

Airlie Medical Practice Survey Report

This piece of work was undertaken by the Health Promotion Service on behalf of the Health & Social Care Partnership

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Fife Health & Social Care Partnership

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Introduction

Following on from discussions with Airlie Medical Practice around their interest in providing health promotion support and resources to patients in the Levenmouth area, it was decided to find out how their patients accessed health information and what support they felt would benefit them. Therefore, between 24 October and 17 November 2023, the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership (FH&SCP) and Fife Council undertook a consultation at Airlie Medical Practice to gain an understanding on how patients gained information or support around eating well and if there were ways this could be done differently.

Initial Steps

A short term working group (STWG) was established, which included representatives from the Health Promotion Service, Levenmouth Community, Learning Development Team and FH&SCP Locality Planning. The group met online to plan the project and design a short survey that could be given out to patients. The survey was then shared with the Health Promotion's Food and Health Team for comments and feedback.

It was agreed, in order to capture a wide cross section of the patients of Airlie Medical Practice, a survey would be the best way to capture the thoughts and feelings around eating well as an initial focus. The survey would take place over the course of the month and members of the STWG would be on hand to prompt and help patients to fill in the forms. There would be a QR Code on the practice's website and Facebook page so that people not coming into the surgery would have a chance to fill it in. Additionally, forms were also given to the GPs and receptionists to encourage patients to fill in the forms.

When no-one from the STWG was in the waiting room forms, clipboards, pens and a collection box were left in the waiting room next to a poster advertising the survey asking patients to take part.

Overview of findings

From the 11,000 patients registered with Airlie Medical Practice, the consultation received 420 responses in total. However, approximately 30 of these were not completed as people would be called for their appointment whilst completing the survey. The respondents were from a wide range of areas and ages, with Methil showing the highest prevalence and the majority in the over 60 age bracket. Just under half had dependants living at home with them.

89% of respondents all had an interest in eating well and 39% went online or used social media to access information around food and nutrition.

Respondents felt they were fairly knowledgeable about eating well. On average they scored themselves a subjective 6.7 on a scale of 0 -10. However, 41% rated themselves between 8 and 10 for this question.

When patients were asked what kind of information/support they would like 74 people stated they were happy with what they currently receive. From the suggested options, support with meal planning (14%) and requests for recipes (12%) were the most frequently asked for. 22% left the box blank. A few people highlighted the current cost of living crisis and were looking for advice around low cost recipes and sourcing more affordable fresh food.

However, the main theme that arose from the additional comments were people requesting factual information they could rely on for specific conditions, for example IBS, eating disorders and mental health.

The additional comments were as follows.

- cooking lessons on budget
- menopause info
- eating disorder
- dietician
- better access to a variety of fruits and vegetables at affordable prices
- diet sheet
- medical nutrition. how to access nutritious drinks when can't eat
- unfortunately due to my MH, I find it very difficult to prepare and consume healthy food
- a leaflet with details of various websites and sources of information around all of the above
- I would really like help to lose weight and eat better in general
- healthy eating weight management groups run by GP practices
- not a lack of info I just need motivation to keep it up
- what to eat during episodes of hypothyroidism and with prostate cancer
- help to lose weight
- factual information about nutrients to counter internet hype
- set a chart for day

- meal planning for fussy children
- more clarity on allergens and alternatives
- Simple good rules to follow
- meal planning for on the go
- prices of good quality food
- food preparation especially for fussy eaters
- how to eat well/healthy with a budget and mythbusting - a lot of contradicting information about the same stuff eg. all chocolate is bad for you but dark chocolate is healthy and milk chocolate releases good endorphins?
- links to good mental health
- balancing macros, protein etc
- info about potentially harmful foods (i.e. what has more added sugar than you'd expect"]
- Real info re what's good to eat - not sugar free and low fat diet info. More info about HOW these foods are good and what they do
- better balance/variety on limited time
- meal planning for one
- none. don't need an appointment with nutritionist as don't want to waste their time
- all of the above - great health promotion
- healthy snacks and main meals
- recipes for big families
- I know what I should be doing - my problem is lack of willpower
- food portions - what's an appropriate amount for all ages
- anything
- leaflets or emails
- losing appetite so try hard to eat healthy
- recipes which help me manage my IBS
- I have Crohn's so I get a lot of info at the hospital
- Grains and vegetables, fish
- Support groups to help give motivation
- inclusion of assistance for IBS/bowel issues that affect meals/nutrition
- Since my wife died I am unsure if I am getting enough vitamins and nutrients in my diet
- Good recipes and could plan. Bulk cook and freeze. Everyday foods not posh stuff

When asked what websites people had heard of from NHS Inform, Food Standards Scotland, Feeding Fifers and Parent Club, it emerged less than half had heard of NHS Inform and just under a quarter of respondents had not heard of any of the websites.

