

HECK

## HARRIET ARKELL SAVVY SHOPPER: Chicken sausages are flying off the shelves offering the familiar shape... but with less fat

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Sausages may be out of favour with shoppers (a new report says sales have fallen by more than a quarter since 2008), but some varieties are selling better than ever.

The Office for National Statistics says health fears about pork (earlier this year MRSA was found in some pork products) and consumers' desire to eat more healthily have contributed to this decline.

Shoppers are also said to be concerned about sausages being bulked up with cheap fillers.

However, chicken sausages are a surprise new hit this summer, offering the familiar (not to mention child-friendly) sausage shape but with less fat.

Waitrose and Marks & Spencer are both stocking chicken sausages for the first time, while Yorkshire-based sausage-maker Heck says that sales of their version, which they launched a few months ago, are soaring.

Jamie Keeble, co-founder of Heck, says: 'Lots of people are changing the way they think about their food and chicken sausages are tapping into a growing trend for traditional food made healthier.'

'They're ideal for anyone who can't eat pork, who wants to curb their red meat intake, or who just wants to follow a low-fat diet.'

Mr Keeble says sales of his Chicken Italia sausages, which are made with 85 per cent chicken breast and thigh, mozzarella and sun-dried tomatoes, have trebled since the spring.

Samantha Douglas, Waitrose's sausage buyer, says: 'Shoppers are loving our new chicken sausages — sales have grown by 18 per cent in the past month.'

'The hot weather has meant that people are looking for new and exciting things to grill on the barbecue, and these are a delicious — and lighter — alternative to the traditional pork sausage.'

Heck Chicken Italia sausages cost £2.99 for 340g from Tesco, Asda and Booths. Waitrose Chicken Sausages with Red Pepper Pesto are currently reduced from £3.29 for six to £2.19.

M&S launched its Chicken Posh Dogs for the first time this summer (£4.50 for 450g) and says they're already hugely popular.



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