

Computerized Dietary Analysis Systems

Chapter 5

Advantages of Computerized Nutrient Analysis

- Save time
- Less labor intense
- Money saving
- Reduces errors

Consideration in Selecting Software

- Define specific needs for the nutrient analysis
 - What type of information output is needed
 - Choose a software that meet your needs
- Consider the
 - Database
 - Program operation
 - System output

Nutrient Database

- USDA Nutrient Data Laboratory operates the National Nutrient Databank
- Food composition values published since 1896.
- Data obtained from
 - USDA Food Composition Laboratory & other government labs.
 - Food industry
 - University researchers

Selecting a Commercial Computerized Dietary Analysis

- Number of foods and nutrients analyzed
- Are brand names of foods included?
- Regular database updates (once/year)
- Missing values (zero or flagged)
- Services offered by vendor & number of years in business
- Cost of upgrades

Program Operation

- Hardware requirements
- Cost of the software package (\$200-\$600)
- Support service
 - Quality of user's manual and help screens
- Ease of searching for and entering foods for analysis
- Editing the database

Program Operation

- Capabilities of the system
 - Preview a single food nutrients
 - Ability to use a variety of volume or weight measures
 - Ability to edit food list
 - Food entry number limit
 - Ability for averaging multiple days
 - Standards for comparison
 - Type of output report

System Output

- Ability of the program
 - To print a variety of reports
 - Tabular or graphic forms
 - Selected nutrient of interests
 - Personal messages
 - To export data to electronic file for further analysis (statistical)
- Make sure the output is appropriate, meaningful and useful for your needs

Steps in Using a Computerized Nutrient Analysis

- Locate appropriate food in the databank
- Make substitution if necessary
- Determine volume or weight measure
- Add, delete or modify entry (if needed)
- Select a nutrient standard for comparisons

REMEMBER

- Computerized nutrient analysis do not offer a precise description of nutrient intake.

