

COVID-19 Consumer Tracker waves 9 to 12 report published

The latest findings of the [COVID-19 Consumer Tracker](#) have been published. The [monthly tracker](#) monitors attitudes, experiences and behaviours of consumers in relation to food during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research covers England, Wales and Northern Ireland from April 2020 onwards.

Key findings from the COVID-19 Consumer Tracker

Food insecurity

Concerns about food availability, food affordability and skipping meals for financial reasons were high in April 2020 but declined significantly in August 2020. They have since risen again to their current level in March 2021.

The proportion of respondents who reported use of food banks or charities also dropped in August 2020. Otherwise, this proportion has remained relatively stable across all waves.

Participants from larger households (4+), those in younger age groups (aged 16-24), and households with a child present were more likely to be 'food insecure', across all these measures of food insecurity.

Food purchasing, nutrition and food safety behaviours

Trends in food purchasing, eating, food safety and hygiene behaviours in the home have remained stable. They are consistent since the tracker began in April 2020.

Consumer food concerns

From December 2020 to March 2021, the COVID-19 tracker asked respondents about their food concerns.

28% of respondents reported being concerned about the quality of food produced in the UK in March 2021, whilst 50% reported being 'concerned' about the quality of food imported from outside the UK. These were consistent across all collected waves.

In March 2021, 22% of participants reported having a concern about the food they eat at the moment. The biggest concerns selected by participants were:

- the 'healthiness' of food in my diet (53%)
- animal welfare (52%)
- the ethical treatment of producers and farmers (50%)
- food freshness (50%)
- hormones, steroids or antibiotics in food (50%)

Emily Miles, Chief Executive at the Food Standards Agency, said:

'Across a whole year of collecting this data we have seen that young people and households with children are amongst those most affected by food insecurity, which unfortunately has gradually increased since the lower levels we saw last summer.

'This evidence is being used to inform the work of FSA and the wider government in tackling these issues, for example in the National Food Strategy. We will continue to play our part in protecting health and consumers' wider interests in relation to food.'

Read the full report in the latest [COVID-19 Consumer Tracker](#).