What the survey did not capture

Anecdotally, one woman who reported she was 5 out of 10 on the knowledge scale and wanted support on food preparation, went on to explain in detail how she prepared heart healthy meals by batch cooking and freezing.

Another lady reported that she knew how to cook and wanted to cook but due to her arthritic hands could not open tins, lift a pot or peel potatoes and said the only hot food she got that was not from a microwave was when she bought soup from the bakers.

Someone else, who has celiac disease, said she found it difficult to eat healthily as the diet limits what she can have and the "free from" range is often costly and even then, not all of the items are allowed with her condition.

One respondent wrote on the form - "I am going blind and get Wiltshire meals delivered but they come in compartments and it's hard for me to plate it up and have all of it at the same temperature".

These findings, which the survey does not capture, highlight that some people know more than they realise, health conditions have a real impact on eating well and it opens up questions about options for meals and what information people organising meals for patients have available to them when ordering.

It was also noted that some patients used apps on their phones to translate the questions into Arabic and Chinese and although this appeared to be the norm for these patients, it raises issues around how non-English speakers receive health related information.

Limitations

Although a QR code was shown on the practice's Facebook page only 4 people filled it out remotely. Therefore, nearly all of the respondents were attending appointments with regards to their health, which perhaps skews some of the results.

Due to capacity, and in order to cover each day of the week over the month, the waiting room was only staffed on Tuesday and Thursday of week 1 and Monday, Wednesday and Friday of week 3. On the days with no-one prompting the patients to fill out forms 43 were filled in, which highlights more staff would be required for a more intense piece of research.

Question 7, which asked people what kind of support they would like around Eating Well, gave some examples, which then led to people copying these suggestions, perhaps rather than writing what they personally felt would help them. This then leads to the question, how many people would have requested support around meal planning if it had not been one of the offered suggestions? However, this was the most frequently noted down request.

Conclusions and recommendations

Overall, respondents held positive attitudes towards eating well and feel they have a good knowledge of it but some feel they need further support to make healthier informed choices when buying and preparing food.

Patients were requesting support around their diet when they have a diagnosed condition, which means they may not have already received any information or, perhaps at the time of

diagnosis, were not in a position to take in all the information provided. Therefore, there may be some merit in there being condition specific leaflets and website links available in GPs and other health professionals' rooms to share with patients during appointments.

Although the majority of people are going online and using social media to access eating well information, over 50% had not heard of NHS Inform, which is Scotland's national health information service that provides reliable health related information. Raising the profile of NHS Inform should help provide patients with the factual and reliable information they require.

Information on low cost recipes and ways to access good food on a budget needs to be more readily available. One thought around this, and also to help promote websites such as NHS Inform, is using the television screen in the waiting room. A power point presentation with health promotion information, what's on in the area and slides with recipes, tips for meal planning and budgeting ideas, could be designed and shown on a loop in the waiting room.

Link Life Fife and Fife Forum have dedicated workers in the Levenmouth area that have a vast knowledge of the community resources available and patients needing additional support around motivation and mental health could be referred to them.

The Health Promotion Food and Health Team are currently working on building a Food Champions Network. As part of this piece of work they will be looking at making information and resources related to diet and nutrition more accessible.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Eating Well Survey

Appendix 2 – Results

Appendix 1 – Eating Well Survey

Eating Well Survey

Hi! We are trying to understand how people get information or support on eating well in the area and if there's ways we can do this differently. If you could take 2 minutes to complete the form it would be appreciated. Thank you!

1. What area do you live in?

- Leven
- Methil
- Buckhaven
- Kennoway
- Wemyss Villages
- Other

2. What age range are you in?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-60
- 60+

3. Do you have dependants living at home with you?

- Yes
- No

4. Do you have an interest in eating well?

- Yes
- No

5. How do you usually access information about eating well?

- Leaflets
- Books
- Television
- Online
- Social media
- Word of mouth
- Friends/family
- Community groups/courses/learning
- Newspaper/magazines
- I don't
- Other

6. How would you rate your knowledge around eating well? (1 being knowing a little, 10 being knowing a lot)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. What support/information, if any, would you like to receive around eating well? (for example meal planning, nutrition, budgeting, recipes, food preparation)

