

# Energy and Nutrition Information Survey

## Summary

### Sampling overview

Survey period	4 – 8 January 2011
Methodology	Telephone survey with interviewers
Survey target	Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong citizens of age 12-49
Survey institute	Public Opinion Programme at The University of Hong Kong
Sample size	511 successful cases
Effective response rate	74.6% (calculation based on the number of qualified targets)
Standard sampling error	Less than 2.2% points. The sampling error for all percentages was less than plus/minus 4.4% points at 95% confidence level.

### Survey results

**About 90% (87%) of respondents do not routinely read the back-of-pack nutrition label when they buy food or beverages.**

- Only about 10% (13%) of respondents report always reading the nutrition label on the package, or read the nutrition label when they buy food or beverages for the first time. More female respondents routinely read the nutrition label (female: 18%; male: 8%)
- Respondents who seldom or never read the label mainly feel it is not necessary to do so (44%), or are not used to doing so (37%)

**Respondents lack awareness of what constitutes nutrition information. Respondents in the habit of reading a nutrition label still cannot accurately name all components of the back-of-pack nutrition label.**

- Only one out of 511 respondents accurately named all eight components of the existing nutrition label
- Only 29% can accurately name half or more of the label's components
- The nutrition components most commonly named, in order, are sugars (43%), carbohydrate (38%) and sodium (34%)

- The three most important components of nutrition information named by different age groups who always, most likely or occasionally read the nutrition label; or when they buy food or beverages for the first time, are: (from the most to the least important)
  - ✧ Aged 12 – 17: Energy, protein and carbohydrate \*
  - ✧ Aged 18 – 29: Total fat, carbohydrate and sugar\*
  - ✧ Aged 30 – 39: Trans fat, sodium and sugar\*
  - ✧ Aged 40 – 49: Trans fat, sodium and sugar\*

*\*The difference in the third mention each age group was not statistically significant.*

**All respondents have some misunderstanding about the energy levels of popular food and beverages in Hong Kong.**

- Respondents cannot accurately rank the energy levels of equivalent size/volume (100g/100mL) food and beverages: pineapple bun, egg tart, curry fish ball, soft drinks, and Hong Kong style ice lemon tea and ice milk tea
- Over 60% (62%) underestimate the energy level of 100g pineapple bun
- About 90% (91%) overestimate the energy level of 100mL soft drink

**Half of respondents (50%) do not know their daily energy needs. Among those believing they know their energy needs, only 20% of them correctly state their daily energy needs. Another 70% said they seldom or never consider their energy needs before eating.**

- More female respondents always/most likely consider their energy needs before eating (Female: 18%; male 10%)
- Among respondents who said that they know their energy needs, around 20% (22%) report that they always/most likely consider their energy needs before eating

**70% of respondents do not do enough aerobic exercise. Older the respondents exercise less.**

- Only 30% (31%) of respondents do at least 20 minutes aerobic exercise three times or more per week on average. Up to 30% (27% – 34%) of respondents aged 30 to 49 do not do any exercise

	Aged 12 - 17	Aged 18 - 29	Aged 30 - 39	Aged 40 - 49	Overall
Three times or above per week	53%	24%	28%	30%	30%
Less than two times per week	43%	56%	45%	35%	45%
No exercise	3%	20%	27%	34%	24%
Do not know/hard to tell	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%

**Respondents misunderstand the basis of weight management and balanced diet.**

- Only less than 30% (26%) of respondents agree that diet control and exercise are equally important for weight management
- Over 40% (44%) believed that a balanced diet means no ice-cream, chocolates, sweets and soft drinks. Older age groups agree more with this statement
- Another 40% (43%) feel it is difficult to burn calories. Older age groups agree more with this statement

**Over half of respondents do not know where to find a qualified dietitian.**

- Respondents usually use the internet (65%), read books (24%) and magazines/newspapers (21%) to find accurate nutrition information
- About 60% (57%) do not know where to find a qualified dietitian. Among those knowing how to find a qualified dietitian, most would search via public/private hospital (62%), private clinics (30%) and the internet (16%)

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