

Summary of the results from Riksmaten adults 2010-11

A representative sample of 5000 individuals between 18-80 years and living in Sweden were invited to participate in the survey. The data collection took place between May 2010 and July 2011. The participants, all together 1797 women and men, reported everything they ate and drank during four consecutive days. The reporting was done in a web-based food diary. The participants also filled out a questionnaire with about 50 questions.

In comparison to previous dietary surveys in Sweden, this study indicates that positive changes in food intake have occurred. The participants reported a higher intake of fruit and berries, vegetables, roots, pulses, fish and shellfish. Moreover, it has become more common to use liquid margarines and oils when cooking. Nevertheless, has overweight and obesity prevalence increased and was in this investigation 42 percent among women and 57 percent among men.

The daily mean intake of fruit, berries and vegetables (including a maximum of 100 grams of juice) was 360 and 310 grams in women and men, respectively. 21 percent of the participants consumed more than 500 grams of fruit, berries and vegetables (including a maximum of 100 grams of juice). About 30 percent of the partakers ate fish as a main course 2-3 times a week and this was more common among women.

The mean consumption of sodas and cordials was 100 ml per day, but those who consumed the most had an intake exceeding 600 ml. Many participants had a high intake of foods high in sugar and fat with low nutrient density and on average about 15 percent of the energy were derived from such foods. These foods include sodas, candy, pastries, rolls and cookies. The dietary habits varied with age. The younger age groups consumed less fruit, vegetables and fish (including shellfish) and more pasta, sodas and pizza, pies and pirogues. Older people ate more wholesome and traditional foods with a higher intake of porridge, potatoes, fruit, berries, vegetables, fish (including shellfish), soup, pastry, cookies and desserts. The alcohol intake was lowest in the youngest age groups and highest in individuals between 45 and 64 years of age. In addition, the level of education and other background factors were associated with food habits. As an example, people with a higher education, in comparison with those with a lower education, consumed more fruit, berries, vegetables, cheese and alcohol. Women and men who were physically active as well as non-smokers had a higher intake of fruit, berries and vegetables, in comparison to others.

The energy intake was on average 7.4MJ in women and 9.4 MJ in men. The energy distribution was 18 percent from protein, 35 percent from fat and 47 percent from carbohydrates (alcohol energy not included). The proportion of saturated fat in the diet was high (13 %) but the intake of polyunsaturated fatty acids was satisfactory (6 %). The intake of fiber (2.5 grams/MJ) and whole grains (52 gram per 10 MJ) was low. About 10 percent of the energy was derived from added sugar and 3 percent from alcohol. The salt intake was high (7.5 grams/day). Furthermore, the results show that most individuals had a satisfactory intake of vitamins and minerals, but the intake of vitamin D, folate and iron was low and especially in young women. The most common dietary supplements in this investigation were multivitamins, omega-3 supplements and fish oil and 21 percent took dietary supplements.

The low participation rate (36 %) may have influenced the results of this survey especially in young men, the group with the highest non-participation. Among women, all age groups were well represented. The prevalence of overweight and obesity is in line with other Swedish studies, with both higher participation rate and a larger sample size. The level of education was somewhat higher among participants than in non-participants. If this means that the participants are more health conscious than those who did not participate, then the results might be biased. This may give a too positive picture of the food habits in Sweden. Despite this, the results indicate that the food habits are far from satisfactory and there is room for improvement. The intake of fruit, berries, vegetables and whole grains is too low and the intake of sugary and fatty foods with a high content of saturated fat and salt too high. The investigation also indicates that young adults (18-30 years) have the worst food habits. This is reflected in a poor nutrient intake and this is especially pronounced in young women. This group is an important target for future public health work since food habits are established early in life and this group is in childbearing age.