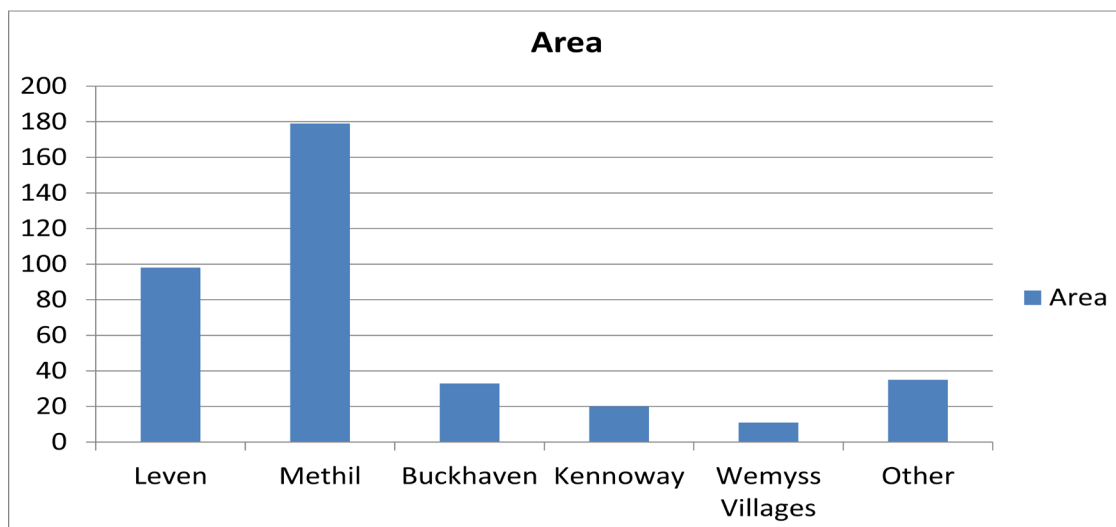
- meal planning
- nutrition
- budgeting
- recipes
- food preparation
- left blank
- Other

8. Below are some websites that have information around eating well. What ones have you heard of?

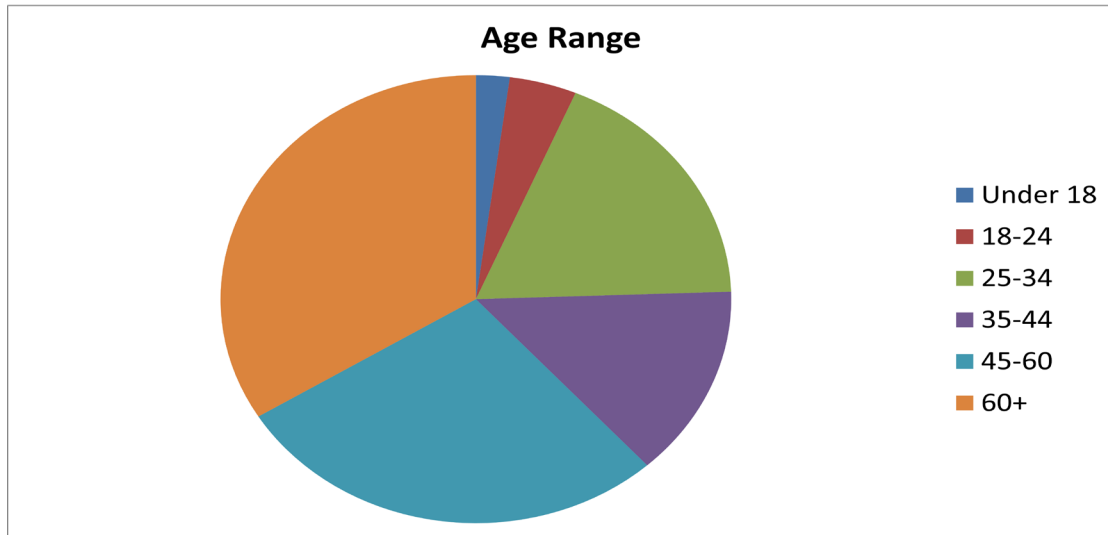
- NHS Inform
- Parent Club
- Food Standards Scotland
- Feeding Fifers
- None

