

ABSTRACT

NUTRITION INTEGRITY OF FOOD-BASED MENU PLANNING OPTION MENUS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN CALIFORNIA

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has established standards for specific nutrients and caloric levels for National School Lunch Program meals. The purpose of this study was to determine the degree of compliance National School Lunch Program meals planned using a food-based menu planning option have with USDA nutrition standards. A scoring method for determining degree of compliance with USDA nutrition standards was developed. Nutrient analysis was calculated on 1 week of menus from each of 29 school districts using Nutrikids software. Results of this research showed that food-based menu planning options generally meet nutrient standards for cholesterol, calcium, and protein. Sodium, total fat, and saturated fat were the three nutrients most likely to be out of compliance with nutrition standards. Results of this study could be used to improve the degree of compliance of school lunch menus planned using a food-based menu planning option.

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