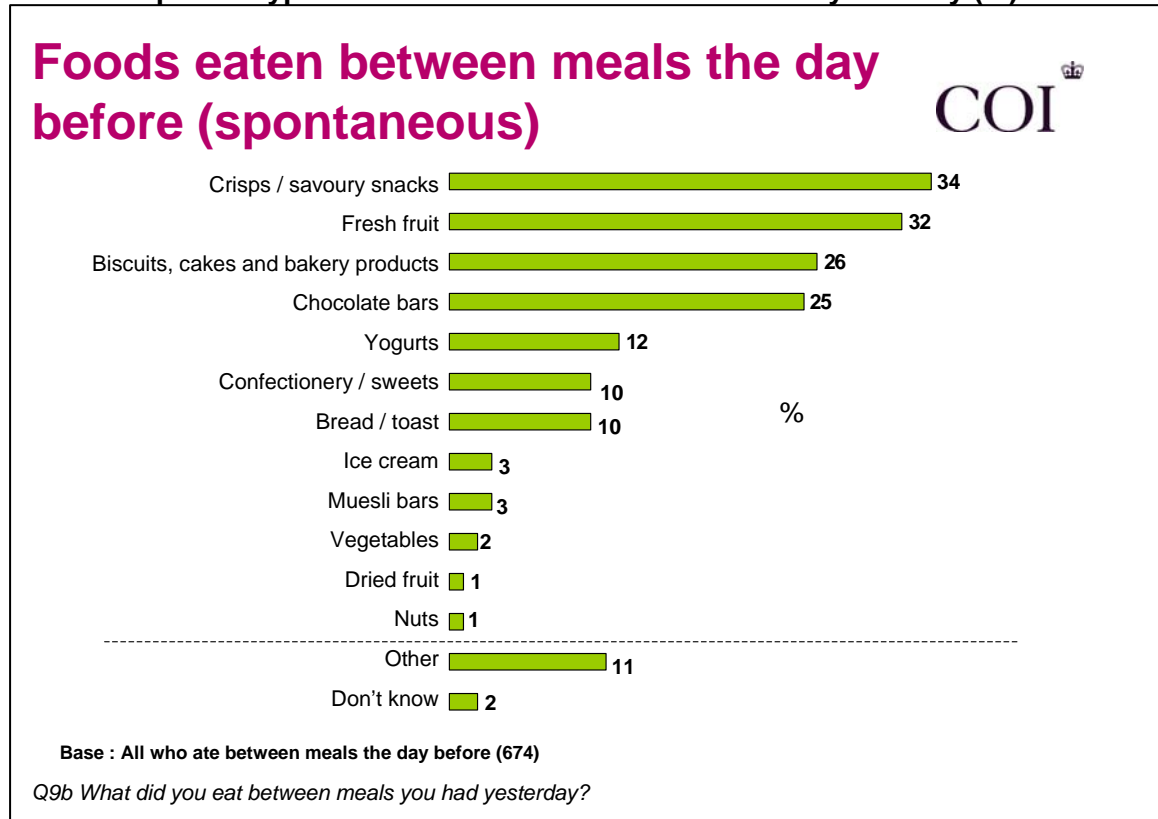
Children were twice as likely (72%) to say they had eaten at least one 'less healthy' snack between meals, as they were to say they had eaten fruit and/or vegetables (33%). Since half of children (50%) who snacked between meals ate just one type of snack in the day, it was more likely that this one snack was not fruit & vegetables.

Of those who had eaten between meals, girls were more likely (41%) than boys (25%) to say they had chosen at least one piece of fresh fruit and/or vegetable as their snack, and 7 to 9 year olds were more likely (45%) than 10 to 12 (31%) and 13 to 16 (26%) year olds to have had this as a snack. This mirrors the finding that girls and younger children were also more likely than their peers to be trying to eat more fruit and vegetables (discussed in more detail earlier in this chapter).

Of those who had eaten between meals, older children (aged 13 to 16) were generally more likely (79%) to have eaten at least one of the 'less healthy' options, compared with 69% of 10 to 12 year olds and 64% of 7 to 9 year olds. Those whose parents were in social grade DE were more likely (79%) to have eaten at least one of these 'less healthy' snacks than those with AB parents (62%).

Chart 15 shows the specific food that children had as snacks between meals the day before the interview. The top two choices were crisps and/or savoury snacks (34%) and fresh fruit (32%), followed by baked goods, such as biscuits and cakes, (26%) and chocolate bars (25%).

