Does breakfast influence food intake consumed later in the day?

According to many health experts, those that consume breakfast on a regular basis are less likely to overeat, seek out compensatory snacks, and more likely to maintain a healthy weight compared to those that habitually skip this morning meal. However, few rigorously controlled studies have substantiated these claims by demonstrating that eating breakfast guards against weight gain. In fact, some researchers have argued that skipping breakfast may actually favor an overall reduction in daily caloric intake. Clearly the association between regular breakfast consumption, health status, and food choices is complex and still unfolding. A study conducted by Scazzina et al. examined the effects of nutritional and cognitive-perceived characteristics of breakfast on metabolic and behavioral variables related to food intake consumed later in the day.


For More Information To contact the corresponding author, Dr. Francesca Scanzina, please send an e-mail to Francesca.scazzina@unipr.it.

Does coconut oil have a role in heart healthy diets?

Fatty acids are important components of a healthy diet. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020 recommend limiting intake of saturated fatty acids and emphasizing unsaturated fatty acids, particularly polyunsaturated fatty acids, which can help to lower plasma cholesterol and may also have other cardio-protective benefits. Because of well-publicized claims about purported health benefits, coconut oil has gained popularity in recent years. Conventional thought is that coconut oil is high in saturated fatty acids and therefore likely to increase plasma cholesterol levels and heart disease risk. However, proponents of coconut oil maintain that the types of saturated fatty acids in coconut oil have demonstrated health benefits such as helping to increase levels of HDL, or “good”, cholesterol. Clearly, the cardio-metabolic effects of coconut oil in humans are complex and still unfolding. A study conducted by Maki et al. provides further insight into the role of coconut oil in heart healthy diets.
Closing the gap: Can linking nutrition and agriculture improve diets?

Infants and children are among those most greatly impacted by low-quality diets and chronic malnutrition. Although there are many factors that contribute to the scarcity of food, social safety nets are an essential part of the solution. Nutrition-sensitive agriculture is an actionable concept that focuses on crop production to improve availability of nutritious foods. This food-based approach addresses the underlying causes of food insecurity by encouraging more diverse and productive agricultural practices. However, some experts suggest that nutrition-sensitive agriculture strategies should also include nutrition programming that provides caregivers with the knowledge and practices to help improve the nutritional status for all household members. Although an integrated approach to nutrition and crop production has the potential to greatly impact household nutrition, few programs of this type have been put into practice. A study conducted by Gelli et al., implemented an integrated agriculture and nutrition intervention aimed at improving household food production diversity, maternal knowledge on child nutrition and feeding practices, and children’s diets and anthropometric measures.


For More Information: To contact the corresponding author, Dr. Aulo Gelli, please send an email to a.gelli@cgiar.org.

Read full summaries here.
challenging in low- and moderate-income countries. Existing literature suggests that on-farm agricultural diversity can contribute toward improving diet quality. However, the published work does not distinguish between the effects on direct foodstuff availability or whether the improvement is produced by the availability of other foods after the agricultural products are sold in the market. Jones et al. published the results of a study that addressed these questions using a population of women living in three different agricultural regions in Peru in the October issue of The Journal of Nutrition. The data suggest that agricultural biodiversity does contribute toward diversity of these women’s diets and that it also helps them to achieve micronutrient adequate diets. However, the data did not support an effect of market-orientation on diet diversity. The authors concluded that these observations are indicative of agricultural biodiversity providing a more diverse diet through direct consumption, as opposed to resulting from the purchase of more diverse foods after the sale of their products.


For More Information: To contact the corresponding author, Dr. Andre Jones, please send an email to jonesand@umich.edu.

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