

# Nutrition program improves food stamp family's food security

December 12 2016, by Amy Patterson Neubert

---

Food stamp participants who participated in a supplemental nutrition education program were able to improve their food security by 25 percent, according to a study by Purdue University.

"Food assistance is very important and this shows that nutrition education is an effective part of improving food security as the lessons focused on practical ways to stretch food dollars while eating nutritiously," said Heather Eicher-Miller, an assistant professor of [nutrition](#) science. "In Indiana, Snap Ed is making a significant impact, and it is amazing that an [education program](#) that is shared with just one person in a household has the power to change how an entire family is eating for one year. What these families learn can last longer than the food assistance they receive."

These findings are published in *The Journal of Nutrition*. During 2013, 19.5 percent of U. S. households with children experienced food insecurity at some time during the year, and children can suffer from psychological, behavioral and physical problems if they do not consume enough food.

The federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, known as SNAP, serves millions of low-income individuals and families. SNAP is a part of the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. SNAP-Ed programs can vary from state to state. The direct education provided through SNAP-Ed programs in Indiana are hands on, and all lessons combine maximizing the [food](#) budget while focusing on nutritional components,

such as consuming lean meats and vegetables and fruits. One lesson includes visiting a grocery store to compare prices while studying items' nutritional labels. These lessons are provided through local Purdue Extension offices.

In this [randomized controlled study](#), 575 individuals from low-income Indiana households, each with at least one child, participated in the first four Indiana SNAP-Ed curriculum lessons. The lessons were taught by 41 SNAP-Ed educators from 38 Indiana counties. The individuals were interviewed before they started the education program and a year later.

"The fact that what they learned made a difference months later is remarkable," said Eicher-Miller, who also is director of Indiana's Emergency Food Resource Network. "This educational program is voluntary for SNAP participants. We may not see such a large increase in [food security](#) over time if the program was required for the population it serves."

**More information:** R. L. Rivera et al, SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education) Increases Long-Term Food Security among Indiana Households with Children in a Randomized Controlled Study, *Journal of Nutrition* (2016). [DOI: 10.3945/jn.116.231373](#)

Provided by Purdue University

Citation: Nutrition program improves food stamp family's food security (2016, December 12) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-12-nutrition-food-family.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is

provided for information purposes only.