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Determinants of milk choice amongst young New Zealand men
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Background – The National Nutrition Survey showed that young men aged 19 to 24 years use standard milk (3.3% fat) more so than lower fat alternatives and are among the most frequent consumers of milk. Milk is a significant contributor of saturated fat for men in this age group. As there is a negative relationship between the intake of foods high in saturated fat and the incidence of chronic disease it is important that factors contributing to the milk selection bias towards standard milk be understood.

Objective – To identify milk choice influences and barriers to shifting milk choice from standard milk to healthier, lower fat alternatives among young men.

Design – A cross sectional survey whereby a group of young men completed a self-administered questionnaire on a restricted-entry web-page hosted by the New Zealand Heart Foundation. The questionnaire was designed to determine usual milk consumption behaviour, influences and perceptions towards choice of milk type and barriers to shifting milk choice to lower fat alternatives.

Outcomes – A convenience sample of 86 young men completed the questionnaire. Standard milk was the milk type used most often by 35% of the respondents. The primary influences in choice of standard milk were taste and habit. Consumers of standard milk did not perceive the lower fat alternatives to be ‘healthier’ or ‘more refreshing’. Lower fat milk choices were viewed to be feminine - ‘for chicks not guys’. Among young men who consumed lower fat alternatives the key influences of milk selection were perceived health benefits and maintenance of a healthy body weight.

Conclusions – Amongst this group of young men there were differences in attitudes and beliefs between those who consumed standard milk and lower fat alternatives. These perception differences translated into different milk choice. These findings were limited by a small sample size. Nutrition promotion initiatives which attempt to modify milk type selection need to consider the perceptions held by a larger representative sample of this demographic group.

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Trim Pork: Becoming part of a healthy lifestyle
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Background – Pork is the most consumed animal protein in the world. During the past five years the per capita consumption of pork has increased significantly in New Zealand. Understanding the key consumer trends, purchase behaviour, needs and wants of the New Zealand consumers is critical to grow pork consumption in New Zealand.

Objective – To identify factors that influence the food consumption patterns and its effect on the growth of pork consumption in New Zealand.

Design – Twelve focus groups covering urban and rural New Zealanders were conducted in 2007. The panel members were pork consumers selected based on a set criteria.

Outcomes – The key trends identified that have implications to pork consumption are an increase in the pace of life, information overload, desire for a healthier diet, a redefinition of convenience, increasing use of a global menu, increase in demand for responsibly produced food and the greater importance for safe food that has no negative impact in the short as well as long term. Balancing the need to consume goodness food and the want to enjoy a pleasurable eating experience is considered a constant battle.

Conclusions – Pork is currently considered unique with a distinctive taste, healthy with heart tick assurance for specific cuts, versatile, quick and easy to prepare and a celebratory meal solution. Further growth can be achieved by increasing the convenience of pork preparation, enhancing the nutritional attributes, and achieving a better consistency in quality. Getting the balance right so that pork is a good choice for short and long term health, provides the required sustenance to fuel the body and finally, satisfies the emotive indulgence, is critical for future success. Trim pork is considered best suited to take this position.