



## Pricing Effects on Food Choices

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 Retrieved on March 23, 2007 from the Journal of Nutrition Website:  
<http://jn.nutrition.org/cgi/content/full/133/3/841S>

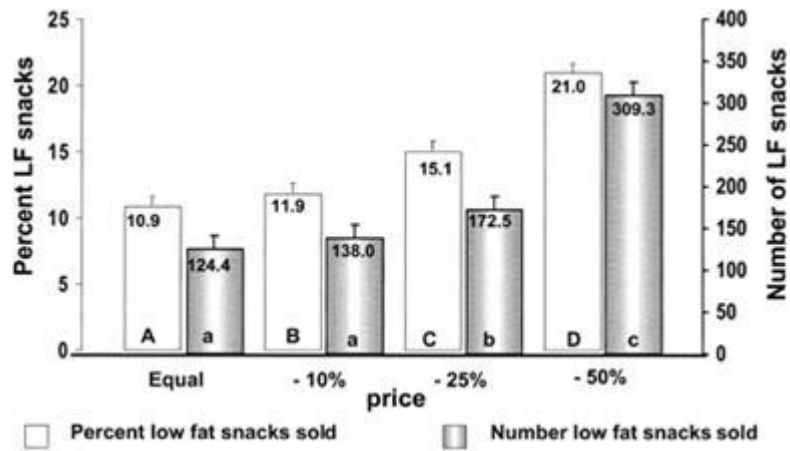
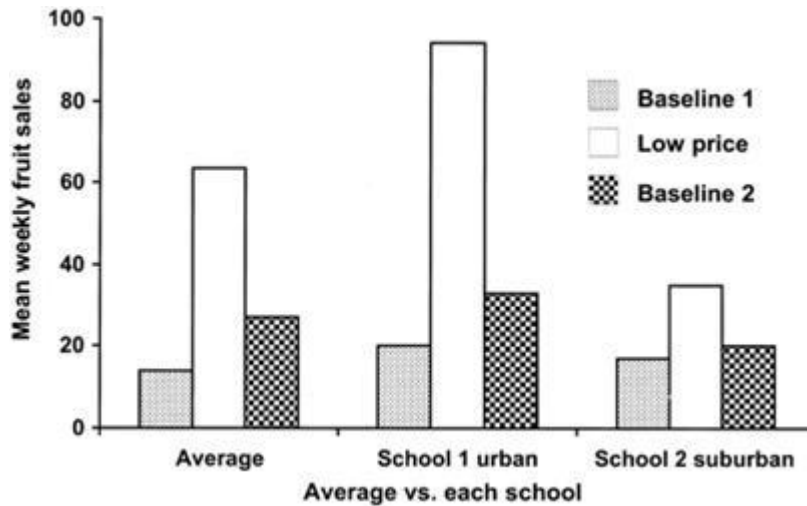
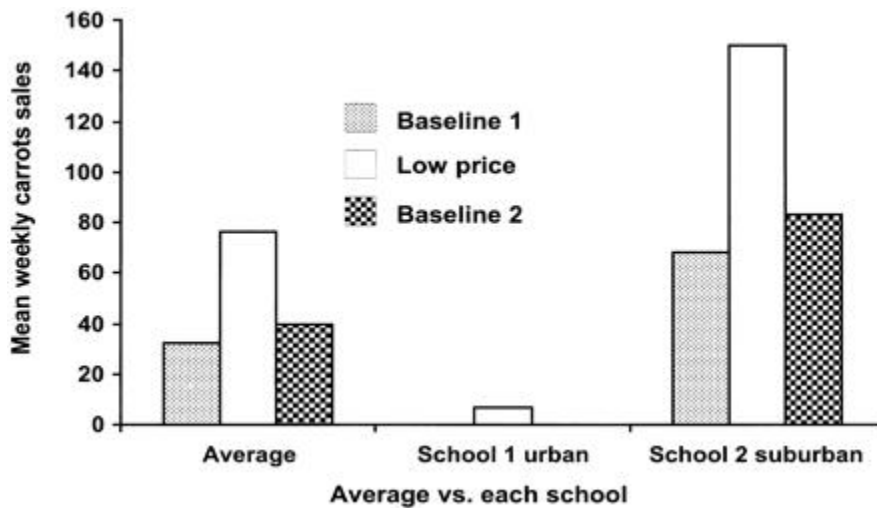


FIGURE 1 Low-fat snack sales as a function of price





**FIGURE 2** Fruit sales as a function of price.  
**FIGURE 3** Carrot sales as a function of price.

Individual dietary choices are primarily influenced by such considerations as taste, cost, convenience and nutritional value of foods. The current obesity epidemic has been linked to excessive consumption of added sugars and fat, as well as to sedentary lifestyles. Fat and sugar provide dietary energy at very low cost. Food pricing and marketing practices are therefore an essential component of the eating environment. Recent studies have applied economic theories to changing dietary behavior. Price reduction strategies promote the choice of targeted foods by lowering their cost relative to alternative food choices. Two community-based intervention studies used price reductions to promote the increased purchase of targeted foods. The first study examined lower prices and point-of-purchase promotion on sales of lower fat vending machine snacks in 12 work sites and 12 secondary schools. Price reductions of 10%, 25% and 50% on lower fat snacks resulted in an increase in sales of 9%, 39% and 93%, respectively, compared with usual price conditions. The second study examined the impact of a 50% price reduction on fresh fruit and baby carrots in two secondary school cafeterias. Compared with usual price conditions, price reductions resulted in a four-fold increase in fresh fruit sales and a two-fold increase in baby carrot sales. Sales returned to baseline levels with the reinstatement of usual prices. Both studies demonstrate that price reductions are an effective strategy to increase the purchase of more healthful foods in community-based settings such as work sites and schools. Results were generalizable across various food types and populations. Reducing prices on healthful foods is a public health strategy that should be implemented through policy initiatives and industry collaborations.

