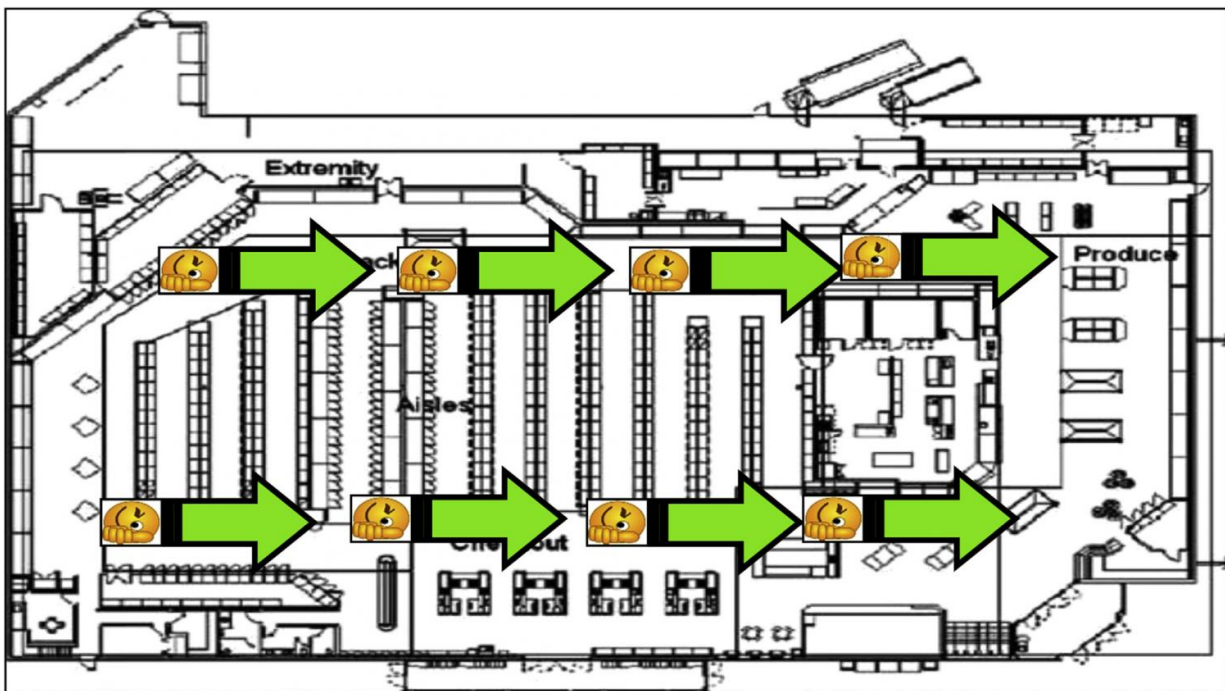


All signs point to health: Arrows on grocery floors increased the proportion of produce spending

June 30 2016



Example of arrow deployment in a grocery store. Credit: *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*

Fruit and vegetable availability is often assumed to be a purchase barrier, yet fruit and vegetable availability does not necessarily result in frequent purchases. Rather, in-store marketing of less-healthy foods may be a

major influencing factor in consumer spending habits regarding fruits and vegetables. A new study, in which in-store marketing focused attention on fruits and vegetables, resulted in an increased proportion of produce purchases keeping overall food spending the same.

To study the effect of in-store marketing, researchers used a shopper marketing nutrition intervention and placed 10 large (6 by 3 feet) green arrows on the floor of a grocery. The arrows were placed in highly visible areas around the perimeter of the store and pointed to the produce section. On the arrows were sayings such as, "Follow green arrow for health," and included a graphical representation of fruits and vegetables and emoticons to facilitate social approval.

Two groceries were included in this pilot study, including a control grocery of the same chain with similar demographics and [poverty levels](#) with no arrows. Weekly sales reports detailing daily grocery department sales were generated by the retailer for the 14-day trial. During this period, the intervention store experienced a significant increase in the proportion of [spending](#) on produce compared with other food. Despite the increase in spending on fruits and vegetables at the intervention store, however, the total food spending per customer did not change significantly between the two stores

"Efforts to move shoppers to purchase healthier foods while not increasing budgets could trigger a public health shift," lead author Collin Payne, PhD, New Mexico State University, said. "And our intervention showed that the produce spending proportion increase is possible without increasing overall spending per shopper transaction."

The results of the initial trial were duplicated over a longer period, at two additional stores with different demographics and poverty levels. This added validity to the initial results by extending the intervention to new groups of shoppers. However, Dr. Payne and his coinvestigators

recommend that future studies examine how long this [intervention](#) is likely to have an effect.

More information: "This Way to Produce: Strategic Use of Arrows on Grocery Floors Facilitate Produce Spending Without Increasing Shopper Budgets," by Collin Payne, PhD; Mihai Niculescu, PhD; David Just, PhD; Michael Kelly, PhD. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, Volume 48, Issue 7 (July/August 2016) [DOI: 10.1016/j.jneb.2016.05.001](#)

Provided by Elsevier

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