

Keep your fruit close and your vegetables closer

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College students wishing to eat healthier may want to invest in a clear fruit bowl says a recent article published in *Environment and Behavior* (published by SAGE). The new study found that when fruits and vegetables are within arm's reach, students are more likely to eat them. Furthermore, making fruit and vegetables more visible increases the intake of fruit, but the same does not hold true for vegetables.

Researchers Gregory J. Privitera and Heather E. Creary tested a total of 96 college students by placing apple slices and carrot cuts in either clear or opaque bowls at a table close to the participants or at a table two meters away. Participants watched as the food was taken out of its packaging and were told that they were welcome to eat it.

After leaving the students alone with the food for ten minutes, the researchers found that when apples and carrots were left close to the participants, those healthy foods were more likely to be eaten. Interestingly, making the food more visible to participants by placing them in clear bowls increased the intake of the apples but not the carrots. The researchers explained that this might be due to the fact that fruit is sweeter and may induce more motivation to eat than bitter-tasting vegetables.

"Apples, but not carrots, have sugar, which is known to stimulate [brain reward](#) regions that induce a 'wanting' for foods that contain sugar," the authors wrote. "Hence, apple slices may be more visually appealing than carrots."

Privitera and Creary also offered suggestions for the structure of dining and café settings on college campuses.

"Many dining facilities on college campuses are structured in a buffet," the researchers wrote. "Placing foods in locations that are more proximate (closest to seating area or entrance) and visible (in open containers at the front or easiest to reach locations in the buffet) could increase intake of these foods among college students."

More information: *Environment and Behavior* April 17, 2012 [doi: 10.1177/0013916512442892](https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916512442892)

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