

AWARENESS OF DIETARY GUIDELINES AND CHANGES IN FOOD CONSUMPTION IN AUSTRALIA

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After more than 10 years of publicity of the Australian Dietary Guidelines, two surveys were carried out to ascertain the awareness and knowledge of the guidelines by Australians. Changes in nutrient intake over the period were also analysed to indicate trends in energy, fat, sugar and alcohol consumption.

Identical surveys carried out in 1984 and 1989 showed a dramatic increase in awareness of the individual guidelines except for "promote breast feeding" (see table). Most information came from newspapers, magazines and schools. During the period, 1979 - 1989, there has been a large increase in apparent consumption of vegetables and grain products and a decrease in apparent consumption of sugar and alcohol, the latter due to an increase in low alcohol beer at the expense of other beer.

There was a slight increase (3.3%) in dietary fat from vegetable and animal sources. However, there has been a decrease (7.5%) in fruit consumption from 1982 - 1989.

Australians may therefore be changing some of their eating habits as a result of the Australian Dietary Guidelines.

| Statement | % Awareness | |
|---|-------------|------|
| | 1984 | 1989 |
| Promote breast feeding | 59 | 60 |
| Choose a nutritional diet from a variety of foods | 49 | 92 |
| Avoid eating too much fat | 79 | 98 |
| Avoid eating too much sugar | 80 | 88 |
| Limit alcohol intake | 79 | 89 |
| Use less salt | 90 | 98 |
| Control your weight | 73 | 96 |
| Eat more bread, cereals, vegetables and fruit | 66 | 95 |

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