

Generation Z and Diet Culture

Diving into The Dieting Habits of Generation Z and How Social Media Influences Many

By Paige Platt, Staff Writer

With social media becoming increasingly prominent in daily lives, individual's habits are constantly up for show for everyone to see and dissect. Generation Z is now on the 'trend' of a healthy lifestyle routine and are now prioritizing and promoting their health and well-being.

According to (MyFitnessPal, n.d.) a survey found that 87% of Millennials and Gen Z TikTok users have turned to the platform for nutrient and health advice, while 57% report that they are influenced by or frequently adopt nutrients trends they've found on the platform. In fact, of those who are influenced by nutrient and health trends on TikTok, 67% report that they adopt at least one of these trends a few times a week. These trends have varied from drinking chia seed water to lose weight or advising people to up their protein intake.

"I think that Gen Z considers convenience an important factor in their dietary choices. Social media plays a huge role in these choices, I know that now with TikTok if I need a recipe, I just look it up on TikTok and someone already a video for me." Said Karen Platt 56-year-old Mother and Generation Xer.

The accessibility of nutritional information has made healthy eating considerably more convenient for Gen Zers than it has been for previous generations. Having access to multiple social media platforms as well as various fitness apps that give food regiments allows individuals the privilege of having these diets made for them.

"I love having access to recipes and exercise videos on TikTok, but at the same time, when its all I see on my for you page, it can be discouraging at times. It Makes me feel like I should be doing better for myself" said Kayla George, senior at Clemson University.

The downside consists of these social media habits influencing individuals to take these trends to an extreme. Leading to unhealthy eating habits and in worst cases eating disorders. Social media has even created a new eating disorder — orthorexia. A disorder that's comorbid with anorexia, orthorexia is when a person develops disordered eating due to an obsession with healthy food. (Naraharisetty, 2022)

“I absolutely believe social media impacts eating habits and body image. It can promote unhealthy eating trends we see in videos such as “Mukbangs”, while it also glorifies healthy eating creating a lot of pressure. This often leads to things like eating disorders and body dysmorphia.” Said Taylor Lassen, senior at FAU.

While social media can be an excellent tool for dieting and finding exercise tips. Recognizing the signs of body dysmorphia and eating disorders is important in order to steer clear of negative dieting culture. Ultimately by promoting self – acceptance and mindfulness, Gen Z can take control of the positive aspects of social media while mitigating its harmful effects on their mental health.