



## **DEL MONTE FOODS, INC.**

### **2020 STATE OF HEALTHY EATING IN AMERICA STUDY**

#### **January 2020**

This study explores how Americans perceive the importance of healthy eating and how it factors into their life. The below data reflect key insights found in the study.

- I. AMERICANS KNOW THAT A HEALTHY DIET IS KEY TO LIVING THEIR BEST LIFE.**  
When asked about eating healthy, 70% of Americans said that when they eat a healthy diet, they feel like the best version of themselves. In fact, 1 in 5 said that healthy eating is also key to living their best social life.

However, millennials feel especially pressured by their friends/peers to eat healthy — 32% (as compared to 25% Gen Z, 18% Gen X and 9% Boomers).

- II. CHASING HAPPINESS THROUGH HEALTHY EATING IS A SERIOUS CAUSE OF WORRY AND STRESS FOR AMERICANS.**

Healthy eating clearly ties to worry and stress for Americans as more than half of Americans said that:

- Eating a healthy diet is the key to their happiness.
- Eating healthy is one of their biggest worries when it comes to maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

And, nearly half of Americans are worried about incorporating enough fruits and vegetables in their diet. They said that when they're unable to get fruits and vegetables, they are not the best version of themselves.

Again, millennials are singled out, feeling the most peer pressure around healthy eating as 32% said they feel looked down upon by friends for non-healthy eating (compared to 18% average of all Americans).

- III. FOR PARENTS, THIS GOES BEYOND FEELING RESPONSIBLE FOR DEVELOPING GOOD EATING HABITS IN THEIR CHILDREN.**

The worry here among parents is even greater, not just for providing healthy food, but also for establishing good habits:

- 80% of parents feel responsible for developing good eating habits in their children.
- 76% of parents find it important to eat healthy to set good examples for their children.

Parents are concerned about what might happen if their children don't eat healthy:

- Half of parents worry that if their children don't get fruits and vegetables, they will not achieve their full potential in life.
- Nearly half of parents believe that if their children do not have a healthy diet, they feel that they have failed as a parent.



- Nearly half of parents worry about not being around for their children if they do not eat a healthy diet.
- Nearly one third of parents worry that if their children don't eat a healthy diet, they will have trouble at school.

#### IV. YET MOST AMERICANS HAVE MISCONCEPTIONS AROUND HEALTHY EATING SOURCES, ESPECIALLY FRESHLY PACKAGED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES.

While 86% of Americans said that eating fruits and vegetables is crucial to maintaining a healthy diet, they have varying views on what is considered healthy. When asked if different types of foods were healthy, top categories were fresh (78%), clean-labelled (62%), or organic (61%), while frozen (19%) and pre-packaged (13%) were listed among the lowest.

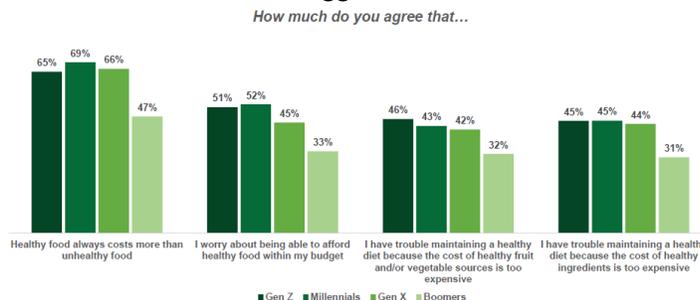
The stress continues in where Americans look for healthy sources of fruits and vegetables — 1 in 3 people agree that they feel overwhelmed by all the different food labels when looking for healthy options. Part of this stress could be caused by perceptions around where Americans are looking for healthy food options and their sources of fruits and vegetables. People overwhelmingly said the fresh produce section (96% healthy foods, 95% fruits and vegetables) and the frozen foods aisle (85%, 76%), and less identified the canned foods aisle (74%, 64%) and bulk food aisle (62%, 44%).

#### V. WHEN EXPLORING THE BARRIERS AMERICANS FACE TO EATING MORE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES, TASTE ISN'T THE ISSUE.

In fact, when Americans were asked about the barriers to eating more fruits and vegetables, only 1 in 10 said taste was an issue. Cost (35%), knowledge (27%), time (23%) and access (10%) were listed as core issues. However, taste is more of an issue for parents, with 1 in 3 (34%) agreeing their children don't like the taste of fruits and vegetables.

Perceived cost is one of the largest barriers — healthy eating is thought to be expensive and out of budget. 59% of Americans believe that healthy food always costs more than unhealthy food.

- Millennials and Gen Z struggle the most with affordable healthy eating:



For nearly 2 in 3 Americans, prioritizing healthy foods means less fun — 63% think they would have to give up spending money on other things to afford healthy food.

- 1 in 3 (30%) think they'd have to reduce how often they go out to eat in order to afford more healthy foods.
- 1 in 5 (18%) think they would have to give up their Netflix, Spotify, Hulu, or another subscription service in order to afford healthier food.
- Many find preparing healthy food too time-consuming — 1 in 4 (25%) find it difficult to have enough time to prepare healthy meals/snacks.



- 1 in 3 feel they would have to spend less time on sleep, hobbies, leisure, friends, self-care, or their children to be able to prepare healthy foods.

Many just find fresh food inconvenient — 58% said that they find it more difficult to keep fresh food than pre-packaged foods in their home. 1 in 3 (36%) said buying fresh produce is a waste of money because it goes bad so quickly.

## **VI. DESPITE ITS IMPORTANCE, 1 IN 3 OF AMERICANS SAY THEY WERE NEVER TAUGHT ABOUT HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS.**

There is a lack of knowledge around healthy eating as 1 in 3 say they were never taught about healthy food options and 25% do not feel they know enough about nutrition to ensure they maintain a healthy diet.

The gap in knowledge is even more prevalent in millennials and Gen Z, who are feeling the most social pressure to eat healthy. Over one third of Gen Z (36%) and Millennials (35%) believe they were never taught how to find healthy food options (Gen X, 30%; Boomers, 28%). 2 in 5 Gen Z (40%) do not feel they know enough about nutrition to ensure they maintain a healthy diet (Millennials, 31%; Gen X, 24%; Boomers, 17%).

People place the burden of education on themselves, especially parents. 71% think it's important to do their own research about the healthiest food options out there. 80% of parents feel responsible for developing good eating habits in their children.

Despite the best of intentions, the stress of shopping for healthy foods for their kids gets in the way of their ability to educate them. 80% feel responsible for developing good eating habits in their children, yet only 68% make it a priority to teach their children about eating habits and 59% teach their children about healthy eating by taking them grocery shopping. Why the gap? Over a quarter of parents find shopping for healthy food for their children to be a significant stressor in their life.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The Del Monte Foods' 2020 State of Healthy Eating in America Study was a fifteen-minute online study among a nationally representative sample of 18+ general population consumers (n=1,000) in the United States, commissioned by Del Monte Foods, Inc. Data was collected October 28 – November 8, 2019.

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