

## **Factors Impacting Food and Diet Choices Among Adults**

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There are various factors that impact food and diet choices among adults, including environmental factors, nutrition factors, and social media. Additionally, sources of food and nutrition information are widespread and easily accessible, though the information is not always evidence-based. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans clearly articulate that adults should consume a diet composed of a variety of foods that are nutritionally-balanced and that all foods can fit. The purpose of this needs assessment was to determine the rationale for adults' food and diet choices, their nutrition knowledge, and current dietary habits. Participants were recruited from employees at Fargo Cass Public Health, members at Family Wellness, and the researcher's Facebook page. A link to an electronic survey consisting of 48-57 questions, most of which were multiple-choice, was distributed to potential participants. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze and compare current trends among participants' ( $N = 98$ ) food choices, basic nutrition knowledge, and thoughts and feelings related to food. While the majority of participants reported believing all foods are capable of fitting into their diets, when asked about their current food choices, many participants reported avoiding or cutting out specific foods or nutrients. This suggests their dietary practices do not match their beliefs and they are potentially missing out on a nutritionally-varied and balanced diet. Such findings support a need for an evidenced-based resource to help adults make food and diet choices that encourages and allows all foods to be incorporated so they may achieve a nutritionally-varied and balanced dietary intake.