

FACTORS AFFECTING FOOD CHOICES



Factor Category	What's included	Examples / Important Details
Knowledge, education and health	Information that a person has about food, nutrition, cooking and health	- Nutrition education at school, at home or in the community - Cooking skills and reading food labels - Scientific research and media coverage on healthy eating - Nutritional requirements at different ages
State of health	Medical conditions that affect what a person can eat	- Allergies and intolerances (gluten, lactose, nuts) - The need to increase or reduce certain nutrients - Chronic conditions that affect diet
Physical activity level (PAL)	Amount of energy used each day	- Active people need more energy - A sedentary lifestyle reduces energy requirements
Personal preferences	Likes, dislikes, memories or emotional associations	- Favourite food - Foods associated with comfort or negative experiences
Lifestyle	Routines, timetables, work, pace of life	- Type of work (active/sedentary) - Stress and tiredness after work - Time available for cooking
Time available for preparing food	Willingness to buy ingredients and cook	People who are short of time opt for ready meals, snacks or fast food

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Food yield and cost	How much a person can spend; product prices	• Compare prices per kilo/litre • Home-cooked food vs. ready meals • Special offers, budget brands
Food availability	What is available in the area where a person lives	• Available in supermarkets, local markets and online shops • Opening hours for food services
Seasonality	The time of year when food is at its best and cheapest	• Strawberries in summer • Winter vegetables • Lower prices and better quality when they're in season
Food miles (distance travelled)	Distance from producer to consumer	• Environmental impact • Local food vs. imported food
Culture and religion	Factors that influence what is permitted or prohibited	• Kosher, halal • Avoid pork • Culinary traditions
Ethics and the environment	Concerns about sustainability and animal welfare	• A preference for organic, fair trade and cruelty-free products • Reducing food waste • Reducing the use of pesticides and packaging
Celebrations and traditions	Foods associated with special occasions and moments	• Birthday cakes • Christmas, Easter, harvest festivals • Weddings, funerals, ceremonies

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Social and family aspects	How social context influences what we eat	- Eating as a family - Sharing meals at work or school - Getting together with friends - Experiencing different cultures
Media and advertising	The influence of the media and advertising	- TV, social media, influencers, magazines - Packaging, slogans, colours, music, celebrities
Food labelling	Information on the labels	- Nutritional information - Allergens - Nutritional traffic light scheme (colours) - Nutritional and health claims
Time available for eating	Eating habits and meal times	- Eating alone or in a group - Snacking between meals - Eating on the go (in the car, at work)