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## Perceptions of nutrition and healthy lifestyle among women in Saudi Arabia

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**Objective:** This cross-sectional study aimed to evaluate perceptions of nutrition and healthy lifestyle among women in Saudi Arabia.

**Research Methods & Procedures:** Between May and October 2012, 1000 women attending preconception or antenatal clinics at King Fahad Medical City, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, completed a voluntary questionnaire regarding eating habits, nutritional intake and physical activity.

**Results:** The majority of participants were Saudi Arabian (95%), married (97%) and pregnant (73%). The mean weight of participants was 75 kg. Forty-five percent of participants consumed three meals per day, 70% did not eat breakfast, 48% ate dessert every day, 74% did not partake in any exercise and 62% took vitamins. Only 54% of the participants read the ingredients on food labeling. The majority (78%) of participants believed that pregnant women were required to double their food intake and 59% did not think that pregnant women had specific dietary requirements. Fifty-nine percent of the participants also believed that a healthy diet consisted of regular meals of fruit, vegetables, proteins and grains and 60% believed that the five food groups were fat, protein, grains, dairy products and fruits and vegetables. The vast majority (98%) of participants wanted to learn more about healthy eating and lifestyle habits.

**Conclusions:** The majority of women who attended the preconception or antenatal clinics both required and wanted further education on healthy living, particularly around food choices and exercise. Providing women with prenatal education regarding health and nutrition could potentially improve their child's future nutritional status.

### Biography

Dania Al-Jaroudi is a practicing REI consultant at King Fahad Medical City, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. She has completed her fellowship in REI at McGill University, Montreal Canada, in 2004. She has obtained her Master's degree in Health Administration from the University of Minnesota, USA in 2014. She is currently the chairperson of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility Medicine department at King Fahad Medical City, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. She has published more than 12 papers in reputed journals and has been serving as an Editorial Board Member in reputable journals.

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