
Front and Center

The Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion continues to link nutrition science to the nutrition needs of consumers. This issue of *Family Economics and Nutrition Review* provides the science on the associations between nutrient intakes and dietary status of several segments of the U.S. population: dietary supplement users and nonusers in the food stamp population, adolescents, and preschool-aged children. Understanding the associations among supplement use, nutrient densities, and diet quality among subgroups within a population informs policy. A long-term portrait of the intakes among U.S. adolescents leads to recommendations regarding the intake of grains, vegetables, fruits, legumes, lean meats, dairy products, dietary fat, physical activity levels, and effective nutrition education. A comparison among household types in which preschool-aged children reside highlights the continuing need to address issues of food security, energy (kcal) consumption, and sedentary activities that may place children at higher risks of being overweight or obese.

In addition to *Family Economics and Nutrition Review*, the Center uses a series of bulletins to inform consumers of the connection between dietary guidance and nutritional well-being. In its latest issue of the bulletin *Putting the Guidelines into Practice*, the Center suggests ways that consumers can “Get moving . . . For the health and fun of it!” This bulletin helps consumers understand the benefits of physical activity, how much is needed, and how to incorporate it into a busy lifestyle.

With its online dietary assessment tool—the Interactive Healthy Eating Index (IHEI)—the Center provides an opportunity for consumers to input their daily food intakes and then receive a quick summary measure of the quality of their diets. With USDA’s release of the Interactive Physical Activity Tool (IPAT) this past December, the Center combined two important aspects of healthful living: appropriate dietary intake and physical activity. An enhancement to the IHEI, the IPAT allows users to input their daily activities and receive a physical activity score in terms of current recommendations. In combination, the IHEI and the IPAT allow users to receive prompt, accurate, and up-to-date information on diet quality and physical activity status.

From the research of *Family Economics and Nutrition Review* to the information of the consumer bulletins to the interactive feedback of the complementary Web-based IHEI and IPAT, the Center’s mission remains focused on helping consumers link dietary guidance to lifelong dietary behaviors that can enhance their well-being.

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