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Food: Now and Then - Young People's Attitudes to Healthy Eating

Food: *Now and Then* is a new e-report from the Schools Health Education Unit (SHEU) that contains the latest responses to questions about food, healthy eating and weight control. Also included are trends data from a sample of 756,066 young people, between the ages of 10 and 15, who have taken part in the Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire (HRBQ).

It contains fascinating trend information, some going back to 1983 - a generation ago. A number of our original subjects in the 1980s have probably had children who have contributed to the findings in 2010.

What did we find?

The report is arranged by topics that cover: breakfast, lunch, attitudes to weight, food preferences, drinking water, snacking and considering healthy food options.

This article will present a brief summary of the results and uses two symbols to indicate an upward data trend ↑ and a downward data trend ↓.

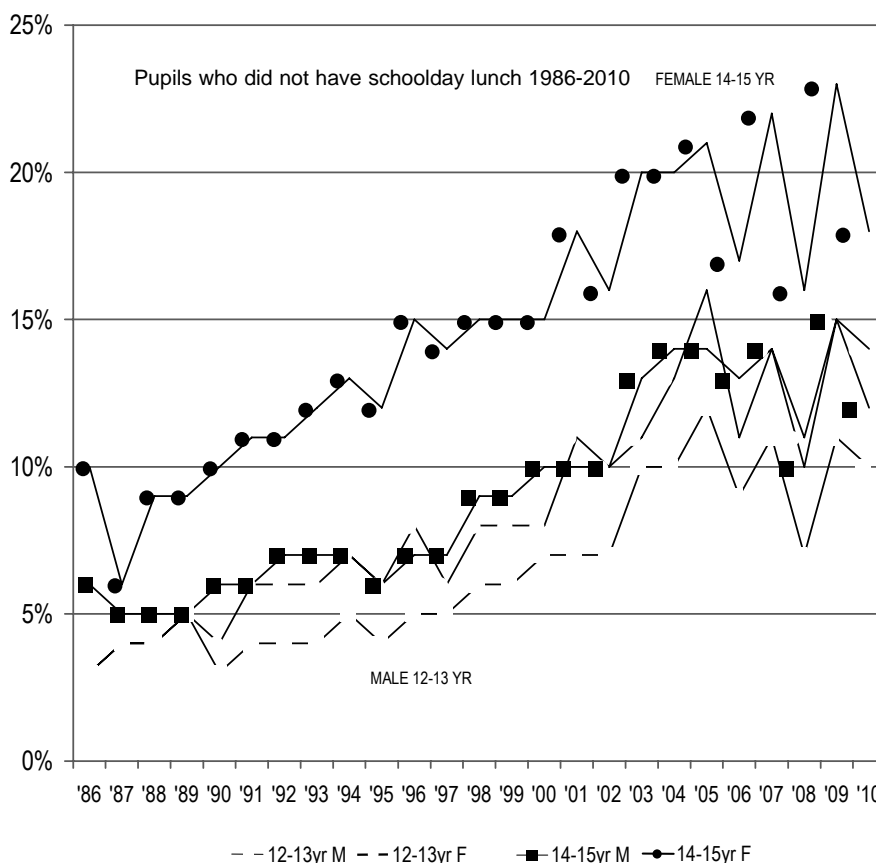
Schoolday breakfast

In 2010, 31% of 14-15 year old females report having '*nothing at all to eat*' for breakfast. Since 2004, this figure has remained fairly constant.

↓ Since 1999 there has been a steady decline in the number of pupils who ate sugar-coated cereals '*on most days*'. For example, 15% (1999) 12-13 year old females and 9% (2010).

Schoolday lunch (see chart below)

↑ Over 10% report not having schoolday lunch '*yesterday*' (18% of Year 10 females). 5% or so of pupils said this in 1986 (10% of Year 10 females).



The 'yo yo' figures seen in recent years are as a result of biennial surveying.

Attitude to personal weight

There is no overall trend in those reporting that they are 'Happy with weight as it is'. Females, aged 12-15 yrs. old, report being the least happy.

There is a slight upward trend, from 1983-1990, in those reporting they 'tried to lose weight'. Males consistently report lower percentages compared to females.

↑ 60% of Year 10 females (aged 14-15 years old) say they 'Would like to lose weight'. A little over 50% of Year 10 female pupils said this in 1991.

