

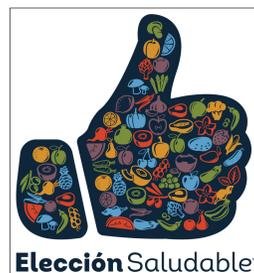
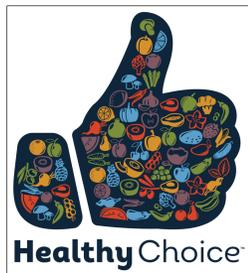
Thumbs Up for Healthy Choices: Making the Healthy Choice, the Easy Choice in Utah's Food Pantries.

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INTRODUCTION

Food pantry users are often assumed to have poor diet quality.^{1,2} Identifying effective strategies that increase the selection of healthy foods by pantry users may help improve their dietary intake.^{3,4} Utah's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) developed the Thumbs Up for Healthy Choices program which aims to make the healthy choice, the easy choice in pantries. Thumbs Up for Healthy Choices uses nudge strategies including shelf signs, recipe cards, banners, and grocery cart signs to increase the visibility of healthy options. The objective of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Thumbs Up for Healthy Choices program on food pantry users' selection and use of targeted foods.



Thumbs for Healthy Choices Shelf Talkers

METHODS

- A convenience sample of 457 food pantry users in 6-urban Utah food pantries were surveyed.
- Participants were asked about their familiarity with the Thumbs Up program, barriers to making healthy choices, selection of promoted items, use of foods and recipes at home, as well as the impact of the program on dietary intake.
- Frequencies and descriptive statistics were analyzed.
- Chi-square associations were used to identify relationships between demographic characteristics and program impact.
- Logistic regression was used to analyze the effect of exposure on program impacts.

MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES JUST GOT EASIER!

Look for the Thumbs Up sign to find foods that are:

HIGH IN: Vitamins, Minerals, Fiber

LOW IN: Sodium, Added sugar, Saturated and trans-fats

EXTENSION UtahStateUniversity FOOD \$ENSE SNAP-ED

Thumbs for Healthy Choices Banner and Grocery Cart Sign

RESULTS

- The majority of participants were non-Hispanic, white females.
- 84% of respondents agree/strongly agree that Thumbs Up makes the healthy choice, the easy choice.
- 67% of respondents agree/strongly agree they eat healthier since Thumbs Up was implemented.
- Hispanics were more likely to report healthier eating for themselves and their families than non-Hispanics ($P=.002$, $P=.001$).
- After controlling for age, ethnicity, and gender, program exposure was significantly associated with using targeted foods at home ($P<.001$) and selecting foods with Thumbs Up signs ($P=.002$).

Logistic Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Responses to Program Impact Questions (n=195)						
Impact	Did use Thumbs Up foods at home		Selected foods with Thumbs Up signs		Prepared Thumbs Up recipes at home	
	OR (95% CI)	P value	OR (95% CI)	P value	OR (95% CI)	P value
Gender	1.103 (.479-2.540)	.82	.864 (.393-1.898)	.72	1.365 (.613-3.040)	.45
Age	1.284 (.552-2.989)	.56	.665 (.300-1.474)	.32	.605 (.267-1.372)	.23
Ethnicity	1.409 (.660-3.008)	.38	1.561 (.758-3.215)	.28	1.353 (.650-2.817)	.42
Exposure	1.933 (1.394-2.679)	<.001	1.480 (1.148-1.908)	.002	1.644 (1.275-2.210)	<.001

QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS

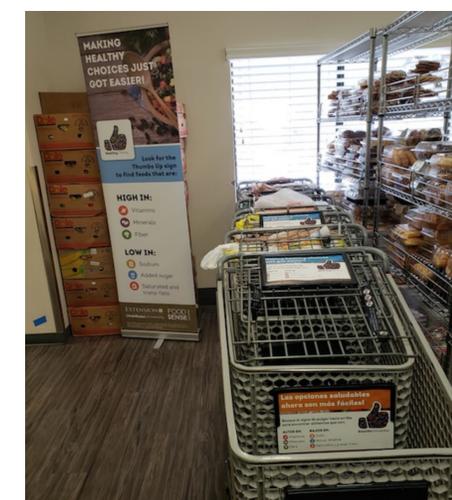
- "It's great to have the reminder [Thumbs Up]. It makes healthy choices much easier, especially if I have questions about the choices available."
- "Thumbs Up makes it easy to locate the food. I know by looking at Thumbs Up I will be getting a healthy choice."
- "Thank you for thinking about our health."

CONCLUSIONS

These results suggest that the Thumbs Up for Healthy Choices program positively impacts food pantry users' selection of targeted healthy foods. Nudge programs, including Thumbs Up, are low-input strategies that may improve food pantry users' selection and consumption of healthy foods. Thumbs Up for Healthy Choices is most effective when implemented as part of a multi-level intervention that also increases the availability of healthy options and improves the nutrition knowledge and skills of food pantry users.

HOW IT WORKS

- Through healthy food drives and community garden donations, healthy food availability is increased.
- Nutrition Education Assistants (NEAs) use the Thumbs Up for Healthy Choices toolkit to identify foods that fit the specific nutrition criteria.
 - Foods are low in sodium, added sugar, trans and saturated fat.
- Shelf tags, banners, posters, and recipe cards are used to help food pantry users identify healthy options within the pantry.
- NEAs prepackage healthy recipe bags that food pantry users can grab and go.
- NEAs have nutrition education booths in waiting areas to 1) teach food pantry users about the Thumbs Up program and 2) provide food pantry users with food samples of nutritious recipes that can be made from food at the pantry.



Pictures of Thumbs Up Nudge Strategies in Food Pantries

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