

Nutrient Intakes of American Children Ages 2-10 Years

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Nutrient intakes of American children aged 2 to 10 years were compared for the years 1978 and 1988 using a unique nutrient assessment system designed and developed by the Nutrition Department at General Mills, Inc. This system integrated data from three sources: 14-day food consumption diaries collected from 4,000 households in the Market Research Corporation of America Menu Census panel surveys; serving size data from the spring 1977 Nationwide Food Consumption Survey; and nutrient data from the Michigan State University Nutrient Data Bank. The results indicate that energy and macronutrient intakes remained fairly constant over the 10-year period. Average daily vitamin and mineral intakes were lower in 1988 than in 1978 for the majority of those studied; however, most nutrient levels remained over 100% of the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs). For more than 50% of the population, the intakes of calcium, vitamin B-6, and zinc were below the RDAs. Our findings indicate the need for continued monitoring of the impact of changing food consumption patterns on the diets of American children.