

Indicators of Diet Quality, Nutrition, and Health for Americans by Program Participation Status

Client: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service

Overview

The Food and Nutrition Service's nutrition assistance programs seek to increase food security and reduce hunger and obesity through access to affordable healthy food and nutrition education. This study is the fourth in a series to examine the relationship between diet quality and participation in three such programs: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The SNAP portion of the study also examines (1) how outcomes vary between SNAP participants and a matched sample of income-eligible nonparticipants; and (2) how outcomes vary among individuals who participate in multiple nutrition assistance programs (SNAP plus WIC or SNAP plus NSLP), participate only in SNAP, or are eligible but do not participate.

Our team used three waves of National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) data to examine the relationship between food



assistance program participation and two types of measures: (1) measures of dietary intake assessment (e.g., diet quality, nutrient intakes, food consumption patterns) and (2) measures of health status (e.g., overweight and obesity, body composition, blood pressure, selected blood biomarkers and biochemical indicators). Specifically, our research was designed to address the following study objectives:

- For all Americans, assess overall diet quality and compare selected measures of nutrition and health with recommended values.
- Compare overall diet quality, nutrition, and health of program participants with those who are income eligible but do not participate and those who have higher incomes.
- Compare selected measures of overall diet quality, nutrition, and health between program participants and matched income-eligible nonparticipants.

Using three waves of NHANES data, the Insight team calculated descriptive statistics and standard regression-adjusted estimates to compare indicators of diet quality, nutrition, and health among SNAP, WIC, and NSLP program participants with both income-eligible nonparticipants and those who have higher incomes. Multivariable regression techniques were employed to examine associations between program participation and these outcomes.

Products

Three final reports (for SNAP, WIC, and NSLP)