



Survey on consumer choices (Housewives) and consumption pattern of edible fats and oils in Varanasi

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ABSTRACT

The fat content of a normal diet is made up mostly of pure fats and oils consumed as such. Fat is necessary for the health of the skin, brain, hair, nails, mucous membranes, digestion, immune system, heart, reproductive function and nervous system. The food items that contain fats are butter, ghee, hydrogenated oils, cooking oils such as groundnut, rapeseed and mustard, soybean, coconut oil and sunflower oil. The main nutrients in fats are: energy, fat and essential fatty acids (EFA). Some fats, especially vegetable oils, provide the EFA - linoleic, linolenic and arachidonic acids - for the body. These EFAs are also important for the structure and function of cells. Like vitamins, the essential fatty acids also play a role in several metabolic reactions. Present study examines the choices or brand preferences and consumption pattern of fats and oils made by housewives. Survey was done on four hundred housewives in urban area of Varanasi. Questionnaire –cum – interview schedule method was used for the documentation of results and conclusion.

INTRODUCTION

Food is the first among the hierarchical needs of a human being and nutrition is coming to the fore as a major modifiable determinant of chronic disease, with scientific evidence increasingly supporting the view that alterations in diet have strong effects, both positive and negative, on health throughout life. In order to assess the risk of a population being exposed to inadequate levels of nutrients and undesirable excessive amount of nutrients in the diet, it is necessary to generate data on pattern of consumption of the population. Food can be broadly divided into major five food groups; one of them is fats and oils.

This study focuses on the consumption of lipids or fats and oils. In recent years it has been suggested that the world is undergoing a nutrition transition by the effect of globalization and characterized by a union on the so-called fast food culture

diet, high in saturated fats, sugar, and processed foods (Popkin, 2003; Lieberman, 2003). Lipids represent an ideal commodity as they are a vital dietary component (through the provision of essential fatty acids). Perhaps in part relating to the changing role of fats and oils in health and nutrition, lipid consumption can also be seen as a means of marking social class, ethnicity and even religious identity in modern society.

Fats and oils are basically esters of glycerol and fatty acids. The fats and oils are the known as dense source of energy as compared to carbohydrates and proteins. Although edible oils have got higher importance in preparation of tasty food, improving texture of food items, increasing palatability of food, flavour of food maintenance and growth of human body though recent media interest has focused on the potential health side-effects of a high-lipid intake, in addition to the health benefits of consuming particular varieties over others. The role of dietary fats and oils in human nutrition is one of the