

AMERICANS' SALT USE IN FOOD PREPARATION--1994 CSFII & DHKS

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ABSTRACT

The Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals (CSFII) 1994-96 survey methodology allows for the collection and coding of information about the use of salt during cooking or preparation for selected Survey Nutrient Data Base foods. There are 3,129 foods within 5 broad food groups--meats, grains, vegetables, eggs and legumes-- which have a flag to indicate that salt is considered an optional ingredient in the CSFII recipes data base. For these foods, information is coded as to whether salt was used (yes) or not used (no) during preparation. This information is later used during the nutritional analysis of the data. If a respondent does not know, or no answer is provided, the analysis program defaults to "yes." In the 1994 CSFII, among the 5,589 respondents with 10,900 24-hour dietary recalls, 89 percent answered either "yes" or "no" for at least one of the foods which includes salt as an optional ingredient. Of these respondents, males and females reported similar usage of salt in food preparation with 75 percent of males and 72 percent of females consuming at least one food to which salt was added in preparation. A subset of the respondents of the CSFII also participated in the Diet Health and Knowledge Survey (DHKS) and answered questions on their knowledge and attitudes about salt or sodium. Seventy-four percent of persons who indicated they thought their diet was too high in sodium consumed at least one food with salt added in preparation, compared to 67 percent of those who thought their diet contained about the right amount. Sixty-eight percent of persons who felt it was somewhat or very important to use salt in moderation consumed at least one food with salt added in preparation, compared to 70 percent who thought it was of limited importance. These data indicate that collecting information on salt use in food preparation not only improves specificity of reports and potentially improves estimates of sodium intake, but also the information has potential for being used with DHKS data to study behavior associated with certain beliefs about salt or sodium.