

Food literacy can lead to a better diet

August 1 2016



Hannah Rohrlach, Nutrition and Dietetics researcher at Flinders. Credit: Flinders University

Food literacy, or understanding important details of what we eat, and why, can lead to a much more 'natural' and healthy diet – and even help to lose weight.

A pilot study at Flinders University is looking at consumer awareness about the social determinants of food choice and critical literacy on the [food system](#).

"Eating well is not just about making good nutritional choices," says Dr Kaye Mehta, senior lecturer in Nutrition and Dietetics at Flinders University.

"When people make choices about their food, they should consider more than just the price or their hip pocket.

"Along with the fat, salt and sugar content, they should also look at where the food came from, at packaging volumes, impact on environment and whether it's Australian or locally grown."

The [pilot study](#) at Flinders aims to determine whether consumers are thinking about the food system in these ways.

Dr Mehta says consumers might be doing their health a favour by making more ethical food choices.

Up to now we have mainly looked at food through the health lens and

this project expands the lenses to look at wider issues.

"I am interested in seeing whether we can engage people in a bigger conversation about the food system and making ethical and healthy choices.

"Nutritionists have been banging on about nutrition for a long time, but making good food choices can make healthy choices a lot easier.

"With increased awareness, people will eat more fresh fruit and vegetables by default and not just select their food preoccupied by heart disease or obesity.

"It seems a more positive way to make [healthy choices](#)."

Nutrition and Dietetics is calling for Flinders University students and staff to participate in a four-hour online course in August to explore the food system from production, processing distribution and how this influences food choice behaviour.

The study is part of a project called 'Food System Matters' which is investigating how consumers can make more informed [food choices](#) by understanding the relationship between food and environmental sustainability, fairness to the primary producers, as well as health.

The online, self-paced course will be offered via the Flinders FLO system over a two-week period from 8 August to 3 September. Written and audio-visual clips are included in the package, along with short quizzes and non-assessed activities.

A pilot trial in April showed promising results. A survey of participants before and after found a statistically significant increase in [food](#) system knowledge and improved healthy behaviour scores.

Provided by Flinders University

Citation: Food literacy can lead to a better diet (2016, August 1) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-08-food-literacy-diet.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.