Chart 15 Specific types of food eaten between main meals yesterday (%)



Around one in ten children said they had eaten yogurt (12%), confectionery and sweets (10%) and bread/toast (10%) between meals the day before. Less than one in twenty had eaten ice cream (3%), muesli bars (3%), vegetables (2%), dried fruit (2%) and nuts (1%).

As discussed before, age was a key factor in the choice of snack children made and Table 12 (overleaf) shows the specific snacks children had eaten between meals and how these varied by age group (only those with significant differences are shown in the table).

Table 12 Specific types of food eaten between main meals by age group (%)

	All who ate between meals	7-9	10-12	13-16
Base	674	194	215	265
Crisps / savoury snacks	34	28	33	38
Fresh fruit	32	45	31	26
Chocolate bars	25	18	24	29
Yogurts	12	11	16	8
Confectionery / sweets	10	13	5	12

Significant differences between the groups are highlighted on the table.

indicates a value less than 1%; - indicates 0%

Of those who ate between meals, those aged 13 to 16 were more likely than their peers to have eaten crisps and savoury snacks (38%) and chocolate bars (29%), whilst those aged 7 to 9 were more likely (45%) than older children to have had fresh fruit. Interestingly, confectionery/sweets was as popular a choice for 7 to 9 year olds (13%) as it was for 13 to 16 year olds (12%), making this the only 'less healthy' snack that young children consumed to as great an extent as their older peers did.

Children whose parents were ABs were least likely of all social grades to have eaten crisps and savoury snacks (21%), chocolate bars (16%) and confectionery (4%) (averages were 34%, 25% and 10% respectively). These children were also more likely (8%) than average (3%) to have eaten muesli bars.

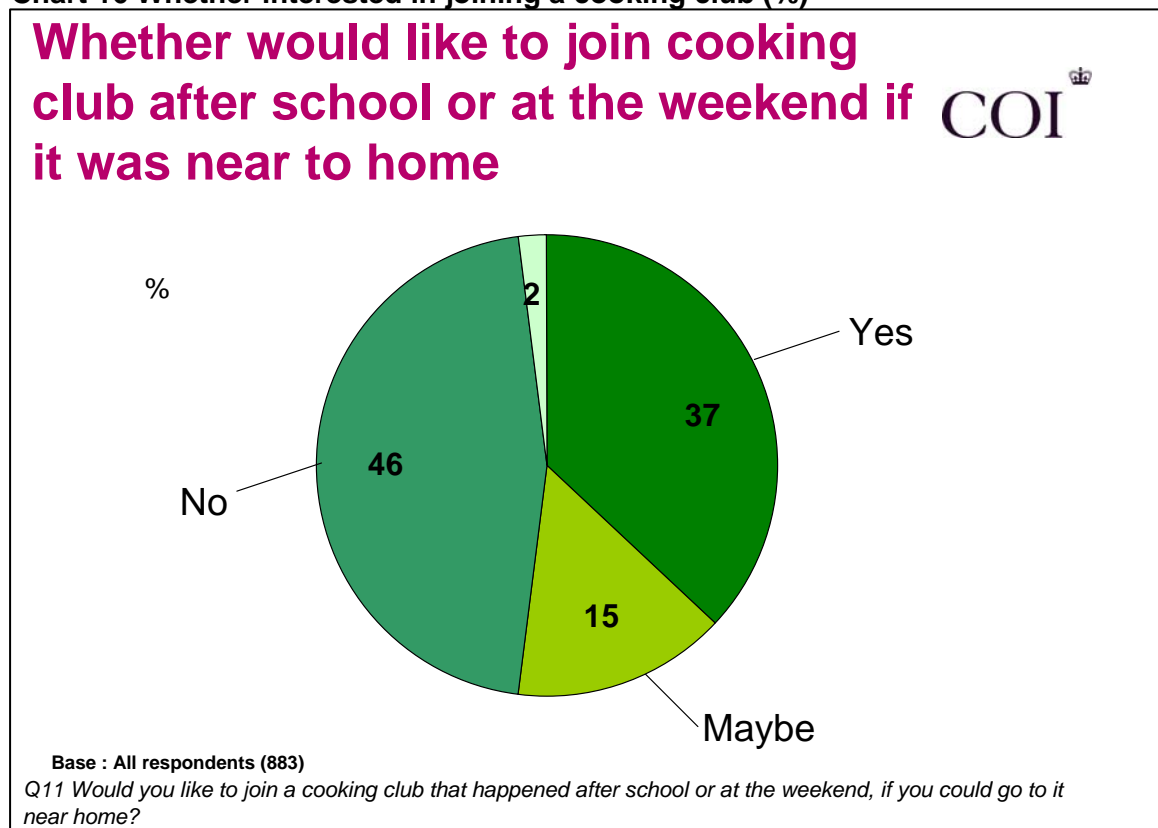
Children whose parents were married were also more likely (36%) to have eaten fresh fruit between meals than those with single parents (22%), whilst those who chose all of their own food at home were less likely (23%) than average (32%) to have eaten fresh fruit as a snack.

