

Eat your fruits and vegetables! Californians seem to be listening

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According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services' Healthy People 2010 objectives, adequate fruit and vegetable consumption is a national public health priority for disease prevention and maintenance of good health. Not only do fruits and vegetables furnish valuable dietary nutrients, but they also contribute vital elements to chronic disease prevention for heart disease, hypertension, certain cancers, vision problems of aging, and possibly type 2 diabetes. With the nation's health in mind, Network for a Healthy California is taking steps to prevent these problems by promoting fruit and vegetable consumption through a large-scale social marketing program funded in part by the United States Department of Agriculture Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP; formally known as the Food Stamp Nutrition Education program) to provide nutrition education.

A study in the July/August 2011 supplement to the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* describes the 10- year trends for California adults' [fruit](#) and vegetable consumption using [surveillance data](#). Investigators from the Network for a Healthy California, California Department of Public Health and [Public Health](#) Institute surveyed 1,400-1,700 California residents per survey year starting in 1997, before the Network's launch in spring 1998, and continuing biennially until the most current data from the 2007 survey. The survey tool used a single 24-hour dietary recall to assess intake.

Findings from this study reveal that over the course of 10 years; mean daily fruit and vegetable consumption rose from 3.8 servings to 5.2

servings. More profound, the number of California adults who reported eating greater or equal to 5 servings of fruit and vegetable on their 24-hour diet recall increased 57% over the past decade.

Interestingly, the increase in fruit and [vegetable consumption](#) was the greatest for the lowest and the highest income groups, nearly doubling the percentage that consumes > 5 fruit and vegetable per day, 1997-2007 in each group. Sharon Sugerman, Research Scientist for the Network for a Healthy California, states, "Examining fruit and vegetable trends by income demonstrates the importance of being able to survey all population groups, specifically the low-income population, but also the higher-income groups. Such data document the overall population-wide trends and allow comparisons between more- and less-advantaged groups."

More information: The article is "California Adults Increase Fruit and Vegetable Consumption From 1997-2007" by Sharon Sugerman, MS, RD, FADA; Susan B. Foerster, MPH, RD; Jennifer Gregson, MPH, PhD; Amanda Linares, MS; Mark Hudes, PhD. It appears in the Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior, Volume 43, Issue 4, Supplement 2 (July/August 2011)

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