



「 F R E U D S 」
H E A L T H
& BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Public Health England - Better Health Adult Obesity

Survey topline results

Methodology

[Opinium](#), a leading online polling and strategic insight agency based in London, conducted an online survey with a nationally representative sample of 5,000 English adults aged 18 and over. The online survey ran from Friday 2nd July to Thursday 8 July.

The survey consisted of 29 questions, asking how English adults feel about the impact of the pandemic and lockdown on their health and collected data to gauge self-reported weight gain or loss, people's motivations for getting healthier over the summer of 2021 and barriers to achieving their physical activity habits.

The survey was designed to provide attitudinal insights to support the launch of the Better Health Campaign. The following statistics were featured in the national and regional press release for the campaign.

Topline survey results

These include:

- Over 4 in 10 (41%) of adults in England say they have put on weight since the start of lockdown in March 2020 (Table 2)
- Almost over half a stone (4.1kg) was gained on average by those who reported putting on weight (Table 3)
- 1 in 5 (21%) reported gaining a stone or more in weight (Table 3)
- In adults aged 35 to 65 years old, the average weight gain for those who reported putting on weight was 10lbs (4.6kg) (Table 3)
- For those who reported gaining weight, nearly half (46%) said unhealthy eating habits like snacking and comfort eating were the main contributors for weight gain (Table 4)
- 89% of adults who gained weight said it was important for them to introduce new healthy habits this summer (Table 5)
- 49% of adults who reported gaining weight, said they would like to have a healthier diet (Table 6)
- 53% adults felt optimistic about making the changes they desired (Table 7)
- 57% reported that they would welcome more advice on eating healthily, ideas for doing so on a budget, and ideas for exercise routines (Tables 8, 9 and 10)

Survey questions and results

The survey consisted of multiple-choice questions to gain insight into the impact of national lockdowns on health behaviors and weight gain.

Table 1. Demographics of survey sample by age

Category	Demographic	Number of people surveyed
Overall	N	5000
Age	18 to 24	483
	25 to 34	913
	35 to 65	2512
	65 and over	1093

Table 2. Results from the question ‘Since the start of the first lockdown (that is, since 23rd March 2020), have you gained weight, lost weight or has it not changed?’. Demographic data split by age

Multiple choice answer selected	Overall % of responses	Overall % of responses split by age			
		18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 65	65 and over
I have gained weight	41	38	60	40	31
My weight has stayed about the same	38	27	25	40	50
I have lost weight	14	23	10	15	13
I don’t know if/how my weight has changed	5	7	3	5	4
Prefer not to say	1	5	1	1	0

Table 3. Results from the question ‘How much weight have you put on since the start of the first lockdown (that is, since 23rd March 2020)? If you do not know exactly?’ Demographic data split by age. To note: this question was only asked of those who had specified that they had gained weight.

Multiple choice answer selected	Overall % of responses	Overall % of responses split by age			
		18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 65	65 and over
Base: all who gained weight	2070	184	548	997	340
Put on up to half a stone (up to 3kg or 6.6lbs)	42	38	53	34	49
Put on half a stone to 1 stone (3.1kg-6kg or 6.7lbs–13.2lbs)	31	20	31	33	28
Put on 1 stone to 1.4 stone (6.1kg-9kg or 13.3lbs–19.8lbs)	11	10	6	13	10
Put on more than 1.4 stone (9 kg or 19.8lbs)	10	12	6	13	7
Prefer not to say	1	7	0	1	1
Don’t know	6	14	4	6	4

1. Overall average weight gain was calculated by using the mid-point of the weight gain bracket in kgs multiplied by the % number of those who selected that option. This was then divided by 93*100 to account for the 7% who selected 'prefer not to say/don't know'.
 - Calculation for average weight gain for all respondents was:
 $(42\%*1.5)+(31\%*4.55)+(11\%*7.55)+(10\%*10)/93*100 = 4.1\text{kg}$
 - Calculation for average weight gain for respondents aged 35 to 65 was:
 $(34\%*1.5)+(33\%*4.55)+(13\%*7.55)+(13\%*10)/93*100 = 4.6\text{kg}$

Table 4. Results from the question 'Which of the below behaviours or issues around eating/drinking do you think have contributed to your weight gain, if any? Please select all that apply.' Demographic data split by age. To note: this question was only asked of those who had specified that they had gained weight.

