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## Red meat and dairy is really good for you

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MOST of us try to be healthy when it comes to the food we eat and our lifestyles and start the week with good intentions. However, according to research by Kantar, the percentage of food and drink we consume for health reasons declines the closer the day is to the weekend. So we're swapping our salad and lean meat and green tea for fizzy drinks and take-away pizza.

Interestingly the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) have highlighted that 31 % of evening meals are chosen for health reasons, compared to breakfast and lunch at 27% (Kantar 52 w/e 24 Jan 2021). In addition, consumers are most likely to choose certain food and drink products for health reasons, with 79% of fresh fruit, 74% of yogurt drinks, and 46% of vegetable servings consumed for health purposes (Kantar 52 w/e March 21, 2021).

They have also found that meat, fish and poultry and dairy products are less likely to be associated with health. The key consumption driver for red meat and dairy is taste and enjoyment. However, some are more likely to be eaten for health reasons, such as fish and yogurt.

Over time, the amount of red meat consumed for health reasons has gradually declined, with 16.7% of red meat eaten for health purposes in 2021, compared to 17.9% in 2017 (Kantar 52 w/e March 21, 2021). That statistic surprised us, especially when we consider that red meat and dairy are recognised as an important part of a balanced diet and currently, 98% of British households buy milk while 91% of UK households enjoy red meat. It is, of course, up to individuals what they choose to eat, but it is also important to understand how the unique nutritional benefits of meat fit into a healthy diet. There will be a large number of people who have cut meat consumption significantly for whatever reason who are now not getting the balance of nutrients and vitamins they need.

We have highlighted this many times before but when it comes to choosing healthy food, red meat is one of the richest sources of essential nutrients such as iron, zinc and B vitamins in the diet, as well as a significant source of protein. Red meat also has much lower fat contents than it did 20 years ago, with fully trimmed lean beef containing just 5% fat on average and fully trimmed lamb containing 8% fat on average.

Lean red meats can play an important part in a healthy balanced diet as they have a high nutrient density, which means that they contain a wide variety of nutrients in a relatively small amount of food.

Experts have also highlighted that the iron and zinc found in red meats is more bioavailable than in many alternative food sources, and red meat can enhance the absorption of

these important minerals. So there is much to love here – taste and health benefits all in one.

We also mustn't forget about the important role dairy products play in a healthy balanced diet. They are highly nutritious with milk, cheese and yoghurt all containing a range of high-quality protein, nutrients and vitamins. For most people they are the main source of iodine, which is difficult to get from other food sources.

So when it comes to those days closer to the weekend, or that weekend treat – don't forget that red meat and dairy are not just tasty, they're also really good for you and the environment. Win win!