Appendix 2 – Results

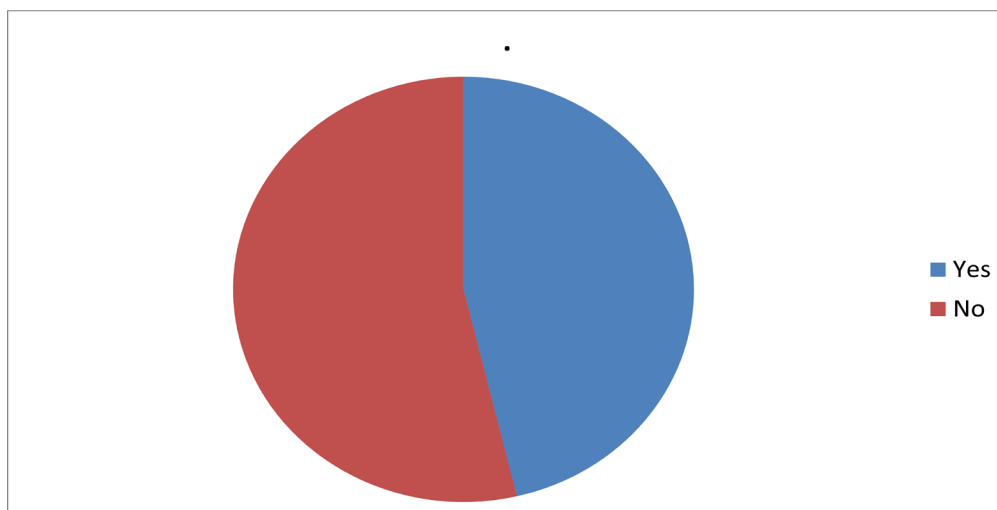
What Area Do You Live In?



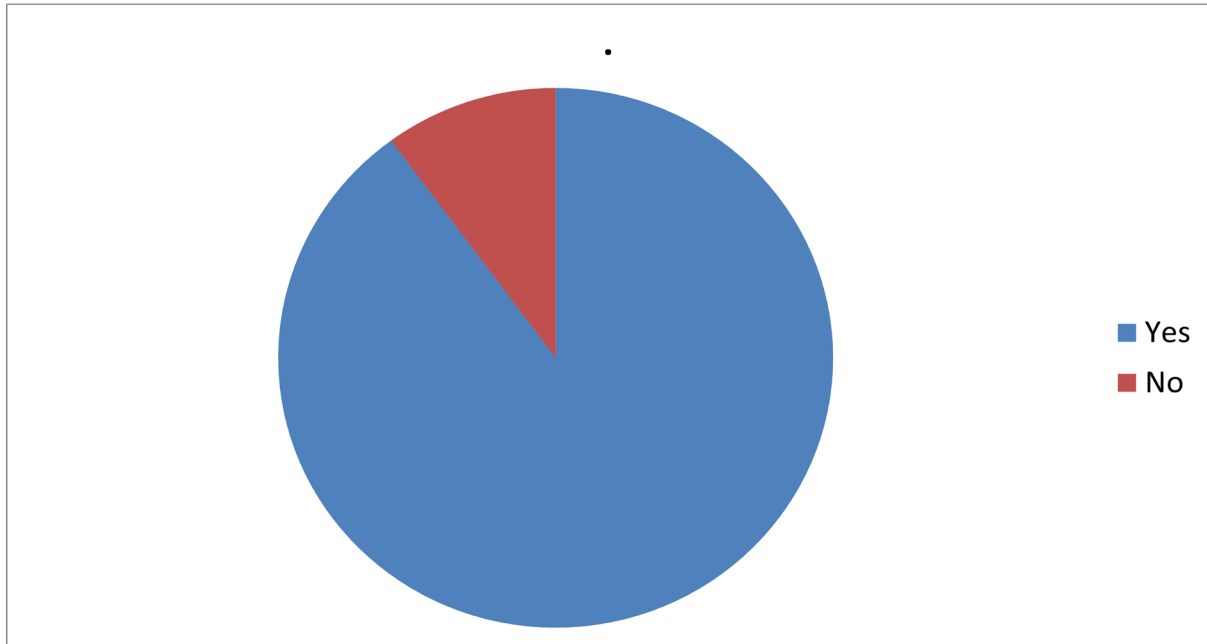
What Age Range Are You In?



