



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20250-1300
Voice (202) 720-4623
Email: oc.news@usda.gov
Web: <http://www.usda.gov>

In Case You Missed It: Study Finds Offering Healthier School Snacks Helps Kids Make Healthier Choices at Home

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[In Case You Missed It: Study Finds Offering Healthier School Snacks Helps Kids Make Healthier Choices at Home](#)

Posted by [Kevin Concannon, Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services](#), on November 18, 2013 at 1:30 PM

Last week, researchers from Michigan State University, Oakland University, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, and the Michigan Department of Education came out with a [new study](#) showing that when schools offer healthier snacks in vending machines and a la carte lines, students' overall diets improve. Students in schools that offered healthier snacks consumed more fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and not just at school—at home, too.

This is encouraging news for schools and school nutrition professionals as they begin implementing the [Smart Snacks in School](#) standards, which will ensure that students are offered healthier food options during the school day. Smart Snacks in School requires more whole grains, low fat dairy, fruits, vegetables and leaner protein, while still leaving plenty of room for tradition, like homemade birthday treats and bake sale fundraisers.

The most exciting piece of this study, to me, is that it reiterates that the improvements we've made to school breakfasts, lunches and snacks really do make a difference in students' lives beyond the cafeteria. Plus, this study comes on the heels of other encouraging research that shows that efforts to establish healthy habits at an early age are working. According to a recent study in the journal [Pediatrics](#), kids ages 11 to 16 are now eating more fruits and vegetables and consuming less sugar, getting more physical activity, and starting their days with a healthy breakfast. At the same time, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is reporting that the [rate of obesity among low-income children appears to be declining](#), dropping for the first time in decades in some states.

America's parents, teachers, school nutrition professionals and communities work hard to make the healthy choice, the easy choice for our kids. Our work is ongoing, but I am proud of how far we've come.

*Read more from the researchers in [Schools Help Kids Choose Carrots Over Candy Bars](#). The study, [Effects of Changes in Lunch-Time Competitive Foods, Nutrition Practices, and Nutrition Policies on Low-Income Middle-School Children's Diets](#), was published in the December issue of *Childhood Obesity*, and was supported by the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#), Michigan State University's [AgBioResearch](#), Michigan Department of Community Health and USDA's [SNAP-Ed](#), the nutrition education arm of USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Learn more about USDA's efforts to [improve child nutrition](#) or visit [ChooseMyPlate.gov](#) for quick, easy nutrition and diet tips for families.*