

Smarter lunchrooms lead kids to eat more salad

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Providing healthier food choices for our nation's schoolchildren is a hot-button issue in Michelle Obama's Let's Move campaign. And a team of researchers from Cornell University have recently identified one simple solution to help schools serve more fresh vegetables and salad items.

Laura Smith, a researcher at the Cornell Food and Brand Lab, presented the findings of the study "Convenience Drives Choice in School Lunchrooms" at this week's Experimental Biology conference in Anaheim, Calif.

In a year-long study in an upstate New York middle school, researchers examined the effect of moving the [salad](#) bar to a more prominent location in the cafeteria. Results show that sales of certain salad bar items increased by 250-300%.

"It wasn't a big move," Smith explained. "From its original location against a wall, we moved the salad bar out about four feet, in front of the cash registers."

"By the end of the year, this even led to 6% more kids eating school lunches," Smith said. "It's basic behavioral economics — we made it easier for them to make the right choice."

Smith and her colleagues, Professor Brian Wansink and Professor David Just, lead the Smarter Lunchroom Initiative. The initiative focuses on low-cost and no-cost changes that can be made in lunchrooms to subtly

guide smarter choices.

Provided by Cornell University

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