

AVO 7025

Avocados Australia

*Benchmarking the usage and
attitudes of avocados with
health professionals*

Sample Set Characteristics:

The 2008 project included the following cohorts of specific groups of health professionals:

General practitioners: 104 participants – Referred to in the tables as GP

Dietitians: 103 participants – Referred to in the tables as D

Gym Trainers: 105 participants – Referred to in the tables as GT

Naturopaths: 102 participants – Referred to in the tables as N

Pre & post natal care nurses: 106 participants - Referred to in the tables as P

Conclusions:

There was a consistent view expressed throughout the survey, that health professionals hold a positive view of the health benefits of regularly eating avocados.

There was no evidence of any significant sentiment against regularly eating avocados

What are the positive aspects of eating avocados? (unprompted question: multiple responses per participant)

Key Themes	GPs	D	GT	N	P
Tastes good/enjoy eating	42%	56%	46%	52%	46%
Vitamins & minerals	61%	58%	38%	53%	51%
Healthy fats	18%	32%	27%	29%	38%
Natural	64%	72%	61%	67%	76%
Fresh food/fruit/veg	66%	78%	54%	73%	68%
Convenient/versatile	29%	41%	27%	38%	47%
Healthy for children (enjoy eating)	3%	14%	1%	16%	38%
Good for toddlers/very young	2%	17%	1%	21%	68%
Healthy for mums	4%	34%	7%	36%	72%
Good source of antioxidants	14%	43%	19%	39%	37%
Good source of folate	12%	39%	9%	37%	53%
No cholesterol/lower cholesterol	9%	28%	13%	26%	32%
Heart healthy	14%	32%	19%	28%	24%

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Healthy for mums	4%	34%	7%	36%	72%
Good source of antioxidants	14%	43%	19%	39%	37%
Good source of folate	12%	39%	9%	37%	53%
No cholesterol/lower cholesterol	9%	28%	13%	26%	32%
Heart healthy	14%	32%	19%	28%	24%

What are the negative aspects of eating avocados? (unprompted question: multiple responses per participant)

	GPs	D	GT	N	P
High in calories/higher than other fruits & vegs	31%	28%	33%	26%	24%
High in fat/higher than other fruits & vegs	34%	21%	29%	23%	27%
Sometimes not good quality	23%	31%	24%	29%	26%
Gets over-ripe very quickly at home	17%	12%	9%	13%	8%
Don't like the taste	6%	3%	5%	1%	4%
None/Nothing significant/nothing really	13%	23%	8%	18%	21%

How often do you think an average Australian should eat avocados?

	GPs	D	GT	N	P
Weekly	18%	26%	19%	24%	28%
Fortnightly	28%	37%	31%	44%	39%
Monthly	23%	26%	28%	23%	26%
Less frequently than once a month	4%	2%	3%	0%	3%
Don't know	27%	9%	19%	8%	4%

The majority of the respondents answered either 'fortnightly' or 'monthly'. Dietitians, naturopaths and nurses were more likely to recommend 'fortnightly'.

The GP cohort was most likely to answer 'don't know'.

Only a very small percentage of the respondents indicated that avocados should be eaten less frequently than once a month.

**What is the serving size of avocado? Ie how much avocado should an average Australian eat in one serve?
(Open-ended question: unprompted):**

Key themes	Typical serving
a spoonful	13%
one slice / couple of slices	21%
about a quarter	23%
about a third	19%
about a half	11%
whole avocado	2%
don't know	11%

What is the role of avocados in a healthy daily diet

	GPs	D	GT	N	P
Should be included as part of a healthy weekly diet	28%	41%	37%	43%	53%
Optional to a healthy weekly diet	42%	52%	43%	48%	44%
Should not be included in a healthy weekly diet	4%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Don't know	26%	6%	18%	8%	3%

The pre and post natal care nurses were the segment most likely to recommend that avocados should be included as part of healthy weekly diet.

GP's were the least likely to recommend that avocados be included in a weekly diet and most likely to answer 'don't know'.

Across all segments of the surveyed respondents, there was no significant support for the view that avocados should not be included in a healthy weekly diet.

The most frequently cited response was that avocados were considered to be optional.

If you recommend that your clients eat more fruit and vegetables, how often would you specifically refer to avocados?

	GPs	D	GT	N	P
Frequently	11%	32%	19%	34%	41%
Sometimes	19%	54%	38%	51%	44%
Rarely	33%	8%	29%	11%	9%
Never	37%	6%	13%	4%	6%

The pre and post natal care nurses were most likely to specifically refer to avocados.

GP's were most likely to 'rarely' or 'never' recommend avocados by name.

The most commonly sited response was 'sometimes'.

Why do you ‘frequently’ or ‘sometimes’ specifically recommend avocados? (open-ended question):

Two of the most common responses from the pre and post natal nursing cohort were:

- Important health advice for mums
- Good nutrition for children

This segment of health professionals consistently indicated a high level of awareness of the benefits of eating avocados: from their nutritional value for mums and children to their versatility and convenience:

“Avocados are full of folate, which is very important for women, and are so easy to prepare, both for parents and kids”.

“Full of really important vitamins for kids”.

Why do you 'frequently' or 'sometimes' specifically recommend avocados? (open-ended question):

Another important theme related to perceptions around avocados being either better/healthier than other foods, or a good tasting alternative:

Better / healthier than...

- butter or margarine
- foods higher in saturated fat
- many dips in the shops

Better tasting alternative to...

