

# Dietary Habits of Students Receiving Nutrition Education

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## Abstract

College students encounter new challenges and responsibilities with newfound freedom, it is easy to gravitate towards convenient and tasty yet unhealthy food options such as fast food and packed food items. Dietary habits represent an individual's continuous food preferences, dietary patterns, and habits. Nutrition education teaches about the science and facts about nutrition, to encourage the adoption of healthier dietary habits. This study aimed to observe the dietary habits of students enrolled in a nutrition and dietetics course. The study was carried out from the area of Indore, M. P., 56 students participated and were later divided into two groups 18 - 21 years and above 21 years. A survey - based questionnaire was formulated which included a demographic profile, anthropometric assessment, information about the enrolled course, food choices and habits, and other parameters related to the topic of study.

The majority of the participants were aged between 18 - 21 years (73.2%) and lived with their family, predominantly female from middle - income nuclear families. Most students had a normal BMI (62.5%), and only a small percentage were either underweight or overweight. The majority of students either had a vegetarian diet (41.1%) or a non - vegetarian diet (51.8%), and very less followed some other diet. There was a significant difference between the mean BMR of males ( $1694.8 \pm 77.6$ ) and females ( $1346.7 \pm 182$ ) ( $P=0.0001$ ). The majority of students were enrolled in an undergraduate course for nutrition and dietetics (76.8%), with varying years of study. Most students claimed that the nutritional knowledge they receive is effective (60.7%). Students who perceived that nutritional knowledge was effective consumed three or more meals in a day (69.6%), did not skip meals at all (25%) or sometimes skipped meals (57.1%), consumed fruits (66.1%) and salads (67.9%) once or twice on a daily note, consumed food items rich in antioxidants (51.8%), engaged in regular physical activity (62.5%), made changes in diet as an outcome of the nutrition education they received (76.8%), and also said that nutrition education has improved their overall health (83.9%). It was seen that most students indulged in snacking daily (39.3%), and opted for healthy snacking options. Most students do not take any vitamin or mineral supplements (58.9%).

**Keywords:** Students, Dietary habits, Nutrition and dietetics, Nutrition education.