Foods on the top shelf of the food pyramid are those which are high in fats and salt. It is recommended that these foods are used sparingly. **Almost all respondents had at least three servings per day of these foods.**

Twelve percent of respondents ate fried foods 4+ times per week. As seen in Figure 29 more males than females consumed fried food 4+ times per week. A strong social class gradient in both males and females was also observed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group (Years)</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-34</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-54</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55+</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 29:** Percentage of respondents consuming fried foods more than 4 times per week by gender, age and social class.

High percentages of respondents continued to use butter daily. Overall 59% used butter daily with the highest consumers in the older age group for both males and females.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group (Years)</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-34</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-54</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55+</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 30:** Percentage consuming butter daily by gender and age.
Fifty-six percent reported using low fat, polyunsaturated spreads. This was predominantly among the older males and females.
The children were asked about the frequency of their consumption of a variety of foodstuffs. In keeping with the National targets, data are presented below concerning fruit and vegetables (both cooked and raw) and foods high in sugar and fat. These illustrate less variability over socio-demographic groups than earlier sections. Nevertheless, both age and gender differences do emerge on the aggregate fruit data. Forty one percent of children aged 9-11 report eating fruit more frequently than daily and this decreases to 32% for those aged 15-17. The percentages rarely or never eating fruit are constant at 8% across all age groups. Gender differences are clear, with girls more likely to be eating fruit more frequently than boys. Overall 40% of girls report eating fruit more than once a day, while 7% report that they rarely or never eat fruit. The corresponding percentages for boys are 31% and 10% respectively.

The data for vegetable consumption indicate that eating fruit is more common than eating vegetables. They also show fewer global differences across socio-demographic groups. Gender differences are minimal with 19% of boys and 20% of girls reporting that they eat vegetables more than once a day, while 14% of boys and 11% of girls report rarely or never eating vegetables. Similarly, there are few differences across social classes. There is, however, a reported decrease in vegetable consumption with age. Twenty one percent of children from 9-14 report eating vegetables more than once a day while this drops to 16% of those aged 15-17.
Children were also asked about eating a range of other foods, including cakes and pastries, soft (fizzy) drinks, sweets, chocolate and crisps. All of these are considered to be high fat and/or sugar foods and it is recommended that they are eaten sparingly. The figures below indicate the percentages of children who report that they are eating 3 or more of these daily. Therefore this represents children who are eating these high fat and/or sugar foods frequently. Few patterns emerge in this data, with the exception of the suggestion of a social class effect and boys in general eating more high fat and/or high sugar foods.

In addition to questions about food consumption, children were asked whether they were on a diet to reduce weight or if they thought that they needed to lose weight (but were not-currently on such a diet). Overall, 8% (4% of boys and 12% of girls) reported being on a weight reducing diet and an additional 23% (18% of boys and 28% of girls) reported that they needed to lose weight. These percentages increased across the age groups, from 5% of 9-11 year olds through 8% of 12-14 year olds to 10% of 15-17 year olds who were on weight reducing diets and a further 19% of 9-11 year olds, 23% of 12-14 year olds and 25% of 15-17 year olds reporting that they should lose weight. However, on examination these general increases across age are almost entirely attributable to the girls. The figures for boys decrease slightly from ages 9 to 17, while those for girls run from 6% of 9-11 year olds through 10% of 12-14 year olds to 16% of 15-17 year olds being on a weight reducing diet while the corresponding figures reporting that they needed to lose weight are 21%, 29% and 35%. There is no consistent pattern for these variables across the social classes.
Health Strategy Target
To achieve a 30 per cent increase in the proportion of the population aged 15 and over who engage in an accumulated 30 minutes of light physical exercise most days of the week by the year 2000.
To achieve a 20 per cent increase in the proportion of the population aged 15 and over who engage in moderate exercise for at least 20 minutes, three times a week by the year 2000.

Overall, 42% of respondents engaged in some form of regular physical exercise.
Twenty-four percent reported doing mild exercise four times per week for at least 20 minutes, 31% did moderate exercise three times per week and 9% did strenuous exercise three times per week.

Table 17 below shows the distribution of mild exercise participation by gender, age and social class. Higher percentages of older females in the higher socio-economic groups did more mild exercise than the lower socio-economic groups. In contrast, more lower social class young males did mild exercise compared to higher social class males.

| Table 17: Percentage engaging in mild physical exercise for at least 20 minutes most days of the week by gender, age and social class |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| SC1-2 | SC3-4 | SC5-6 |
| **MALES** | | | |
| 18-34 yrs | 27 | 19 | 33 |
| 35-54 yrs | 23 | 21 | 21 |
| 55+ yrs | 32 | 31 | 29 |
| **FEMALES** | | | |
| 18-34 yrs | 28 | 27 | 27 |
| 35-54 yrs | 22 | 24 | 21 |
| 55+ yrs | 30 | 39 | 21 |

As seen in Figure 40 significantly smaller percentages of the older age group participated in moderate exercise 3+ times per week. There was also a difference between the numbers of males doing the required amount compared to females. A social class gradient existed in most age groups for both males and females.
Table 18 below shows the distribution of strenuous exercise participation by gender, age and social class. More males than females engaged in this form of activity especially in the younger age group.

