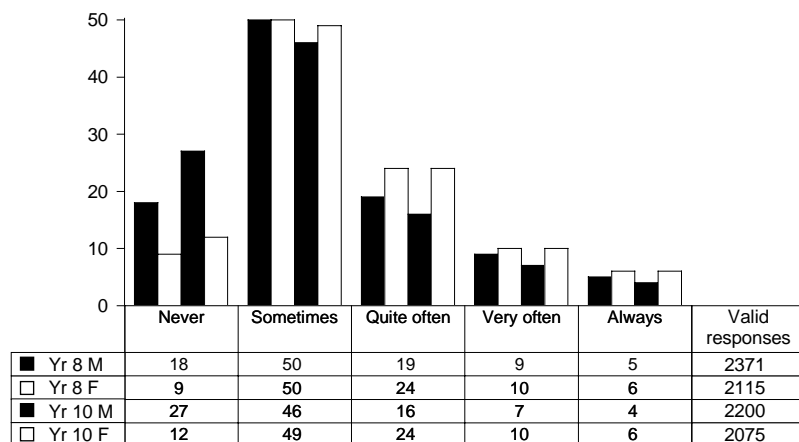


# Dietary decisions

27% of the Year 10 males never consider their health when choosing food

## When choosing what to eat, do you consider your health? (N3)

1. Most of the young people respond at least *sometimes*.
2. More females than males respond very often, and many more males than females respond *never*.
3. With respect to age, more of the older males respond *never*; the females show less change.



## Comments

1. There are many prompts to think about the food we eat — coverage in the media seems never to have been higher. But with so much publicity about BSE, food poisoning, GM foods, additives and contaminants, let alone health education messages, we have to face the fact that more than half of this sample never or only sometimes evaluate their diet from a health point of view.
2. If health considerations are prominent this does not mean that they are the deciding factor.
3. The table bears out the evidence of the previous pages that the females are more health-conscious about food than the males. Has 'scare fatigue' particularly affected the Year 10 males? Evidence from 'Education and Health' suggests that nutrition needs to have a secure place in the National Curriculum to help males adopt more positive attitudes to healthy eating (Frobisher & Maxwell, 2002).
4. Dietary advice about specific items may have changed over the years, but the general exhortation to eat a diet which is well-balanced has not.



In earlier books in this series, we described how those young people who reported that they often thought about health when choosing food did indeed have different dietary habits to their peers, for example, being more likely to choose low-calorie options.