

School nutrition programs slow BMI gains in children

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(HealthDay)—Body mass index (BMI) increases in middle school students can be limited by school-based nutrition policies but not by physical activity policies, according to a study published in the January issue of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.

Jeannette R. Ickovics, Ph.D., from the Yale School of Public Health in New Haven, Connecticut, and colleagues assessed the effectiveness of implementing school-based nutrition and [physical activity](#) policies (e.g., alternatives to food-based rewards/celebrations and opportunities for physical activity during/after school) on student BMI trajectories at 12 randomly selected schools in an urban district. Students were followed for three years during [middle school](#) (2011 to 2015; 595 students).

The researchers found that students at schools randomly assigned to receive support for nutrition policy implementation had healthier BMI trajectories over time. The magnitude of improvement was greater over time, with cumulatively significant effects three years postintervention. Students at schools randomly assigned to receive the nutrition intervention had an increase in BMI percentile of

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