

HISPANIC FOODS

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The rapid rise in the number of Hispanics in the United States has led to an increased interest in the dietary intake and nutritional status of this ethnic group. There is a need to describe the nutritional status of Hispanics to evaluate associations between nutrient and food intake and disease status. Assessment of dietary intake among Hispanics can be problematic due to difficulties in dietary data collection methodology and limited information regarding the nutrient composition of foods commonly consumed by Hispanics. Validity of dietary intake may be sacrificed, particularly among Hispanic individuals who consume more traditional or home cooked meals for which available nutrient data may be lacking. Examples were given of how the variability in dietary intake may not be captured when specific Hispanic foods and recipe ingredients are not accurately analyzed for nutrient amounts. Uncontrolled variability can result in misclassification of individual nutrient intakes, thus the ability to detect nutrient differences between population groups can be lost and crucial associations between diet and disease may not be ascertained.