



## **Food Consumption amongst the South African Population**

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There have been no national dietary surveys since the National Food Consumption Survey was undertaken in 1 to 9 year old children in South Africa in 1999. Furthermore, there has never been a nationally representative dietary survey in adults. Hence dietary data on isolated studies in children and adults undertaken over the past 15 years will be presented in order to make some conclusions and to provide trends regarding nutrient and food intake of South Africans.

In children there were 9 studies in Gauteng, 7 studies in Kwa-Zulu Natal, 3 studies in Limpopo, 2 studies in Western Cape and 1 study each in North West, Free State, and Northern Cape. No studies were conducted in Eastern Cape or in Mpumalanga. In adults there were 5 studies in Kwa-Zulu Natal, 2 in North West, 2 in Free State, 1 in Gauteng, 1 in Western Cape and 0 in Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, the Northern Cape or Limpopo. In the children surveys 10 used the 24-hour recall, 3 used a food frequency and 10 studies used both. All of these studies were undertaken in one area of the province indicated and do not include a representative sample of these provinces. In adults 4 studies used a frequency questionnaire, 3 a 24 hour recall and 3 used both. Data from these studies tended to show similarities in nutrient deficiencies. While mean protein intakes were generally adequate, specific micronutrient deficiencies were repeatedly indicated. These included zinc, iron, calcium, riboflavin, thiamine, vitamin B6, folate and vitamin C. This implies that food fortification may not be sufficient to meet the daily requirements of nutrients.