There were no significant differences in the snack choices children made by region.

CAS 2006 indicates that adults were much less likely (40%) than children (77%) to eat between their main meals. Adults were also less likely than children to chose crisps (20% compared with 34%), chocolate bars (16% compared with 25%) or confectionery (4% compared with 10%) as their snack, whilst being more likely to choose fruit (40% compared with 32%), and dried fruit and nuts (3% compared with 1%).

Finally, children were asked whether they would be interested in joining a cooking club that happened after school or at the weekend, if it was near to home (Chart 16).

Chart 16 Whether interested in joining a cooking club (%)



Just under half (46%) said they would not be interested, whilst 15% said they were maybe interested and 37% said they definitely were interested. Girls were more likely (45%) than boys (29%) to say they were interested, as were 7 to 12 year olds (48%) compared with 13 to 16 year olds (22%). This reflects other findings throughout this report that indicate that girls and younger children were generally more engaged with healthy eating messages and more likely to be aware of eating a healthier diet.

There were no differences by the social grade or marital status of children's parents, or by region.

Appendix 1 - Questionnaire

- Q.1 Are there any things about food that you worry about? **PROBE:** Anything else?
DO NOT READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Food poisoning such as a Salmonella and E. Coli -----	01
GM/Genetically modified foods-----	02
BSE/Mad cow disease -----	03
The feed given to livestock/What animals are fed -----	04
Antibiotics in meat/ antibiotics/medicine given to animals -----	05
Conditions in which food animals are raised/Cruelty in raising animals/any mention of poor conditions -----	06
(The use of) pesticides (to grow food)/Chemicals on food/Too much pesticides/chemicals -----	07
The use of additives (such as preservatives and colouring) in food products -----	08
Food allergies and intolerance/Being allergic to foods/Peanut allergies -----	09
The amount of/too much salt in food/Salt is bad for you -----	10
The amount of/too much sugar in food/Sugar is bad for you -----	11
The amount of/too much fat in food/Fat is bad for you -----	12
The amount of saturated fat/Saturated fat is bad for you -----	13
Food miles (i.e. the distance food travels)/Food being flown from abroad/Food that is not local food -----	14
Bird/Avian flu/ Any mention of turkeys/Any mention Bernard Matthews -----	15
Nutritional content of school meals/School meals are bad for you/Any mention of Jamie Oliver and school meals -----	16
Hormones and/or steroids in meat/food-----	17
Trans fats/Trans fatty acids are bad for you/Any mention of reduction/not having any trans fatty acids in food-----	18
The way animals are slaughtered -----	19
Foods aimed at children/Food made for children is unhealthy -----	20
Obesity/people being overweight/Getting fat – any mention -----	21
Other (specify)-----	22
None/Nothing/No worries-----	23
Don't know -----	24

- Q.2 Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements?
PROBE: Is that a lot or a little?

READ OUT. ROTATE. SINGLE CODE EACH STATEMENT

Agree a lot / Agree a little/ Disagree a little / Disagree a lot / Don't know

- I really enjoy cooking
- Eating healthily is very important to me
- Fast food and ready-made meals are not that bad for me
- I normally sit at the table with my family when I eat meals, such as breakfast and dinner
- My parents and other grown ups make me eat healthy food like fruit and vegetables
- Eating healthy food will help me grow and be healthier
- Adverts on the TV or in magazines make me want to eat certain foods

- Q.3 Which of the following best describes you?

