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A NUTRITIONAL STUDY OF THE DIET OF THE NORMAL COLLEGE WOMAN

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(Abstract)

Because a great deal of work has not been done on the dietary habits of normal women, this study was undertaken to see whether or not the average diet of women who are habitually up to normal weight and who are in good physical condition meets their requirements as to calories, protein, calcium, phosphorus, and iron.

The individual dietary study method was used with twenty normal college women as subjects. Some of these women were studying at the Uni-

versity Practice Home, some at home and the rest in two different groups, ate their meals in the laboratories of the home economics department. Miss Woodard assisted the groups at the Practice Home and the ones at their own homes in the weighing and preparation of their foods. For the students carrying out the experiment in the home economics laboratories, she consulted them concerning their usual diets and prepared foods ordinarily eaten by these women. The food intake was always voluntary, all the subjects eating the types of foods and amounts desired. If any food was served which any subject did not care for, she did not eat it. The experimental dietary period in each case was four consecutive days. All the separate ingredients of the recipes were weighed before the product was cooked and after it was cooked. Then, the part the subject ate was weighed. The calorie, protein, and mineral values for each food for each subject were then calculated from these weights using the figures of Sherman, Rose, Forbes and Swift and Peterson and Elvehjem for the food values.

The calorie intake for the group ranged from 1200 to 2400 calories per person per day, with an average of 1854 calories. This figure is lower than the average calorie intake suggested by Sherman for women of this type.

The protein intake ranged from 44 to 32 grams per person per day, with an average of 62 grams. Only four subjects were below what is considered the standard for them.

The calcium intake was from 0.45 to 1.51 grams per person per day, average, .0.84 grams. Only three subjects were below their standard, the rest of the subjects ranging from 1 to 135 per cent above their requirement.

The phosphorus intake ranged from 0.87 to 1.74 grams per person per day, average, 1.26 grams. Four subjects were below their standard while the rest ranged from 5 to 68 per cent above the standard.

The iron intake ranged from 0.010 to 0.021 grams per person per day. Three persons were below their requirement while four exactly met it and the rest ranged from 21 to 66 per cent above their standard.

Apparently these students, with the exception of only three or four, are selecting foods that meet their calorie, protein and mineral requirements.