



EATING PATTERNS OF ADELAIDE CHILDREN
ENTERING SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND THEIR UTILIZATION
OF SCHOOL CANTEENS

A project submitted in partial fulfilment
for the Degree of Master of Dental Surgery

by

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SIGNED STATEMENT

This research report is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Master of Dental Surgery in The University of Adelaide.

The report contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any University. To the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person except when due reference is made in the text of the report.

MARGARET A. EVANS.

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SUMMARY

Seven-day diet records were obtained from 438 year 8 children at three Adelaide high schools. Analysis of the eating patterns revealed sex and ethnic differences. In general, the findings showed that breakfast was the meal most frequently missed on weekdays. Most children snacked during the day and only a small percentage relied on three main meals for their daily food intake. The majority of meals and snacks were home-prepared, but on weekdays the canteen was the major source of food during the school day. The type of canteen menu influenced patronage and the canteen which stocked only nutritionally acceptable food items attracted the highest usage even though it had competition from nearby food shops.

Sex differences were pronounced in that males were more likely than females to miss meals, eat alone, patronize food shops and the school canteen. Females tended to snack more frequently than males and to prefer company when eating.

Ethnic differences were found especially in relation to breakfast habits and canteen usage. Greek children were more likely than children of Australian/New Zealand parentage to miss breakfast and rely on the canteen for provision of food during the school day. On weekdays significantly fewer breakfasts were eaten with parents by Greek children than by ANZ children.