

2009 update to WIC cost-effective for reducing childhood obesity

January 23 2024, by Elana Gotkine



The 2009 update to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) was estimated to be cost-effective for preventing childhood obesity, according to a study published online Jan. 23 in *Pediatrics*.

Erica L. Kenney, Sc.D., M.P.H., from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in Boston, and colleagues estimated the impact of the 2009 WIC food package change on [obesity risk](#) for participating children aged 2 to 4 years from 2010 through 2019. The cases of obesity prevented in 2019 and [costs](#) per quality-adjusted-life year gained were estimated using microsimulation models.

The researchers found that an estimated 14.0 million U.S. children aged 2 to 4 years were reached by the updated WIC nutrition standards from 2010 through 2019. An estimated 62,700 cases of [childhood obesity](#) were prevented in 2019, all of which involved children from households with low incomes, thereby improving health equity. Per quality life-year gained, the update was estimated to cost \$10,600. More than twice as many cases of childhood obesity would have been prevented if WIC had reached all eligible children.

"The WIC 2009 food package change is estimated to have reduced childhood obesity for children in households with low income and to be highly cost-effective while improving health equity," the authors write. "WIC's beneficial impact could be expanded by identifying strategies to increase enrollment and improve retention in the program."

More information: Erica L. Kenney et al, Cost-effectiveness of Improved WIC Food Package for Preventing Childhood Obesity, *Pediatrics* (2024). [DOI: 10.1542/peds.2023-063182](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2023-063182)

Copyright © 2024 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

Citation: 2009 update to WIC cost-effective for reducing childhood obesity (2024, January 23) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-01-wic-effective-childhood-obesity.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.