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October 18, 2010

Nutrition 203

Self-Evaluation of Food Habits

Demographics

Did your family immigrate to the United States? If yes, how many generations ago?

My father immigrated to the United States from Ilocos Sur Philippines in 1987. He was accompanied by his father and three of his brothers; the rest of his siblings – two sisters and two other brothers – stayed behind. My father, his three brothers, and my grandfather were the first generation to immigrate to the United States and resided in San Diego, California. My ancestors from my father side are all from the Philippines as well.

My mother, accompanied by my five siblings and myself, immigrated to the United States from the city of Manila in the Philippines in 1995 and has resided in San Diego, California since. My little brother is the only individual born here in United States. My mother is the first generation to immigrate to the United States. My grandfather had emigrated from Canton City in China to the Philippines to flee China’s communist ways. All my ancestors from my mother’s side are come from China (father’s side) and those from her mother’s side, as well as her siblings, reside in the Philippines.

What is your ethnic background? Explain the origin of your name and/or parents’ names.

My ethnic background is ¾ Filipino and ¼ Chinese. My mother’s maiden name is Adam, which as one can see is not a typical Filipino or Chinese last name. My grandmother and grandfather were not yet married at the time my mother was born to avoid immigration taxes towards my grandfather, and so rather than bearing my grandfather’s last name of “Yee”, my mother bore my grandmother’s maiden name. My great grandfather on my mother’s side was adopted by an American, which explains the American “Adam” last name. My last name on my father’s side is Cabalbag, which a pretty common Filipino last name. My name is the combination of my mother and father’s name; “Conra”, from Conrado for my father, and “Lyn” from Rosalinda for my mother.

What is your religious affiliation? Explain or clarify.

I am Catholic; I grew up in a Catholic home and have always had the Catholic influence for as long as I can remember.
Ingredients/Common Foods

List 1-3 specific foods that you eat every day. Explain or clarify.

I consume water and apples on a daily basis. I do not drink soda or fruit juices, and prefer drink water as my beverage of choice. I began eating apples everyday when I was constantly catching a cold. My mom would tell me it was because I never ate my fruits or vegetables. Since I did not like vegetables at the time, I would resort to fruits. Whenever I had a feeling I was about to get sick again, I would reach for the fruit basket that always had apples in it. I realized that eating apples often caused me to become less likely to become sick. Eating apples whenever I felt I was reaching a cold soon became eating apples every single day since it was also a convenient snack to grab when I was on the go. Now, every morning I bolt out the door with an apple in hand.

List one specific food that you eat once a week and one food you eat once a month. Explain or clarify.

I eat cereal once a week and eat carne asada fries once a month. In high school, a taco shop was conveniently located just down the street and so it became the go-to spot after school, after volleyball practice, before a football game, and so on. I pretty much got used to eating carne asada fries on almost a daily basis until I had health class my senior year that made me become more aware of my eating habits. Since then, I have definitely cut back from Mexican food and allow myself to have it only once a month. I eat cereal only once a week because when I eat it on a daily basis I easily become tired of its taste, and also because I am not a huge fan of milk. I found myself to enjoy cereal better when I only have it once a week.

How often do you eat foods traditionally consumed by your ethnic group? Explain or clarify.

Rice is a traditional food consumed in the Asian culture. I typically consume rice about every other day because I try not to have it every day. When it comes to Filipino desserts or popular dishes in the Philippines such as lumpia or pancit, I typically consume those either once a month or every other month. In my family, those dishes are usually prepared and served during special occasions or just any occasion out of the ordinary such as Sunday family lunches. Although we have a Chinese background, our dishes typically reflect more on our Filipino culture since my mom was raised in the Philippines. Our Chinese ethnic background reflects elsewhere.

Are there some foods you avoid eating for religious or personal reasons? Explain.

I do not have any foods that I avoid eating for religious or personal reasons. Luckily, I am not allergic to anything so far and Catholics are not forbidden to eat anything except for meat on “Good Fridays” during the Lenten season, which is a rule I do practice.
Are there certain foods you would like to eat more often if cost wasn't a factor? Explain.

There are many foods I would love to eat more of if health wasn’t a factor, but as for cost, it would definitely have to be organic foods. The cost of organic foods holds me back from consuming it more often as I would like. I like the idea of it being a healthier alternative; however, organic foods are at a much higher price range than I’d like.

List food(s) commonly eaten in your region of the United States. Explain or clarify.

Amongst my siblings, my younger brother and I are the only two out of us 7 that were mainly raised in San Diego, California. I arrived to the United States when I was four years old so I consider San Diego more of my home and I am more familiar with it than Philippines, which is my place of birth. I reside in the south-side area of San Diego, more specifically called Chula Vista. Chula Vista being so close to the border and having almost 50% Hispanic population, Mexican food is highly booming in this area (1). When searching for places to eat in this area, a handful of Mexican eateries are suggested and marked on the map (2).

Meals Composition/Cycle

How many meals and snacks do you eat each day? Explain or clarify.

