

FITS FAQ

What is FITS?

The Gerber Feeding Infants and Toddlers Study (FITS) is a survey of the eating habits and nutrient intakes of more than 3,000 children four to 24 months of age. The purpose of FITS was to: investigate infant and toddler food choices and nutrient intakes; examine the relationship between food intakes and self-feeding; and determine whether the Institute of Medicine's standards for Dietary Reference Intakes for vitamins and minerals were being met.

Did you say more than 3,000 infants and toddlers?

Yes, this comprehensive study took an in-depth look at the eating habits of more than 3,000 infants and toddlers. The ages and subgroups break down approximately as follows:

4-6 months	862 subjects
7-8 months	483 subjects
9-11 months	679 subjects
12-14 months	374 subjects
15-18 months	308 subjects
19-24 months	316 subjects

Who conducted the survey?

Gerber commissioned Mathematica Policy Research Inc., located in Princeton, New Jersey, for the two-year process, which included planning, data collection, analysis and reporting. The firm has conducted some of the most important studies of education, health care, welfare, employment, nutrition, and early childhood policies and programs in the United States. Mathematica strives to improve public well-being by bringing the highest standards of quality, objectivity, and excellence to bear on the provision of information collection and analysis to its clients. Barbara Devaney, Ph.D., and Ronette Briefel, Dr., P.H., RD were the principal investigators for the study. The survey was conducted during the five-month period March-July 2002.

How was the data collected?

The study consisted of two primary components: (1) a 24-hour dietary recall administered to parents or primary caretakers of a cross-sectional, random sample of more than 3,000 infants toddlers ages four to 24 months, with two days of dietary recall collected for a random subsample; and (2) a questionnaire administered to parents or primary caretakers that collects information on family socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, knowledge and attitudes toward infant feeding, and child growth and development. The dietary recall used the computer-assisted dietary data collection system from the University of Minnesota, which records all eating occasions and quantity of each food and beverage consumed over a 24-hour period.

What will Gerber do with the findings?

FITS will be published as a supplement in the January *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. Gerber will also share the findings with key thought leaders, third-party organizations and pediatric health professionals who can help provide practical and actionable nutrition advice to parents and pediatric health professionals.