

of infants were at risk for inadequate intake of iron and zinc. Dietary fiber intakes in toddlers and preschoolers were low, and saturated fat intakes exceeded recommendations for the majority of preschoolers ([Butte, Fox, Briefel, et al, 2010](#)). Foods to complement breast milk through the first 2 years of life should be based on local foods appropriate to the infant's dentition and ability to chew ([Solomons and Vossenaar, 2013](#)). Foods may need to include home fortification but should not rely on processed complementary foods ([Solomons and Vossenaar, 2013](#)).

The findings of these studies and other similar reports are important for nurses who work with infants and children. Nurses must work to promote healthy nutrition habits early in children's lives through proper education of families and children about healthy lifestyle habits, including diet and exercise for health promotion and prevention of morbidities associated with poor micronutrient intake and sedentary lifestyle.

Vitamin Imbalances

Although true vitamin deficiencies are rare in the United States, subclinical deficiencies are commonly seen in population subgroups in which either maternal or child dietary intake is imbalanced and contains inadequate amounts of vitamins. **Vitamin D–deficiency rickets**, once rarely seen because of the widespread commercial availability of vitamin D–fortified milk, increased before the turn of the century. Populations at risk include:

- Children who are exclusively breastfed by mothers with an inadequate intake of vitamin D or are exclusively breastfed longer than 6 months without adequate maternal vitamin D intake or supplementation
- Children with dark skin pigmentation who are exposed to minimal sunlight because of socioeconomic, religious, or cultural beliefs or housing in urban areas with high levels of pollution, or who live above or below a latitude of 33 degrees north and south where sunlight does not produce vitamin D ([Wacker and Holick, 2013](#))
- Children with diets that are low in sources of vitamin D and calcium