I eat about two meals a day and maybe two to three snacks a day some days. I know breakfast is the most important meal of the day but sometimes when I’m rushing to school I simply just grab an apple to snack on. Then, later on the day will I have my lunch and dinner. I’m a pretty healthy snacker, I mainly snack on fruits; however, there are days where I do indulge and snack on the not so healthy stuff.

What foods or food groups are needed to make a meal for you? What foods do you consider snacks?

I have noticed that I need some type of meat or fish in my meals; For instance, I can’t just have vegetables. The only time I feel satisfied with plenty of vegetables with no meat or fish is when it is mixed with noodles. However, I must have some vegetables within my meal; I cannot have just meat and just fish. As for snacks, I consider fruits or any foods that can be conveniently taken with you.

Is the meal served in "courses"? If yes, what are they? What is the order of service?

Meals at home are not typically served in courses and there is no order of service. After my mom is done cooking, all foods are placed at the center of the table and each individual just chooses what he or she wants and serves themselves. Even when dining out at a restaurant, having an appetizer and a main course is too much for me. Most of the time, I don’t even have dessert.

What are the major holidays you and your family celebrate each year and what special foods are served for these holidays?
My family and I celebrate Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas, and New Year. These are major holidays where a lot of cooking takes place and many special foods are served. For each holiday, it is always guaranteed that “Filipino spaghetti” will be made; Filipino spaghetti has a much sweeter taste to it and both ground beef and hot dog are often mixed in as well. In my family, spaghetti has always been the food of choice to be cooked during special occasions such as birthdays – also because everyone loves my mom’s spaghetti! My favorite dish that I look forward to each year is only made on New Years Eve in preparation for the New Year. This dish is called “Ginataang Bilo Bilo”. I do not know the English translation but it is a sweet Filipino dessert that consists of tapioca, banana, sweet potato, jackfruit and sometimes cassava.

Do you ever fast? If yes, when? What, if any, foods are avoided and/or consumed?

I do not fast although I am a Catholic and Catholics are advised to fast during the Lenten season. I, however, abide by the avoiding of meat on “Good Fridays” during Lent and I also avoid whatever I choose to give up during that season as a sacrificial promise.

Rules

What, if any, utensils do you use when you eat? Explain or clarify.

During family dinners a spoon and a fork is always provided and always used. When I am eating outside of my home, I find myself only using a fork as my utensil. There is no specific reason or story as to why, I just realized that is the habit I usually find myself doing.

At a family meal, who would be present? Explain or clarify.

My family has always been big on having dinners together every night. My 6 brothers and sisters, my mom, my dad, and I would all sit down and have dinner together. Since the passing away of my father in 2005, I have realized that is no longer the case. While we still have dinner together some days, it is not as often as before. Some of my sisters have married; some are too busy for school, and so on. From having all my brothers and sisters for family meals, it has now dwindled down to just my mom, my little brother, and me. Due to my classes being out late, sometimes I don’t make it home in time to join my mom and little brother for dinner, but Sundays always guarantee a lunch or dinner outing with them.

Is someone at the family meal served first? If yes, who and why? Explain or clarify.

There is no particular order on who is served first in family meals. As I have previously stated, family meals usually involve all foods being placed on the center of the table and each individual serves themselves.

List three rules that you follow when you eat a meal. Do these rules change if you eat informally? How?

I always wash my hands before a meal, I never talk with food in my mouth, and I always make sure I have a napkin with me. These rules pretty much never change for me no matter what
setting I am placed in. I have come to find these habits almost automatic, where not much thought is being placed to complete them. Even eating at fast food chains, I find myself using the restroom to wash my hands after my meal is ordered and already have my set of napkins prepared before my meal is served.

Attitudes and Application

List two things you discovered about yourself through this evaluation. Explain or clarify.

I discovered a lot about my mother’s side that I was never aware of beforehand. I did not know that my grandfather had emigrated from China to the Philippines and I definitely did not know that my great grandfather had fled his abusive home and was raised by an American. Also, I became more aware of my food habits. It never crossed my mind to think of what specific foods I eat weekly or daily until now.

How do your food habits differ from your family norms? Those of friends? Those of people you work with? Those of clients or patients? In what ways do they differ?

My food habits don’t really differ much from anyone except maybe that I consider myself a “saucy” person. I must always have condiments such as ketchup or hot sauce on majority of my dishes. I am really into having my foods spicy. Sometimes I have no interest consuming certain dishes when ketchup or hot sauce are absent. To add to the question before this, I just discovered how disgusting this could sound to others but it’s not as bad as it sounds I promise!
Reference

1. http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/0613392.html


http://maps.google.com/maps?hl=en&revid=1373931264&um=1&ie=UTF-8&q=mexican+food+chula+vista&fb=1&gl=us&hq=mexican+food&hnear=Chula+Vista,+CA&ei=ehu8TNqtBo-2sAPApn8Dg&sa=X&oi=local_group&ct=image&resnum=1&ved=0CCsQtgMwAA
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Comments: Nice job!