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Selected Dietary Intake among Californians of Korean Descent: Preliminary Findings

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Research on diet, acculturation, and ethnicity has suggested that immigrants' dietary patterns differs from people who do not immigrate. The purpose of this paper is to present preliminary descriptive findings concerning consumption of foods that are common in the Korean and American diets among people of Korean descent who reside in California. Adults (18 years of age or older, N=1334) of Korean descent who can be reached by listed residential telephone in California were randomly selected and telephone interviewed by closely supervised bilingual (Korean-English) interviewers after a prolonged period of training. Koreans who reported higher levels of acculturation to American society ate less traditional Korean foods such as Kimchi and ate significantly more frequently foods common in the American diet that are loaded with fat, such as beef, chicken, bread, green vegetables, cheese/yogurt, fried foods, oil based dressings, butter/margarine, soda. Acculturation was also related to increased frequency of drinking alcohol. Older California Korean residents tend to eat slightly more traditional foods than younger persons such as rice, Kimchi, fruits, and fish. Women tend to eat healthier foods than men, consuming more frequently green vegetables, Kimchi, milk, cheese/yogurt, fruits, and bread. Koreans reporting longer residence in the United States reported greater consumption of pork, bread, and soda. Age and gender distinguish somewhat different nutritional patterns of behavior among Koreans in California, and that exposure to American culture through the number of years of residence and acculturation also influences the frequency with which people consume foods.