Multiple choice answer selected	Overall % of responses	Overall % of responses split by age			
		18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 65	65 and over
Snacking more frequently because I am at home all day	46	52	40	48	45
Comfort eating more frequently because of the boredom of lockdown	46	49	42	48	46

Table 5. Results to the question 'How important is it to you to introduce new healthy habits into your lifestyle this summer?' Demographic data split by those who had reported weight gain.

Multiple choice answer selected	Overall % of responses	% of responses from those who had reported weight gain
Very important	34	51
Fairly important	42	38
Not very important	15	6
Not at all important	4	2
Don't know	5	3
NET: Important	76	89
NET: Not important	19	7

Table 6. Responses to the question ‘Which healthy habits, if any, would you like to introduce into your lifestyle? Please select all that apply.’ Demographic data split by those who reported weight gain.

Multiple choice answer selected	Overall % of responses	% of responses from those who had reported weight gain
I would like to exercise more	45	55
I would like to get more/better quality sleep	39	43
I would like to have a healthier diet (e.g. eat more fruit and vegetables, snack less)	38	49
I would like to look more after my mental health (e.g. mindfulness)	26	30
I would like to spend less time on my smartphone/ computer	23	26
I would like to do more cooking from scratch	19	23
I would like to drink less alcohol	16	22
I would like to cut down on takeaways	16	24
I would like to stop smoking/smoke less	10	13
None of the above	13	4

Table 7. Responses to the question ‘How optimistic or pessimistic do you feel that you will be able to achieve your health and fitness goals (whatever they may be) after lockdown?’

Multiple choice answer selected	Overall % of responses
Very optimistic	18
Fairly optimistic	35
Neither optimistic nor pessimistic	23
Fairly pessimistic	7
Very pessimistic	3
Don't know	3
N/A - I don't have any health or fitness goals	11
NET: Optimistic	53
NET: Pessimistic	10

Table 8. Responses to the following questions ‘How helpful or otherwise would the following be in helping you to achieve your health and fitness goals? Information and advice about how to eat more healthily (e.g. calories/fat content of different foods, portion control)’ Demographic data split by age.

Multiple choice answer selected	Total	Overall % of responses split by age			
		18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 65	65 and over
Very helpful	23	29	51	18	7
Somewhat helpful	35	37	27	38	31
Not very helpful	15	14	10	15	19
Not at all helpful	11	6	5	11	17
Don't know	7	8	4	8	7
Not applicable	10	5	2	9	18
NET calculation for: Helpful	57	66	78	56	39

Table 9. Responses to the following questions ‘How helpful or otherwise would the following be in helping you to achieve your health and fitness goals? Ideas of exercise and healthy eating on a budget’ Demographic data split by age.

Multiple choice answer selected	Total	Overall % of responses split by age			
		18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 65	65 and over
Very helpful	21	24	46	19	5
Somewhat helpful	36	39	35	38	31
Not very helpful	14	16	8	14	16
Not at all helpful	12	7	4	12	19
Don't know	6	10	3	7	5
Not applicable	11	5	3	11	23
NET calculation for: Helpful	57	62	81	56	36

**Table 10. Responses to the following questions ‘How helpful or otherwise would the following be in helping you to achieve your health and fitness goals? Advice on effective exercise routines’
Demographic data split by age.**

Multiple choice answer selected	Total	Overall % of responses split by age			
		18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 65	65 and over
Very helpful	20	24	45	17	5
Somewhat helpful	36	36	33	40	31
Not very helpful	14	15	10	13	16
Not at all helpful	12	7	5	12	20
Don't know	7	11	5	7	7
Not applicable	11	6	3	11	21
NET calculation for: Helpful	57	60	77	57	37