READ OUT. REVERSE ROTATE. SINGLE CODE ONLY

I get to choose all the food I eat at home -----	01
I get to choose some of the food I eat at home -----	02
I get to choose very little of the food I eat at home -----	03
I do not choose any of the food I eat at home -----	04

- Q.4 Which, if any of the following applies to you?
READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY (codes 01-03 cannot coded with each other)
- I am completely vegetarian/I never eat meat or fish -----01
 - I am partly vegetarian/I eat some types of meat or fish, but not all types-----02
 - I am a vegan/I never eat meat, or fish or any dairy products -----03
 - I am allergic to some food -----04
 - I am on a diet/trying to lose weight -----05
 - I do not eat some foods for religious reasons -----06
 - I cannot eat some foods for medical reasons-----07
 - None of these-----08
 - Don't know -----09
- Q.5 **SHOWCARD FOOD1** Are you trying to eat less or eat none of any of the following types of food?
CODE ALL THAT APPLY
- Foods containing sugar e.g. sweets, biscuits and chocolate -----01
 - Drinks containing sugar e.g. sugar in tea and coffee -----02
 - Fizzy drinks -----03
 - Foods containing fat e.g. fried foods, crisps, butter, mayonnaise -----04
 - Red meat (e.g. beef, lamb)-----05
 - Ready meals that is meals that you buy from the supermarket and heat up rather than cook yourself -----06
 - Salt (either in a food product, added in cooking or added at the table)-----07
 - Other (please specify) -----08
 - None -----09
- Q.6 **SHOWCARD FOOD2** Are you trying to eat or eat more of any of the following types of food?
CODE ALL THAT APPLY
- Fresh fruit-----01
 - Fresh vegetables (not including potatoes)-----02
 - Fresh salad-----03
 - Nuts/beans/chickpeas/lentils-----04
 - White fish (e.g. cod, haddock, plaice) -----05
 - Oily fish (e.g. salmon, trout, mackerel) -----06
 - Organic food -----07
 - Wholemeal/wholewheat/wholegrain bread -----08
 - Yogurts -----09
 - Other (specify)-----10
 - None -----11

Q.7 How many portions/different types of fruit and vegetables do you think you should eat every day?

DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY

- 1-----01
- 2-----02
- 3-----03
- 4-----04
- 5-----05
- 6-----06
- 7-----07
- 8-----08
- 9-----09
- 10+-----10
- Don't know -----11

Q.8 Did you eat breakfast yesterday?

- Yes -----01
- No -----02

Q.9a Did you eat between the meals you had yesterday, for example between breakfast and lunch, or between lunch and your evening meal?

- Yes -----01
- No -----02

ASK ALL WHO EAT BETWEEN MEALS (Code 01 at Q9a) –OTHERS GO TO Q.10

Q.9b What did you eat between meals you had yesterday? **DO NOT PROMPT**

- Fresh fruit-----01
- Dried fruit, (for example raisins)-----02
- Biscuits, cakes and bakery products-----03
- Chocolate bars -----04
- Vegetables (e.g. carrot sticks)-----05
- Confectionery/sweets-----06
- Crisps/savoury snacks -----07
- Yogurts-----08
- Nuts -----09
- Muesli bars -----10
- Ice cream -----11
- Bread/toast -----12
- Other (please specify) -----13
- Don't know -----14

ASK ALL

Q.10 SHOWCARD FOOD3 Where, if anywhere, have you seen or heard any
INFORMATION ON HEALTHY EATING
and what is good for you to eat?
CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- The Internet ----- 01
- Television ads ----- 02
- TV news ----- 03
- TV programmes ----- 04
- Radio ads ----- 05
- Radio news ----- 06
- Newspapers ----- 07
- Leaflets from Government sources ----- 08
- Leaflets in health settings (e.g. doctors surgeries) ----- 09
- Supermarkets/food stores ----- 10
- Magazines ----- 11
- Cookery books ----- 12
- Family and friends ----- 13
- School ----- 14
- Other (please specify) ----- 15
- None ----- 16
- Don't know ----- 17

Q.11 Would you like to join a cooking club that happened after school or at the weekend, if
you could go to it near home?

SINGLE CODE ONLY

- Yes ----- 01
- No ----- 02
- Maybe ----- 03
- Don't know ----- 04

Appendix 2 – Sample Profile (weighted)

	All GB children aged 7-16 (883) %
Sex:	
Male	49
Female	51
Age:	
7-9	29
10-12	30
13-16	42
Parents Social Grade:	
AB	19
C1	30
C2	21
DE	30
Parents Martial Status:	
Married	67
Single	20
Widowed/divorced/separated	13
Government Region:	
North East	4
North West	10
Yorkshire & Humber	9
East Midlands	7
West Midlands	10
East of England	12
London	13
South East	12
South West	8
Wales	5
Scotland	8

Appendix 3 – Further analysis tables

Table 1 Parental social grade by marital status (%)

		Married	Single	Widowed / separated / divorced
	% of total	67%	20%	13%
AB	19%	84%	10%	6%
C1	30%	66%	21%	12%
C2	21%	83%	10%	7%
DE	30%	45%	32%	22%