

# An Ounce of Prevention: Preventing Illness Through Healthy Living - UK - January 2010

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## What is this report about?

Health is constantly in the news and there is no shortage of information and advice, some of it conflicting, about how to live a healthy lifestyle. However, relatively little is known about consumers' motivations for changing their health habits, and about the extent to which this is linked to their own experiences.

This report explores that link, taking an in-depth look at consumers' health habits, and how they are connected to health problems affecting themselves and/or their friends or family members. It also examines attitudes towards health advice and information.

## What have we found out?

- Despite the tougher economic climate, health remains high on the agenda for the majority of consumers. Today, more than two-thirds of consumers have mainly positive attitudes towards their diet and health.
- The battle to lose weight continues for many consumers: six in ten consumers consider themselves to be overweight. Despite numerous diet products and plentiful advice on healthy living, dissatisfaction with body weight remains an important issue.
- Consumers are overwhelmed by the sheer amount of advice and information available on healthy living with one in four people feeling confused by information overload.
- With confusion rife, it's no wonder that consumers are tempted by the reassurance of regular health checks. A huge opportunity exists within the medical sector to provide more regular health checks for the 9m consumers who would welcome them.
- As with most aspects of life, technology is taking over. The internet is now the most widely-used source of health advice and information among consumers, with three in five consulting the web on health matters. Women favour Government websites while men tend to prefer to use a search engine.
- In today's society, looking good matters. So, appearance can act as a key motivator for improving health, especially among younger consumers. More than a third of 16-24-year-olds have made changes to their lifestyle to lose weight and look better.

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