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In a recent survey of 16,110 Americans, a large percentage of the population fails to meet even minimal nutrient intakes set forth in the Dietary Reference Intakes for several vitamins and minerals.

TYPICAL AMERICAN DIET STILL FALLS SHORT OF RECOMMENDED NUTRIENT INTAKES

A recent article published online in the *Journal of Nutrition* shows once again that many Americans fail to obtain the recommended minimum micronutrient intake levels set forth in the Dietary Reference Intake (DRI) for several nutrients.

Researchers assessed the typical intake of 19 micronutrients derived from all sources (naturally occurring, fortified and enriched, and dietary supplements) for 16,110 participants in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) 2003-2006. Usual intakes were then compared to Dietary Reference Intake for their corresponding age groups.

A relatively small percentage of the population had total usual intakes (from diet and supplements) below the estimated average requirement (EAR) for the following: vitamin B-6, folate, zinc, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin B-12, phosphorus, iron, copper, and selenium.

However, a large percentage of the population had total usual intakes below the EAR for vitamin A (34%), vitamin C (25%), vitamin D (70%) and vitamin E (60%). In addition, calcium intakes were below the EAR in 38% of the population and 45% were low in magnesium.

The researchers noted that enrichment and/or fortification contributed significantly to the intakes of vitamins A, C, and D, folate, thiamin and iron. It was also observed that dietary supplements further reduced the percentage of the population that obtained less than the EAR for all nutrients.

The researchers concluded that “without enrichment and/or fortification and supplementation, many Americans did not achieve the recommended micronutrient intake levels set forth in the Dietary Reference Intake.”

Victor L. Fulgoni III et al. Foods, Fortificants, and Supplements: Where Do Americans Get Their Nutrients? First published August 24, 2011, doi: 10.3945/jn.111.142257 J. Nutr. October 1, 2011 jn.111.142257.