- ..fish if you want your kids to eat their healthy fats
- ..vitamin tablets if you prefer to eat naturally

Why do you 'rarely' or 'never' specifically recommend avocados? (Open-ended question)

The following four themes account for approximately 90% of the responses:

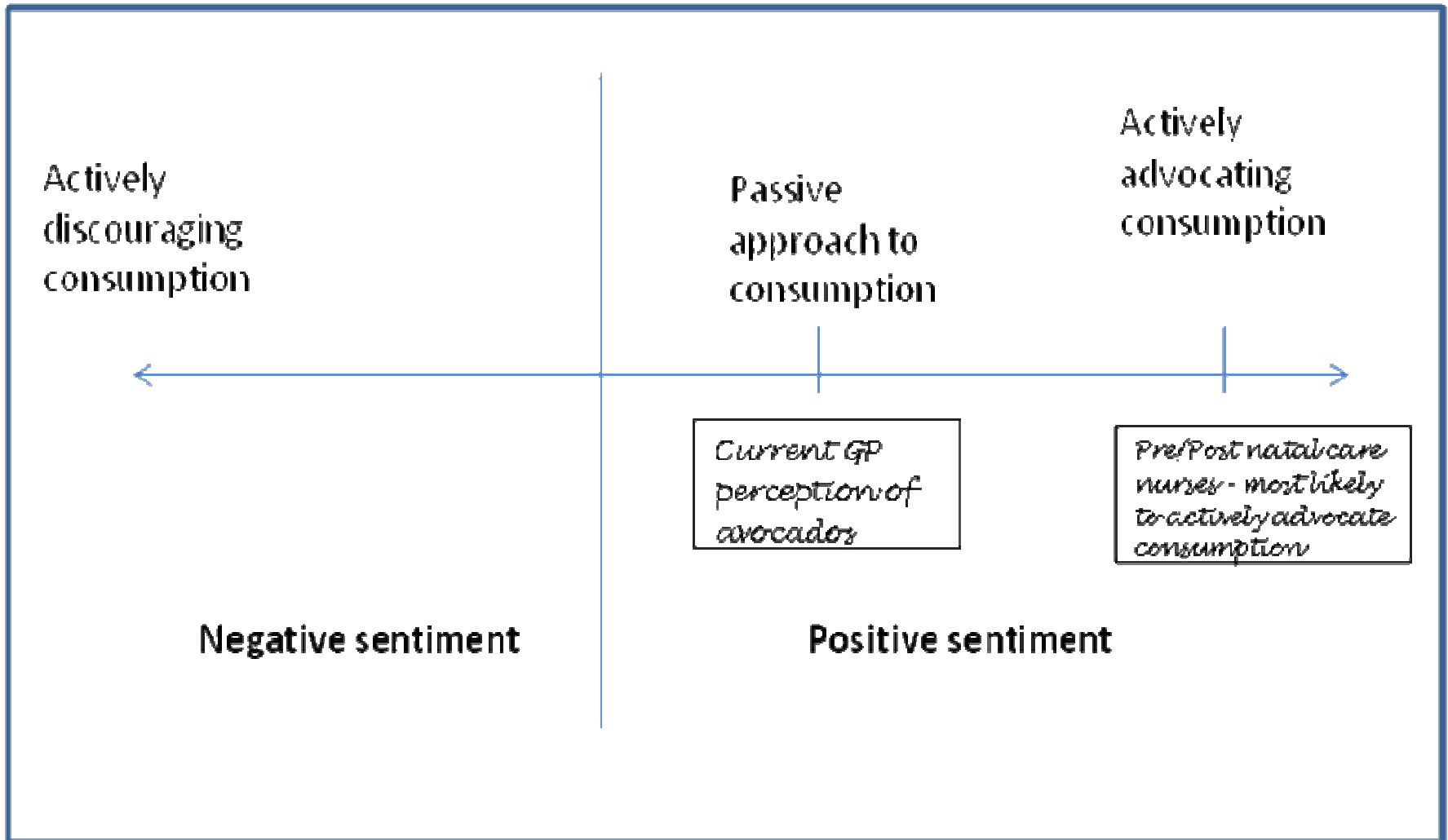
Never think of them at work

Don't disparage avocados - just don't highlight them

Haven't got time to mention every fruit & veg individually - just mention them collectively

No burning reason to mention them individually

Avocado Research Project



Conclusions:

The challenge and opportunity lies in raising awareness of the specific health benefits of regularly eating avocados to the point where health professionals, such as GP's, will actively advocate their consumption.

The responses of the pre and post natal care nurses highlight this opportunity.

There would appear to be two components of this message: a rational component and an emotive one.

The Rational Approach

The rational component revolves around clearly communicating the following messages:

‘what benefit’ + ‘for whom’ + ‘how much avocado’ + ‘how often’ + ‘for how long’.

For example: lower your cholesterol + for people concerned about their heart health + a serving size of x + three times a week + for 8 weeks.

The Rational Approach

This is consistent with the communications provided by the suppliers of the plant-sterol margarines who claim cholesterol-lowering benefits.

Indeed, providing a detailed ‘compare and contrast’ of the health benefits of avocados versus the plant-sterol margarines would be of significant value.

The Emotive Approach

The emotive component is intrinsically related to the rational one.

Within the body of the responses, there is significant positive sentiment towards avocados as a natural, fresh food. This halo of naturalness and freshness provides a benefit over processed foods.

The Emotive Approach

Using the margarine example, there would appear to be an opportunity to leverage the natural cholesterol-lowering benefits of avocados over the highly processed characteristics of margarine.

This fits with the responses of the participants that avocados are better than processed alternatives.