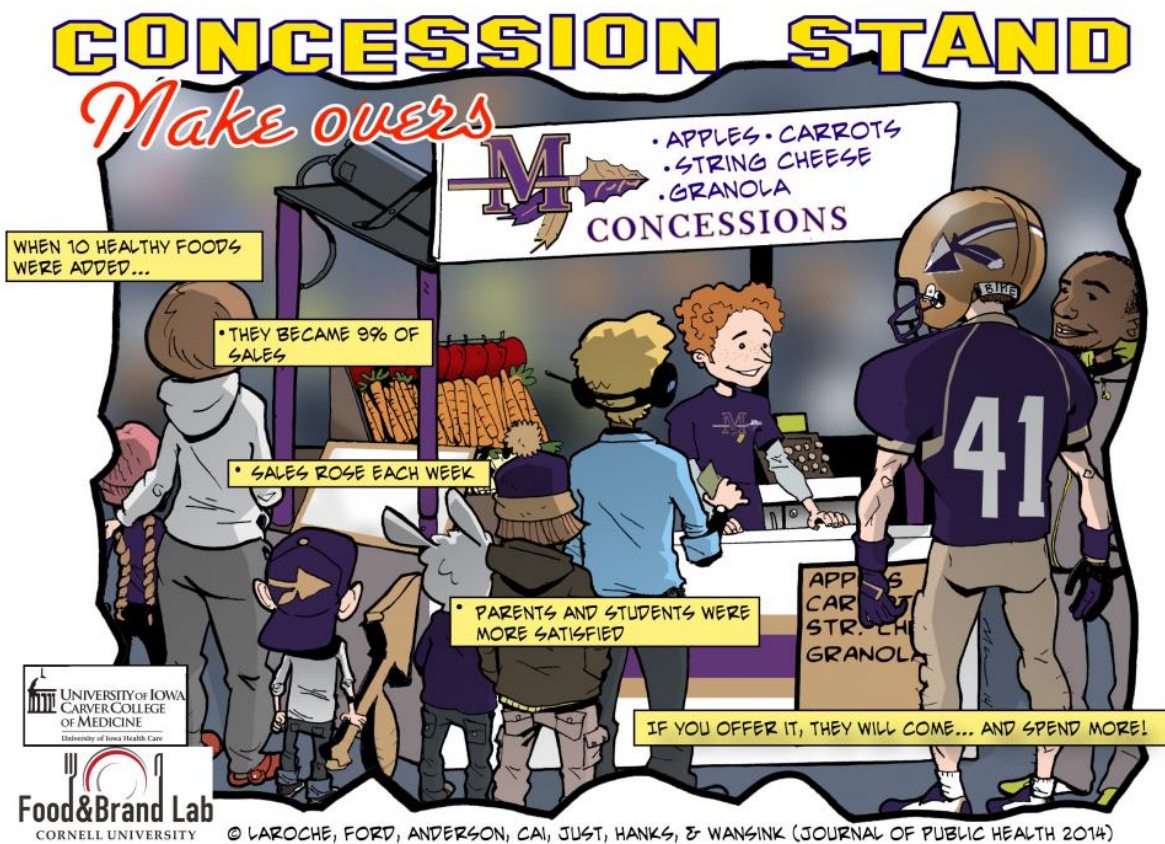


Healthy concession stand makeovers are a game changer

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Concession stands at school sporting events are often overlooked by those advocating for healthy school food. However, a new study highlights how concession stands can benefit from adding on healthy items.

"We found that an average of 77% of [students](#) purchased [healthier foods](#) when they were available and that revenue also increased when a variety of healthy items were available" says co-author Brian Wansink, PhD, Professor and Director of the Cornell Food and Brand Lab, "This a game changer for both schools and healthier students."

In 2014, researchers from the University of Iowa and Cornell University teamed up with a booster club president in charge of running the concession stand at a large high [school](#) to publish their findings on how the addition of healthy items to the school concession stand impacted sales. They found that the addition of 8 new healthy items, which complied with the USDA Smart Snacks guidelines, accounted for 9% of concession stand sales. Overall sales also increased by 4%.

"While these findings were positive," says co-author Helena Laroche, MD, of the University of Iowa, "We really wanted to know how students felt about the change, so we conducted a follow-up survey to gauge their satisfaction."

314 students responded to the survey, which asked them to indicate whether the availability of healthy foods was important to them or not. The researchers split the survey responses based on the students' answer to this question and found that both groups purchased healthier foods and were more satisfied with the offerings. Among those who valued the availability of healthy items, 79% reported purchasing at least one new healthy item. Of those who did not believe it was important to offer healthy foods, almost as many 76% reported purchasing at least one healthy item during the school year. Furthermore, the latter group

indicated being more satisfied with the variety of foods offered and the former more satisfied with the healthfulness and taste.

The researchers stress the importance of sending students a consistent message that health is important by offering healthy items wherever food is offered or sold. "Selling healthy foods at concession stands turns out to be a win-win," says co-author David Just, PhD, of Cornell University, "Students are more satisfied and the bottom line improves."

More information: Helena H. Laroche et al, Healthy Concessions: High School Students' Responses to Healthy Concession Stand Changes, *Journal of School Health* (2017). [DOI: 10.1111/josh.12472](https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.12472)

Provided by Cornell Food & Brand Lab

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