

Healthy work lunches are hard to come by

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(HealthDay)—If you struggle to eat a healthy lunch during your workday, a new survey suggests you're far from alone.

"The good news is most people said they are interested in doing better" when it comes to healthy eating, said Dr. Anne Thorndike, vice chair of the nutrition committee at the American Heart Association (AHA).

The survey included more than 900 U.S. adults who typically eat lunch during [work hours](#). Of those, 56% said they struggled to have a healthy lunch at work, while 77% said they're more likely to make healthier decisions at other times of the day if they have a healthy lunch.

"The finding that healthier food choices at work may impact [food choices](#) throughout the rest of the day presents a unique opportunity for the workplace to have a [positive influence](#) on not only the employee's health but also the health of the employee's family," Thorndike said in an AHA news release. She is an associate professor at Harvard Medical School in Boston.

Overall, 91% of respondents said they were interested in having a more healthy workday lunch, with those younger than 40 more likely to be extremely/very interested than those aged 40 and older (65% vs. 55%).

The survey also found that 82% of respondents said that having healthy food options at work is important to them, and 68% value help from their employer in becoming healthier.

Overall, 86% said they prepare work lunches at home, but this was more likely among women than men (91% vs. 82%).

About 4 in 5 respondents whose workplace has a cafeteria, [food service](#) or vending machines said they use those places at least some of the time.

On a stressful day at work, 35% of respondents said their lunch is less likely to be healthy than on other days, and this was more common among women than men (40% vs. 32%).

While 44% said limited availability of healthy foods has a significant impact on eating an unhealthy [lunch](#), more cited convenience (60%) and taste preference (54%) as being a major factor.

The Harris Poll survey was released by the American Heart Association and Aramark, the U.S.-based food service company.

More information: The American Heart Association has advice on [healthy eating](#).

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