

Survey Investigates

Campus Nutrition

Helen Plocker reports on the recent nutrition drive conducted by the Home Economics Club

THE diet of the average Iowa State woman today is 70 percent of optimum. Such is the conclusion reached through a survey conducted by the Home Economics Club as a means of bettering student nutrition.

As a part of the National Civilian Defense Program, this project is intended to make the student body conscious of nutrition problems and their importance in relation to student health.

During a sample week individual records were kept of food eaten by 1,162 freshman and upperclass women living in dormitories, sororities and private homes. These records were analyzed in terms of weekly servings of essential foods. A system of scoring was used in which a theoretically optimum diet was rated as 100; one meeting the "minimum adequate" level would score 67. Each diet was given a final score based on the total servings of essential foods. Those foods, such as pastries and candies, making a caloric contribution only were omitted.

Essential foods were classified in groups as milk, vegetables, fruits, whole-grained cereals, meat, eggs, fish or cheese. Green or yellow vegetables were counted because of their high vitamin and mineral content. Citrus fruits and tomatoes also were scored separately since they are especially high in vitamin C.

To be nutritionally adequate, the daily diet must include an intake of two or more cups of milk, at least two servings of whole-grain cereals or bread; three vegetables, one of which should be yellow or green and the other of which may be potatoes; two servings of fruit, one of which should be raw; two servings of meat, fish or cheese. In addition, four eggs should be eaten each week.

These foods contribute essential nutrients to the body—protein, minerals and vitamins. The normal appetite usually will furnish sufficient quantities of the other two nutrients—carbohydrates and fats for students eating at the college dining halls.

Based on this standard, the total average score of the 1,162 records was 70 percent of the optimum; scores ranging from 50 to 79 percent were recorded in the dormitories and sorority houses. However, the average menus served in these organized houses provided a 95 percent optimum diet.

As a diet scoring 67 percent has been taken to represent the minimum at which the body can maintain itself, it is clearly seen that the average number of



Ruth Haglund checks the adequacy of the menu as Nathalie Knox, left, Emily Rose Baker and Charlene Hunt enjoy a noonday meal

women consumed a diet slightly better than necessary with approximately 45 percent of the group below that level.

Lack of whole-grain cereals is the most significant defect in the week's dietary. The intake averaged 9 servings; 14 or more were recommended. This means that Iowa State women may be definitely lacking in vitamins B and G, which help check loss of appetite, excessive fatigue, nervousness and constipation. Whole-grain cereals are among the richest sources of these vitamins, although lean pork and legumes also are good sources. The results show that freshmen eat less of the whole grain products than the upperclass women who have had some home economics training.

Less than one and one-half eggs a week are eaten by the average woman student. Menus as served contained limited numbers of eggs and a dislike of them was indicated by some students. The egg yolk, especially, is high in protein, mineral salts and vitamins. Eggs are one of the most satisfactory foods for maintaining a normal hemoglobin level, as they are an important source of iron.

The 15 cups of milk consumed per week by the average Iowa State woman is higher than similar college groups which have been studied. Although it might be inferred that coffee replaces milk in some cases, only three cups a week were consumed by the average student; freshmen drank even less. The co-operative halls led in the consumption of milk with 18.5 cups per week. Milk may be considered a well-balanced food, for it contains fat, protein, carbohydrate (milk sugar), mineral salts, and vitamins, lacking only in iron and vitamins C and D.

The comparatively high costs of protein foods may be one reason for an average weekly score of 10 servings of meat, fish and poultry. However, variations within the residence halls show that if available "seconds" and meat substitutes are consumed it is possible to obtain much higher protein intakes. The chief function of protein is to supply tissue building material to meet the needs of the body.

The average consumption of all fruits was high, the daily total being about one-half a serving more than

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the requirement of two fruits each day. About one-third of those chosen were citrus and one-third were eaten raw, promoting a high vitamin C intake. Fruits also have some vitamin A, especially those that are yellow.

Although fruit consumption was above standard, vegetable intakes were low, the average person eating 4 less than the 21 servings required each week. However, half of these were green or yellow vegetables which are rich in calcium, iron, and vitamins A and G. Root vegetables also have some calcium and are fair sources of vitamins B, G and C. Legumes are high in starch, protein, iron, phosphorus and vitamins. They all add roughage or bulk to the diet.

Students averaged only 19 meals a week, with freshmen missing more meals than upperclass women. However, these may be supplemented partially by the six times a week the average woman eats between meals, providing she consumes the foods which contribute nutritive value.

Of the 1,162 women in this survey, only 45 take vitamin concentrates, so for the greatest number of students all requirements must come directly from the food eaten.

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