Dairy produce

↓ In 2010, between 44%-52% of 10-15 year olds reported having dairy produce 'on most days'. Between 52%-66% of the equivalent group said this in 1999.

Eating meat

↑ Over 35% of Year 10 males, in 2010, eat meat 'on most days'. Less than 30% of the equivalent group said this in 1999.

Vegetarian

↑ In 2010, about 5% eat vegetarian food on most days. Just 1% of all pupils said this in 1991.

Chips and roast potatoes

↓ 11% of Year 8 females, in 2010, eat chips/roast potatoes 'on most days'. 26% of the equivalent group said this in 2000.

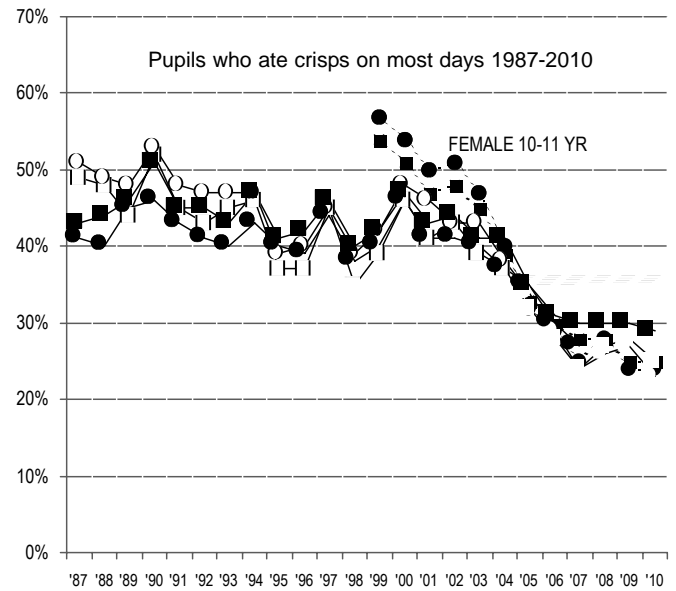
Vegetables (see chart below)

↑ In 2010, 42% of Year 8 males (aged 12-

13years old) eat vegetables on most days. 33% of the equivalent group said this in 1999.

Crisps (see chart below)

↓ 25% of Year 6 girls, in 2010, who were aged 10-11 years old eat crisps, 'on most days'. 58% of the equivalent group said this in 2000 (sweets, chocolates, fizzy drinks show the same fall and in all groups) [Similar trends from Scottish children have been reported by others].

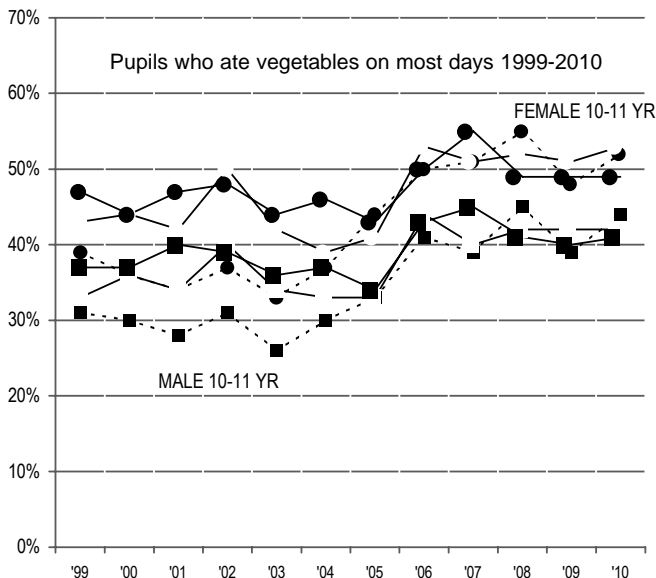


Considering health

35% of Year 10 males, in 2010, 'often' consider their health when choosing food. 26% of the equivalent group said this in 2000 (but it was nearly 40% in 1991).

Eating fruit and vegetables

The table below shows that the more times per. week young people report eating fresh fruit and vegetables they are more likely to report expecting to achieve 5 A-C GCSE's



% 5 A-C GCSE Expectations/	Eating fresh fruit		Eating vegetables	
	Year 10 M	Year 10 F	Year 10 M	Year 10 F
Rarely	10	6	15	10
Once a week	23	19	21	17
2-3 times a week	31	31	31	32
On most days	34	49	33	41

By online (£5) from <http://sheu.org.uk/content/page/food-now-and-then>