Table 18: Percentage engaging in strenuous physical exercise for at least 20 minutes three times per week by gender, age and social class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SC1-2</th>
<th>SC3-4</th>
<th>SC5-6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MALES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-34 yrs</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-54 yrs</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55+ yrs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FEMALES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-34 yrs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-54 yrs</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55+ yrs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Twenty-one percent of respondents reported doing no exercise at all. This was predominantly so for older males and females in the lower social class groups.
Children were asked about their participation in exercise outside of class time. They were asked the frequency with which they exercised so much that they get out of breath or sweat. Presented below are data illustrating the percentages reporting that they exercise in such a way four or more times a week (in keeping with the National targets) and those reporting that they exercise less than weekly. The patterns that emerge are slightly different across these two ways of assessing exercise participation. Overall, 53% of children report exercising four or more times per week while 6% exercise less than weekly. However, this masks some substantial gender differences. Although only 5% of boys and 7% of girls are exercising less than weekly, 62% of boys and 45% of girls are exercising four times or more times per week. This suggests that the vast majority of children are involved in some exercise outside of school, but that boys are more frequent exercisers than girls. Although there are few global differences across social class, exercise participation does decrease with age. Exercising four or more times per week decreases from 63% of 9-11 year olds and 58% of 12-14 year olds to 40% of 15-17 year olds. This decrease is apparent among both genders but is particularly noticeable among girls (dropping from 59% of 9-11 year olds, through 49% of 12-14 year olds to 26% of 15-17 year olds) where it also interacts with social class (see figure 43).
Health Strategy Target
TD achieve a reduction of 10 per cent in mortality due to accidents within the next 10 years and a significant reduction in morbidity particularly among children

No data on fatal injuries were collected but the pattern of non-fatal but limiting injuries in Ireland was recorded.
Eighteen percent of respondents indicated having had an injury in the past two years which interfered with their daily activities and of these 87% were accidental.

Males were more likely to have suffered such an injury with 22% compared to 14% females. There also appeared to be an inverse age relationship with 23% of the 18-34 year olds having a serious injury compared to 13% of the older 55+ age group. Eighteen percent of the injuries were at home/garden, 21% at work and 21% occurred during sport. However, as might be expected age and gender influenced the location at which injuries occurred. As seen in Figure 46 below, with increasing age injuries were more likely to happen at home or in the garden. Work is significant in young males whereas for all groups of women home was the most common site.

The main treatment of injuries was carried out by the accident and emergency service in hospitals (47%). Thirty-six percent used the GP service and 15% treated the injury themselves.

![Figure 46: Site of injury by gender and age](image-url)
A major concern around road safety is drinking and driving. Of those respondents who normally drank and who normally drove a car, 22% indicated that they had driven soon after consuming 2 or more alcoholic drinks. A significantly higher percentage of males to females reported doing this (31% to 13% respectively) and as seen in the Figure 47 below, predominantly the middle, 35-54 years age group.

The majority of respondents (82%) reported always or nearly always using seatbelts when riding in the front seat of a car. Similar percentages were observed across age and social class groupings but there was a higher percentage of females (74%) always using the seatbelt compared to males (61%).
Children were asked a series of questions in relation to safety, accidents and injuries. These included frequency of seatbelt and cycle helmet use. The data presented below for seatbelt use exclude those who do not travel by car or report that there is no seatbelt where they sit in the car. It should be noted that the percentage of those reporting that there is no seatbelt where they sit is low (2% overall) and decreased with age from 4% of 9-11 year olds through 2% of 12-14 year olds to 1% of 15-17 year olds. This may reflect older teenagers sitting in the front passenger seat rather than the back seat of the car. Overall, 41% of children report that they always wear a seatbelt, but this masks some substantial gender differences as 35% of boys and 46% of girls report always wearing a seatbelt when travelling by car. In general, younger children and those from higher social classes are more likely to always wear a seatbelt but the differences are not as noteworthy A clear effect of social class has emerged among older boys which is also present although to a lesser degree among girls (see figures 48 and 49 below).

The rates for cycle helmet use have been calculated by excluding those who report that they do not ride bicycles. Overall, 8% of children report that they always wear a helmet and no gender or social class differences emerge. There are, however, substantial age differences. The rates decrease from 16% at ages 9-11, through 7% at ages 12-14 to 3% at ages 15-17. Interestingly, this mirrors the increase in those reporting that they do not ride bicycles which were 8%, 11% and 21% for the three age groups respectively.
Children were asked about any injuries that they had in the previous 12 months. Overall, 48% report that they have had an injury. Although there are large differences across gender (58% of boys and 39% of girls), few patterns emerge across age or social class. Most injuries occur either at home (their own home or someone else) or at a sports facility or field (not at school). Therein lies much of the gender difference, injuries at home are reported equally frequently by boys and girls (13%), but sports injuries are reported more frequently by boys (21%) as compared to girls (8%). This is likely to be related to the data reported in figures 42 and 43, illustrating more frequent exercise participation among boys. However, while injuries occurring at home are relatively static across gender, age and social class, injuries occurring at a sports facility or field increase across age for both boys and girls from 9-11 year olds (15% of boys and 5% of girls) through 12-14 year olds (21% of boys and 10% of girls) to 15-17 year olds (29% of boys and 9% of girls).
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