

More needs to be done to ensure consumers feel sufficiently reassured about the nutritional content of the products they are consuming

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Pressure on the food and drink industry to curb sugar content in products has never been so intense. Furthermore, many more food categories are likely to come under scrutiny in the coming months with the recent announcement from Public Health England

(<https://www.thegrocer.co.uk/buying-and-supplying/health/overall-calorie-content-targeted-in-next-phase-of-war-on-obesity/55>) that a process to tackle overall calorie content in other foods is about to begin.

But how are Consumers feeling? Do they feel the range of products available allows them to make nutritionally good choices? Moreover, do they feel equipped with the information and knowledge to make the right choices for them? Impact Research (<https://www.impactmr.com/home>) undertook a survey with 1,449 consumers in the UK to find out.

The findings from the study highlight the clear gap in trust that still exists between the consumer and manufacturer and the work that food and drink brands still have to do before consumers will feel sufficiently reassured about the nutritional content of the products they are consuming.

- In the UK, only 39% of consumers feel well-informed about what food and drink products are best for them.
- That said, some categories are making better in-roads than others; 45% of consumers who buy yoghurt feel well-informed compared to just 29% in the Ready Meals category.

There is also a general feeling across the nation that manufacturers still aren't doing everything they can to improve the nutritional content of their products.

- Just 17% feel that manufacturers care about improving the nutritional content of their products to make them healthier
- Whilst only 39% feel there are healthier options available giving consumers a choice of which product to buy

So how are consumers making their food and drink choices and where are they turning to for advice and guidance.

- The most effective channel for helping consumers make more informed decisions is through healthcare professionals.
- 49% of consumers claim GPs are influential in their food choices, while 48% claim the NHS is important. Younger consumers tend to be affected by a wider variety of influencers including their family.
- In the absence of trust with manufacturers themselves, consumers are attaching value to the opinion of those in their "circle of trust".

Stuart Grant, Head of Consumer Research at Impact Research believes the solution lies in greater clarity, "The food and drink industry needs to be more transparent in its messaging, otherwise it will remain outside consumers' "circle of trust", creating a barrier to brands moving towards healthier products and thereby meeting shoppers' changing needs and expectations".

Results based on Impact Research survey September 2017.

Base size n=1,449 UK consumers

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