

USDA's 10th NATIONWIDE FOOD CONSUMPTION SURVEY SHOWS
AMERICANS LACKING IN SOME ESSENTIAL VITAMINS AND MINERALS

Results from the
1994-96 CONTINUING SURVEY OF FOOD INTAKES BY INDIVIDUALS

Selected results from the USDA's 10th nationwide food consumption survey provide facts about Americans' diets. The 1994-96 Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, commonly called the *What We Eat in America* survey, provides dietary data on about 16,000 individuals nationwide. Data were obtained by 24-hour recall. The survey was conducted by USDA's Agricultural Research Service. In 1994-96...

- ✓ Adult females failed to meet the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) for five nutrients--calcium, vitamin E, vitamin B-6, magnesium, and zinc. Adult males fell short of the RDA for vitamin E, magnesium, and zinc.
- ✓ Fat accounted for 33 percent of calories in the American diet. This represents a continued decrease from 34 percent in 1989-91 and 40 percent in 1977-78. Despite this decrease, in 1994-96 only about one-third of adults met the 30 percent or less of calories from fat recommended by nutrition experts.
- ✓ About one in three adults were overweight based on self-reported height and weight compared with about one in five in the late 1970's. Twenty-eight percent of adult males and 44 percent of females reported that they rarely or never engage in vigorous exercise.
- ✓ Consumption of grain-based products is on the rise. For example, between the late 1970's and 1994-96, Americans increased their consumption of ready-to-eat cereal by 60 percent and their consumption of snacks such as crackers, popcorn, pretzels, and corn chips by 200 percent.
- ✓ Consumption of vegetables decreased slightly. And Americans still consume low amounts of dark green and deep yellow vegetables, despite recommendations to do otherwise.
- ✓ About 85 percent of Americans ate breakfast, about the same as in previous USDA surveys. Coffee and fluid milk are still the most popular foods consumed at breakfast. Breakfast provides 18 percent of Americans' daily intake of calories and 12 to 28 percent of their daily intake of vitamins and minerals.
- ✓ Among young children, consumption of fluid milk has decreased by 16 percent since the late 1970's, while consumption of carbonated soft drinks has increased by 16 percent. Consumption of noncitrus juices, including grape- and apple-based mixtures, rose by 280 percent.

✓ About 57 percent of Americans ate away from home on any given day. Foods eaten away from home accounted for more than 25 percent of total calorie and fat intakes.

✓ The percentages of individuals who eat away from home on any given day has increased by a third since the late 1970's. In 1994-96, the most common sources of food away from home for children 5 and under were from someone else, fast food places, and day care.

✓ For Americans, beverages, -- particularly carbonated soft drinks -- were the most popular food item consumed outside the home. French fried potatoes and grain mixtures such as pizza, lasagna and ravioli, and Mexican foods are among the foods popular at home or away.

Source: USDA's Agricultural Research Service, Foods Surveys Research Group
What We Eat in America