

How Do Your Nutritional and Dietary Needs Affect You Poll

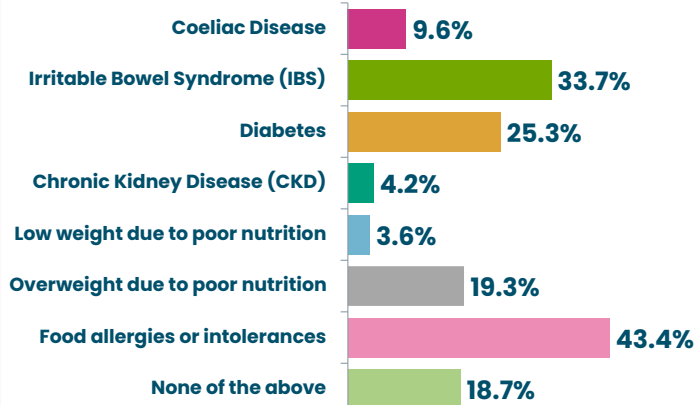
healthwatch
in Sussex

During July 2025, Healthwatch received responses from **166** people about their experiences of living with nutritional or dietary requirements.

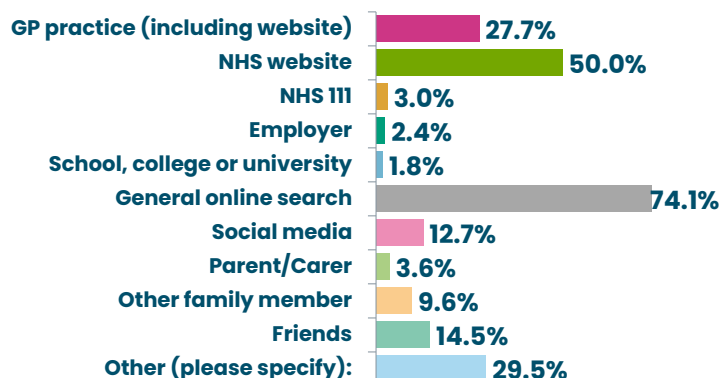
We heard:

- 43.4% respondents had food allergies or intolerances, 33.7% experienced Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) and 25.3% had Diabetes.
- People highlighted the impacts on their life, with 47.9% lacking options when eating out, 28.8% struggling to source food for their dietary needs, and 28.2% unable to access support for their dietary needs.
- The most common ways respondents found information about dietary conditions or nutritional needs were a general online search (74.1%), the NHS website (50%), and via their GP practice (27.7%).
- 32 respondents (19.3%) had used NHS nutrition or dietetic services recently. Experiences were generally positive, but the greatest challenges were lack of flexible appointment times and long waits for appointments. Other respondents had low awareness of these NHS services or how to access them.

Please tell us if you experience any of the following



Where would you look for information about dietary conditions or nutritional needs



Have you experienced any of the following when trying to meet your nutritional or dietary needs?



Respondents to our poll told us they would like to see:

More education about and awareness of different dietary needs

"Better understanding that food intolerance is NOT an option – it is a condition that causes severe health impairment. Staff in restaurants/eating places should have compulsory training in food allergies and intolerance"

"It would be better for my condition to be better understood by medical professionals giving information about nutrition to me"

More affordable healthy food (including Free-From foods)

"My biggest issue is food prices ... some of the items that would benefit me are prohibitively expensive, and general food costs just seem to keep rising (while my salary doesn't!)"

"Healthy food needs to be cheaper and also made easier to access, healthier options in coffee shops would be nice"

Better access to Free-From foods (e.g. gluten and dairy free foods) in supermarkets and when eating out

"More availability of gluten free products that aren't expensive"

"Often cannot get anything to eat at events because organisers do not take into account allergies like GF [Gluten Free]"

Better access to professional support

"Definitive information from a specialist and taking into account that people sometimes have multiple conditions to manage, their own preferences (e.g. vegetarian) and budget"

"Personal session/s with dietician once diagnosed to make correct food choices and feel confident that I'm doing the best for myself"

Clearer food labeling

"A lot of time checking ingredients of foods for allergens – information not readily available as not common allergens."

"In hospitals (and generally), more training/awareness for everybody involved in food preparation and delivery, with information in printed form available for those the food is for"

Better access to public toilets

"[I] cannot go out without knowing where I will be able to go to the toilet"

"I always have to be near a toilet in case I have an IBS attack. This can be hard as we now have to pay to use the toilets along the seafront. The toilets should be free for those with medical conditions."

Tell us your experience

We always want to hear more about people's experiences of health and care services.

Share your story with your local Healthwatch:

Healthwatch Brighton & Hove

info@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk or 01273 234 040

Healthwatch East Sussex

enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk or 0333 101 4007

Healthwatch West Sussex

helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk or 0300 012 0122