

New Research Shows Potatoes Are Good For Kids and Do Not Crowd Out Other Vegetables

Research recently accepted for presentation at the 2011 Experimental Biology Meeting shows that the consumption of potatoes as part of a school lunch does not displace other vegetables. In fact, children and adolescents who consume potatoes at lunch consume significantly more total servings of vegetables in a day. The research, which was conducted by Dr. Adam Drewnowski from the University of Washington, also showed that, compared to meals without potatoes, meals with potatoes provided significantly higher amounts of potassium, fiber and vitamin C—nutrients that were recently highlighted by the 2010 Dietary Guidelines as being of “concern” due to current inadequate intakes.

The abstract, which will be presented on April 13, 2011 at the Experimental Biology Meeting in Washington, D.C., is presented below. For additional information, please contact Katherine Beals, PhD, RD, FACSM, CSSD at kathiebeals@yahoo.com.

White potatoes, non-fried, do not displace other vegetables in meals consumed by American children and adolescents aged 4-18 years

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White potatoes are an accepted, affordable, and nutrient-rich food. However, there are concerns that potatoes may displace other vegetables from meals and diets of American children. Using data from 4-cycles (2001-08) of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), we evaluated whether consumption of white potatoes, baked, roasted, or boiled, displaced other vegetables from the meals of children and adolescents aged 4-18 years. Approximately 10,600 lunches and 11,500 dinners were characterized by place (at-home or away from home) and by source of food (e.g., store or school cafeteria). Children and adolescents consuming white potatoes, baked, roasted, or boiled were identified using the individual-food record. The median, inter-quartile range and survey-weighted mean number of other vegetable servings per 1000 calories were estimated for each meal. Children whose weekday lunches included non-fried white potatoes consumed a median of 0.37 servings of other vegetables at lunch as compared to only 0.19 servings for children whose lunches did not include potatoes. There was no evidence that white potatoes, non-fried, displaced other vegetables in school lunches. Meals containing potatoes had significantly higher amounts of vitamin C, potassium and fiber per 1000 calories than meals that did not contain potatoes. In some contexts, white potatoes, non-fried, may be an indicator of a more nutrient-dense and healthful meal. Supported by the US Potato Board.

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