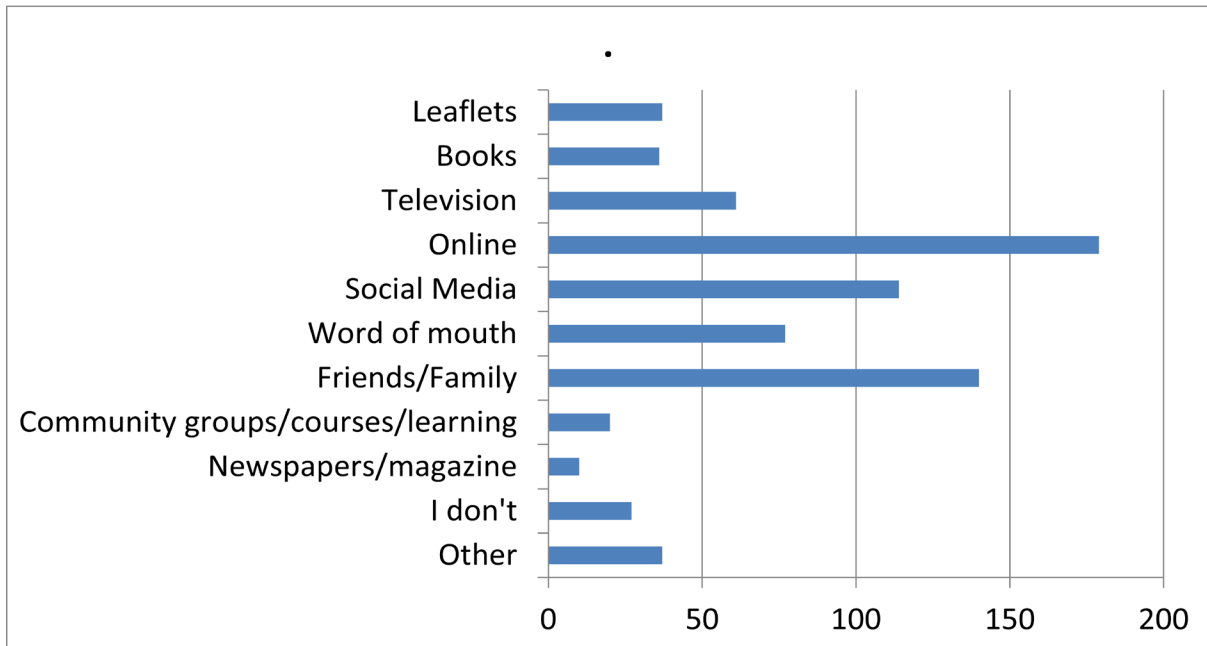
Do You Have Dependants?



Do You Have An Interest in Eating Well?



How do you usually access information about eating well?

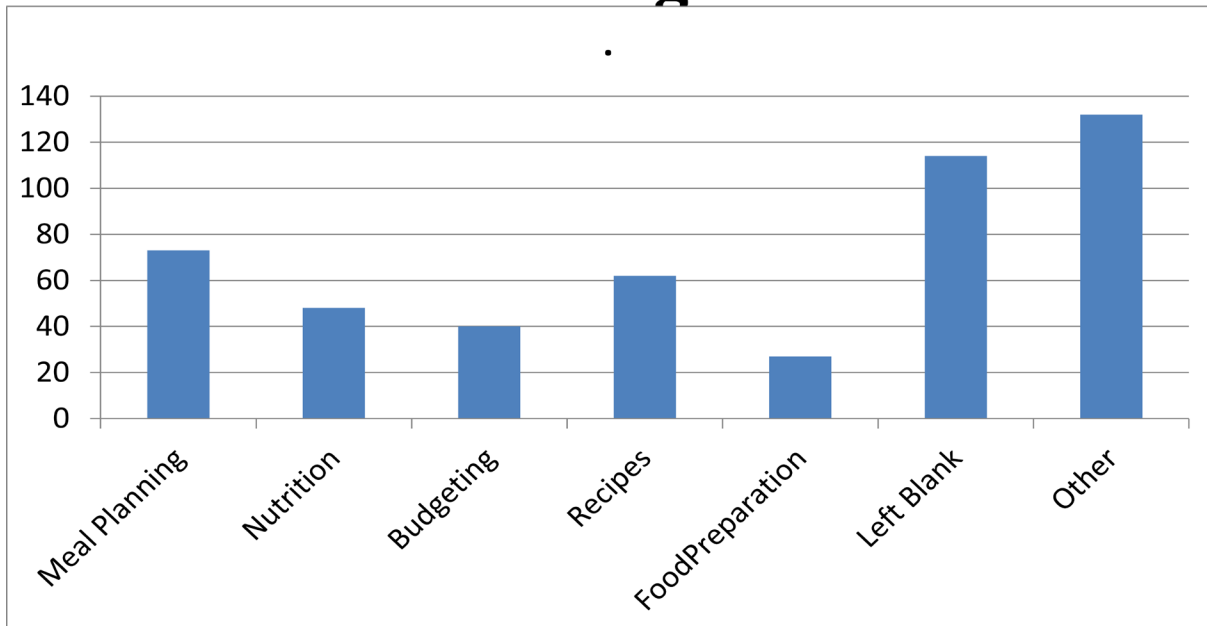


How would you rate your knowledge around eating well? (1 being knowing a little, 10 being knowing a lot)

6.7



What support/information, if any, would you like to receive around eating?



Below are some websites that have information around eating well. What ones have you heard of?

