Evaluation of Average Nutrient Intakes of Collegiate Athletes and ROTC Cadets and Midshipmen

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Dietary intake can greatly affect athletic performance. A number of factors should be considered when determining diets for athletes, such as individual body types and sport-specific demands; however, there are common goals for which every athlete should strive. Such goals include: eating adequate amounts of energy and meeting recommendations for macro- and micronutrients. **PURPOSE:** To evaluate the dietary intakes of collegiate athletes and Reserve Officer’s Training Corps (ROTC) Cadets and midshipmen. **METHODS:** This cross-sectional study included 24 collegiate athletes (15 males, 9 females) and 16 ROTC Cadets and midshipmen (12 males, 4 females), 18 to 25 years of age. Participants completed a self-administered the Block Food Frequency Questionnaire (FFQ) that assessed their dietary patterns over the previous year. The FFQs were analyzed by a third party source. **RESULTS:** Average energy intake of all participants was $1817.8 \pm 484.7$ kilocalories (kcals). Average carbohydrate intake was $208.4 \pm 8.4$ grams (g), representing $45.8\% \pm 8.4\%$ of total energy consumed. Average protein intake was $72.1 \pm 23.4$ g, representing $15.8\% \pm 2.5\%$ of total energy intake. Average fat intake was $75.3 \pm 25.6$ g, representing $37.3\% \pm 7.5\%$ of total energy intake. Average fiber intake was $18.2 \pm 9.6$ g/day. Average vitamin intake was as follows: Vitamin A: $889.9 \pm 415.8$ retinol activity equivalents (RAE), β-carotene: $5535.7 \pm 4497.4$ micrograms (mcg), Vitamin C: $118.4 \pm 51.0$ milligrams (mg), Vitamin E: was $8.3 \pm 3.6$ mg, thiamin and riboflavin combined: $1.5 \pm 0.5$ mg, niacin: $21.0 \pm 7.5$ mg, Vitamin B₆ was $2.0 \pm 0.8$ mg. Average mineral intake was as follows: calcium: $826.0 \pm 303.1$ mg, zinc: $10.6 \pm 3.1$ mg, iron: $13.5 \pm 4.4$ mg, potassium: $2612.9 \pm 877.9$ mg, sodium: $3066.8 \pm 1006.6$ mg, magnesium: $323.2 \pm 314.0$ mg. **CONCLUSIONS:** Although they seem to be meeting energy recommendations, college athletes and ROTC Cadets and midshipmen are not meeting the recommendations of many macro- and micronutrients. It is important that athletes consume well-balanced diets to meet nutrition recommendations and best enhance their performance.