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## **Bread, milk, meat good or bad for the gut? Survey reveals consumers' confusion**

Consumers are confused about what foods are good for digestive health, a new survey by consultancy New Nutrition Business reveals. The number of people who believe bread, meat and milk are good for digestion is almost equal to the number of people who believe they are bad.

The survey asked 3,000 people from the UK, Australia, Spain, Brazil and the US to rank some common foods as good or bad for their gut health.

While 38% of respondents singled out bread as the key culprit behind gastrointestinal distress, 24% said it was good for digestive wellness.

And despite kefir and fermented vegetables being hyped as gut health heroes, more people believed bread was good for digestion than believed kefir (17.6%) or fermented vegetables (15.8%) were good.

Consumers are just as divided over the gut health benefits of milk and meat.

- Nearly half of those surveyed, 46.6%, believed dairy milk was good for digestive health, while 30.6% thought milk was bad for their digestion.
- Just over half, 55%, said they choose lactose-free foods for their digestive health (although only 15% claim to be lactose-intolerant).
- For meat, 27% of respondents said it was good for digestive wellness, while 33% believed it was bad.

“Contradictory consumer beliefs about which foods are good or bad for digestive health indicate how strongly attitudes about food and health are fragmented,” says Joana Maricato, research manager at New Nutrition Business. “Most people are adopting a wide variety of behaviours in relation to diet and health.”

This is a result of growing mistrust in official dietary guidelines, according to Maricato, and people's desire to take back control of their diets. “Changes in dietary advice over the past 15 years have created consumer scepticism about the “expert” opinions of dieticians and nutrition researchers, just at the moment that technology has made it easier for people to find dietary information for themselves,” Maricato adds.

Most respondents, 76%, said they thought messages about diet and health were confusing. Asked where they learn about healthy eating and diet, most said they searched online and read blogs, while only 28% asked a nutritionist or a dietician.

## NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. Editors can request comment or arrange an interview with Joana Maricato, by contacting Marta Matvijev at [marta@new-nutrition.com](mailto:marta@new-nutrition.com).
2. The *Consumer Insights in Food, Nutrition & Health 2019* report provides a snapshot of consumers' beliefs and attitudes about food, diet and nutrition and is available for purchase at [new-nutrition.com](http://new-nutrition.com)
3. Further charts from the report are available on request.
4. Joana Maricato is a research manager at New Nutrition Business, where she focuses on identifying the best strategies for commercializing nutrition science and helping clients create new products with health benefits.
5. New Nutrition Business provides case studies and analysis of success and failure in the global nutrition business and is used by more than 1,700 corporate subscribers in 42 countries. New Nutrition Business is a research and consultancy company with an expert focus on the business of food and health since 1995. It has offices in the United States, Europe, and New Zealand and affiliates in Japan and South Korea.