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Survey Lends Support to “All Foods Fit”

Overall, adults and children who choose a combination of regular and lower-fat foods are most likely to meet Food Guide Pyramid recommendations, according to a recent review of the Continuing Survey of Food Intake by Individuals (CSF II).

Selected foods targeted for review included cheeses, yogurts, salad dressings, and snacks – all available in regular and modified-fat versions. Researchers compared the nutrient intakes of three groups of respondents – exclusive high fat users, mixed users (consumed regular and lower-fat versions of foods) and non-users (no consumption of selected foods.)

The respondents who selected a combination of lower and regular fat products met dietary guidelines for fat intake, had the highest micronutrient intake, and appeared to have the most balanced dietary intake.

Researchers point out that the issue seems to be balancing fat intake on one hand and micronutrient intake on the other, noting that omitting specific food groups (e.g. milk products) or specific foods (e.g. red meat) can easily result in inadequate intake of calcium, iron, or zinc.

Additional studies show that dairy foods help improve the overall nutritional quality of the diet without increasing total calorie or fat intake, body weight or percent body fat.

Sigman-Grant M, et al. Selected lower-fat foods positively impact nutrient quality in diets of free-living Americans. Journal of the American Dietetic Association. 2003; 103:570-576.