

FGI SURVEY REPORT 2012 MEATLESS MONDAY ONLINE PANEL

Each year, the Monday Campaigns commissions a nationwide survey conducted by FGI Research to track awareness and behavior related to the Meatless Monday campaign. This year, the online survey of over 1,000 American adults assessed overall trends in meat consumption and the role that Meatless Monday plays in influencing dietary patterns. The Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future served as the advisor in developing survey questions and analyzing the results.

OVERALL CONCLUSION

Meatless Monday is an effective strategy to encourage people to reduce meat consumption and to incorporate healthy meatless alternatives into their routine. Continued promotion of the initiative in schools, restaurants, media, corporations and communities can lead to healthier eating habits that can help reduce the burden of chronic preventable diseases in the U.S.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Americans are cutting back on meat, primarily because of concerns for their health

- 59% of respondents say they have cut back on meat in the past year and 41% say they are actively trying to do so now.
- Approximately one-third of respondents say they haven't cut back and aren't considering cutting back, while only 3% say they have eaten *more* meat in the past year.
- 62% of respondents report that health is the *primary* reason they are cutting back or considering cutting back on meat.

2. Meatless Monday is influencing people to reduce meat consumption

- Of those aware of Meatless Monday, 36% say the campaign has influenced their decision to cut back or consider cutting back on meat.
- Of those influenced by Meatless Monday to cut back on meat, 62% say they've tried to incorporate Meatless Monday in their weekly routine and 40% say it has led them to incorporate more meatless meals the rest of the week.

3. Meatless Monday is influencing people to eat healthier meatless alternatives

- Of those influenced by Meatless Monday, 73% say they eat more vegetables, 65% eat more fruits, 42% eat more beans and 47% eat more whole grains.
- Meatless Monday also influenced respondents' meal preparation and food choices when eating out. 50% of those influenced by Meatless Monday have experimented with new meatless recipes when they cook at home and 42% have tried more meatless dishes when eating out. In addition, 42% of those aware of Meatless Monday would like to see Meatless Monday promoted at restaurants and 54% would like to see it promoted at supermarkets.

4. **Awareness of Meatless Monday has increased steadily since it was founded in 2003 with the most dramatic increase occurring in the last 2 years.**

Awareness of Meatless Monday increased from 26% to 43% from November 2010 to July 2012. Awareness of the campaign is primarily generated through grassroots viral dissemination and support of participating organizations versus paid media.

IMPLICATIONS

1. **Meatless Monday is an effective public health strategy which can help bring Americans in line with USDA Dietary Guidelines.**

The USDA 2010 Dietary Guidelines call for a reduction in saturated fat and an increase in consumption of nutrient-rich vegetables, fruits, beans and whole grains. A growing body of research suggests that diets high in saturated fat, particularly red meat and processed meat products, are associated with an increased risk of heart disease, obesity, diabetes and certain cancers. Public health advocates should consider Meatless Monday when developing programs to promote healthier dietary choices.

2. **Increasing education on the health benefits of reducing meat consumption can influence people to change their dietary habits.**

The FGI research confirms other studies that show health concerns are the main reason people cut down on meat. Research conducted by NPR found that people are more likely to reduce their meat consumption when they are motivated by health concerns.

3. **Leveraging weekly habits and patterns can be an effective way to change behavior.**

A significant finding of the research is that 62% of those influenced by Meatless Monday report that they've tried to incorporate it into their weekly routine. Research shows that an effective way to change behavior is to leverage the pervasive weekly cycle of planning and renewal as well as consumers' openness to make making healthier choices at the beginning of the week.

4. **Businesses can benefit by using the Meatless Monday platform to promote healthy meatless options each week.**

These survey results show that consumers practicing Meatless Monday are actively seeking out meal solutions both at home and while eating out. A range of businesses can leverage this trend to promote their products and services and increase customer loyalty. Examples include:

- *Food companies and associations that offer meatless options.* Morningstar Farms, the Mushroom Council and others have used the Meatless Monday platform to promote their products online, in social media and through retail channels.
- *Restaurants and food service companies.* High-end restaurants and casual chains have promoted Meatless Monday specials in order to increase business on a slow day and attract new demographics. Sodexo, the large food service company, found that promoting Meatless Monday increased vegetable purchasing and demonstrated the organization's commitment to health.
- *Media companies.* Food and lifestyle media including Women's Health and the Food Network increase viewership by promoting weekly Meatless Monday recipes and features.

5. Tapping into weekly editorial cycles can be a cost effective way to build awareness of public health issues.

The significant growth in awareness of Meatless Monday was accomplished primarily through grass roots interest and free promotional opportunities. As of July 2012, over 200 bloggers and websites with a combined monthly reach of 55 million people feature weekly Meatless Monday recipes. Public health promotion can increase reach by creating content that can be utilized by media to build viewership.

[The Monday Campaigns](#) is a non-profit initiative that uses weekly prompts and the unique cultural associations of Monday as the beginning of the week to positively affect a range of healthy behaviors, including eating healthy, exercising, and quitting smoking.

[Meatless Monday](#), founded in 2003 in association with the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, encourages people to reduce meat consumption by 15% (one day a week) to benefit their personal health and the health of the environment.

The [Center for a Livable Future](#) (CLF) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health provides scientific expertise and technical assistance to the Meatless Monday campaign. For this survey, CLF served as an advisor in developing the questions and analyzing the results.

[FGI Research](#) is a leading provider of custom market research, panels and surveys and data collection. This online survey was administered in July 2012 to a nationally representative sample of 1,005 U.S. adults ages 18 and over. The margin of error is 3%.