

Research Rundown

Article:

Does the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) make a difference? A comparison of nutrient content of home and SFSP lunches consumed by West Virginia children.

What did this study examine?

The purpose of this study was to describe and compare the nutritional content of lunches consumed at home with lunches consumed at SFSP sites. The following were measured to assess nutrient profile during the study:

- Protein
- Vitamin A
- Calcium
- Cholesterol
- Fiber
- Vitamin C

How was the data collected?

The nutritional content was evaluated via 24-hour recalls using a standard protocol and food models to help estimate portion size.

What participants were assessed?

35 children ages nine through twelve years who met the criteria of having one home lunch and one SFSP lunch who come from a low-income household.

What nutritional standards were used?

The Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) and Dietary Guidelines were used to evaluate nutritional quality.

Key Findings:

- 1** Both lunch sources reported **protein standard met**, however the mean protein intakes for children consuming SFSP lunches were **significantly higher** than home lunches.
- 2** Mean fiber intake for children consuming SFSP lunches was **significantly higher** due to the **greater intake** of fruits, vegetables, and beans from SFSP meals.
- 3** **No significant difference** in mean lunch vitamin C levels, however SFSP lunches **provided more calcium and vitamin A** than home lunches.

This study provides documentation that SFSP lunches provide better nutritional quality than home for children during the summer months. Overall, the children who consumed SFSP lunches received meals with a better general nutrient profile, greater variety of foods, and higher fiber content.

Put it into practice!

- Get creative! Promote your Summer Food Service Program to all your students and highlight how summer meals keep students healthy and strong!
- Go above and beyond current requirements by serving a variety of fruits, vegetables, and beans to continue to amp up the fiber content of your meals.
- Aim to increase foods with vitamin C to meet (or exceed) the nutritional standards by featuring delicious produce items like strawberries, pineapple, and kiwis!
- Encourage students to get excited about lunchtime via social media posts, school announcements, newsletters, and more!

Reference:

Stuhldreher, W. L., & Bowen, E. P. (2001). Does the summer food service program (SFSP) make a difference? A comparison of nutrient content of home and SFSP lunches consumed by west virginia children. *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences*, 93(1), 54-58. Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/does-summer-food-service-program-sfsp-make/docview/218170051/se-2>



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