How Much Does a SNAP Rebate Increase Fruit and Vegetable Consumption?

APPAM
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This presentation is the responsibility of the authors. Conclusions do not necessarily reflect the position of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
Outline

• The pilot
• The evaluation design
• Main impact: fruit and vegetable intake
• Mechanism: fruit and vegetable spending
• Local food retail access
• Looking forward
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Healthy Incentives Pilot

3 easy steps to eating better and saving money

Questions? 1-888-987-4487
HIP Intervention

- Piloted in Hampden County, MA
  - November 2011-December 2012

- Financial incentive
  - 30% incentive on SNAP purchases of Targeted Fruits and Vegetables (TFV)
  - Incentive in the form of additional SNAP benefits

- Targeted fruits and vegetables:
  Same as for WIC fruit and vegetable vouchers; i.e.,
  - Fresh, frozen, canned, dried
  - No added sugar, salt, oils (with some exceptions)
  - Excludes juice, white potatoes, mature legumes
Only Some TFV Spending Earned Incentives

- SNAP spending
  - Not cash or WIC vouchers

- Spent in retailers participating in HIP
  - Participating retailers accounted for 60% of all SNAP redemptions

- Subject to a cap
  - $60 per month
  - Few households reached cap
Mechanisms for Affecting Outcomes

- Strong financial incentive
- Implicit fruit and vegetable promotion—because of incentive
- Explicit fruit and vegetable promotion—through notification and training materials
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Evaluation of the Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP):
Final Report

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Random Assignment Design

Data Collection Activities

Administrative Data
SNAP casefiles & EBT transactions July 2001 (sample selection); November 2011–December 2012

Individual Survey Data
Round 1
August–December 2011
Round 2
(24-hour dietary recall interview) March–July 2012
Round 3
(24-hour dietary recall interview) August–November 2012

Sample Design

Hampden County, MA
55,095 SNAP cases

Random Assignment

Primary HIP Population
7,500 cases
9,286 adults

Stratified Random Sample
2,538 adults sampled
1,388 interviews completed

1,388 adults sampled
1,004 interviews completed

1,004 adults sampled
769 interviews completed

Convenience Sample
~30 adults (3 groups of ~10 adults)

Non-HIP SNAP Population
47,595 cases
59,652 adults

Stratified Random Sample
2,538 adults sampled
1,396 interviews completed

1,396 adults sampled
994 interviews completed

994 adults sampled
751 interviews completed
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Impacts on TFV

Impact = 0.24*** cup-equivalents per day; 26% difference

Cup-Equivalents

1.15 cup-equivalents per day

0.91 cup-equivalents per day

HIP group

Non-HIP group

*p<0.10; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Impacts on Total Fruits & Vegetables

Impact = 0.32*** cup-equivalents per day; 14% difference

*p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01
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• **Mechanism: fruit and vegetable spending**
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Monthly SNAP Purchases by HIP participants
(EBT Data, March to October, 2012)

Non-participating retailers, $125.88
Participating retailers: $135.71

Total monthly SNAP purchases: $261.59
Monthly SNAP Purchases by HIP participants (EBT Data, March to October, 2012)

Non-participating retailers, $125.88

Participating retailers: $135.71

TFV: $12.18

Non-TFV: $123.53

Total monthly SNAP purchases: $261.59
Monthly SNAP Purchases by HIP participants
(EBT Data, March to October, 2012)

- Non-participating retailers, $125.88
- Participating retailers: $135.71
- Non-TFV: $123.53
- TFV: $12.18

Total monthly SNAP purchases: $261.59

Incentives earned: $3.65
Four Ways that HIP Households Purchased Fruits and Vegetables

- 36% of purchases were made in non-qualifying FV
- 18% were made in HIP stores
- 18% were made in non-HIP stores
- 28% were cash purchases
Monthly Purchases of Fruits and Vegetables by HIP Participants

TFV spending with SNAP benefits in participating supermarkets (EBT data)

- HIP group: $12.05
- Non-HIP group: $10.86

Impact = $1.19***

All fruit and vegetable purchases (survey data)

- HIP group: $78.17
- Non-HIP group: $72.02

Impact = $6.15**

*p<0.10; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
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TFV Purchases in Participating Supermarkets, by Pre-Implementation Shopping Behavior

Impact of HIP is the same for both groups of participants.

*Impact = $1.23***

$14.44

Pre-HIP participating store shoppers

$13.21

HIP group

$9.50

Pre-HIP non-participating store shoppers

$7.71

Non-HIP group

*p<0.10; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Spatial Analysis

Legend
- 1 Dot = 5 Households
- SNAP Recipient
- Town Borders

Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP) Spatial Analysis

Draft

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Further Interest in Healthy Incentives

- Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentives (FINI)
- Council of Economic Advisers
- National Hunger Commission
- White House Conversation on Child Hunger in America