

GROCERY STORE INITIATIVE TEACHES PEOPLE TO EAT MORE FRUITS AND VEGGIES

Program's taste samples and nutrition advice add an incentive to eat more produce for good health

Public Health Problem

- In South Carolina, few youth or adults eat recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables daily.
- People who eat generous amounts of fruits and vegetables as part of a healthy diet are likely to have a reduced risk of developing serious chronic diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes.

Program

- The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, Clemson University Culinary Science Program and BI-LO grocery stores supported the launch of the Fruits and Veggies—More Matters® national brand with in-store events that made it easy for consumers to taste and buy healthful produce.
- For four months, this pilot program, funded in part by the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant, offered samples of healthy foods prepared by professional and student chefs, recipes, nutrition tips, and displays of suggested portion sizes.
- A volunteer Department of Health and Environmental Control registered dietitian and a professional chef answered customer's questions and offer suggestions.
- Customer surveys about food and nutrition knowledge, usual produce purchasing habits, and an analysis of actual produce purchases of participating customers were conducted before and during the pilot.

Impact

- Produce purchases increased by six percent when compared to purchases made immediately before the pilot program at the Simpsonville, S.C. store.
- BI-LO stores made a commitment to support additional events throughout the state with advertising, customer incentives to take part in the program, and provision of recipe ingredients for taste sampling.
- When kale soup samples were offered, for example, customers later reported their families “ate every bite of it” and produce department staff noted that sales of kale were higher than usual that day.

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