

# Preschoolers' diets improved after federal food voucher changes: study

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(HealthDay)—A change to a U.S. government nutrition program

improved the diets of millions of young children in low-income families, a new study says.

Researchers compared the eating habits of nearly 1,200 2- to 4-year-olds in low-income households before and after the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) was changed in 2009.

With the revamp, more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat [milk](#) were included in the WIC food voucher package.

The change improved the diets for the approximately 4 million [children](#) in the program, according to the University of California (UC) study published April 7 in the journal *Pediatrics*.

"Although the findings only showed significant improvement for consumption of greens and beans, the other areas for which WIC has put in important efforts—increased consumption of whole fruits rather than fruit juice, increased whole grains—all show trends in the right direction...," study author June Tester said in a university news release. Tester is a pediatrician at the UC San Francisco Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland.

"Increasing consumption of nutritious foods such as [green leafy vegetables](#) and whole grains in the low-income children served by WIC will help them establish healthier eating patterns for their future," study co-author Patricia Crawford, a cooperative extension [nutrition](#) specialist with UC's Nutrition Policy Institute, said in the news release.

The researchers also found that the switch from whole milk to low-fat milk did not lead to children drinking less milk.

**More information:** LetsMove.gov has more about [healthy eating for](#)

[children.](#)

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