Recommendation for Increased Iron Levels in the American Diet (1969)

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RECOMMENDATION FOR INCREASED IRON LEVELS IN THE AMERICAN DIET

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FOOD AND NUTRITION BOARD
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NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
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of the need for an evaluation of the physiological availability of iron from compounds currently used or proposed for use in enrichment programs. However, definitive data are not likely to be available in the near future.

The recommended change in the standards of identity for iron enrichment is based on food consumption data obtained in the spring of 1965 [1] by the USDA. The intake of iron by the female population, 10 to 55 years of age, was about 11 mg per day with average calorie intakes at different age levels ranging from 1650 to 2150. The 11 mg per day can be roughly estimated as 5 mg from meat and eggs, 3 mg from vegetable produce and 3 mg from grain products. The consumption of grain products approximated one-fifth pound per day (flour equivalent). Present enrichment standards provide for a minimum of 13 mg and a maximum of 16.5 mg of iron per pound. In order to increase the iron intake of the female population to 18 mg per day by flour enrichment, it would be necessary to provide for 50 mg of iron per pound of flour.

In 1965, the maximum average consumption of flour by males (18-19 years) was about one-third pound per day. This amount would provide, if enriched at 50 mg per pound, 17 mg of iron. The average intake from other sources was about 12 mg per day. Thus, the maximum intake by males, if flour were enriched with iron to 50 mg per pound, would not likely exceed 30 mg per day and no adverse physiological consequences would be expected at this intake.

The Board would not support the widespread enrichment of a large variety of different food items. It believes that the recommended increase in the

iron enrichment of cereal products could be expected to raise the amount of iron in the American diet by approximately 5 mg per day. It recognizes that there should be an evaluation of the effectiveness of such increased cereal enrichment in meeting the needs of all population groups.

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REFERENCES

1. U. S. Department of Agriculture, Food Intake and Nutritive Value of Diets of Men, Women, and Children in the United States, Spring 1965, ARS 62-18 (1969)

2. National Research Council, Recommended Dietary Allowances, Revised 1968, Publ. No. 1694, Washington, D. C. (1968).