



United States Department of Agriculture

# Helping (Nudging) Students to Eat Healthier & Reduce Wasted Food



# Recess **BEFORE** lunch

- Students ate **54%** more fruits & vegetables
- Food waste reduced by **40%**

(Cornell University Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Program)



**EXTEND** lunch from 20 to

**30 minutes**

More time meant students more likely to select fruit  
(57% vs 44%)

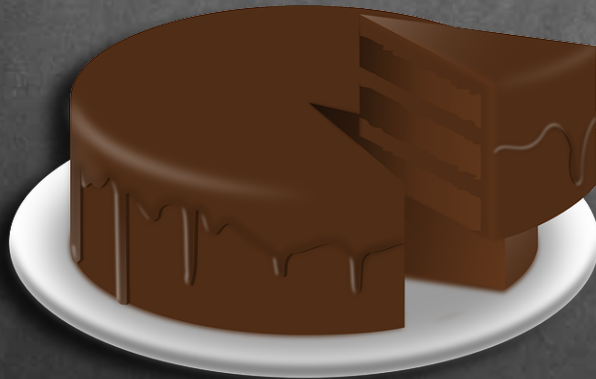
- Less time for lunch resulted in
  - 13% more entrée waste
  - 12% more vegetable waste
  - 10% more milk waste

(Project Bread & Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health)



3-5 minutes of **REVIEW TIME** to study  
menu before lunch

- People have problems with self-control when choosing food
- Distractions or time constraints lead to emotional choices
  - Chocolate cake over fruit salad (Shiv & Fedorikhin - *Journal of Consumer Research*)
  - Excess food selection



## Use Offer Versus Serve (OVS) option

- Students are offered 5 food components, but only need to select 3 to make it a reimbursable meal.
  - One of the selected items must be a fruit or vegetable
  - Milk **DOES NOT** need to be selected



# Use Offer Versus Serve (OVS) option

- Milk **DOES NOT** need to be selected
- Offering cups of water instead can reduce milk waste



Notice the ring  
for water cup

# Involving students in

• **MENU PLANNING** Chefs Move to Schools event lead to **16%** overall consumption of vegetables

• Cooking Up Change competition

- 250 student chefs
- 1.1 million student-designed meals served



Twisted Texas Cabbage & Collard Greens

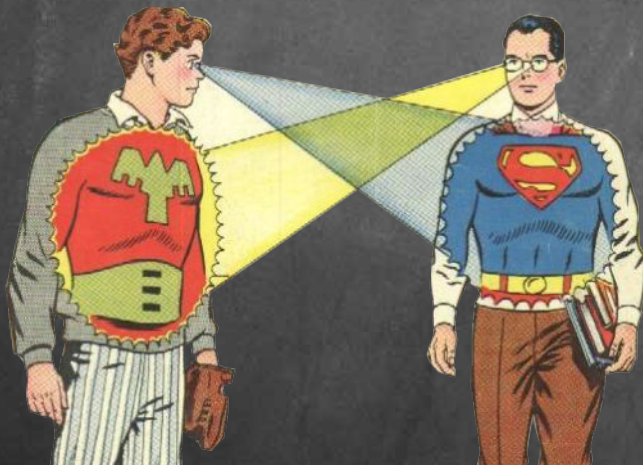
Cowboy Cajun Chicken Lollipop



Pineapple Tart

# CREATIVE NAMES for vegetables and dishes

- In 1928, canned **spinach** was third favorite food of children (behind ice cream & turkey)



- Labeling carrots as **X-Ray Vision Carrots** doubled their consumption

(Cornell University Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Program)



DISPLAY those fun names outside the cafeteria



TODAY'S LUNCH  
INCLUDES  
**IRONMAN SPINACH**

## SLICING fruits

- Slicing apples resulted in 73% increase in number of students who ate more than half of their apple
    - With use of slicer, each apple took 3-4 seconds to slice
    - Slicer costs \$200
- (Cornell University Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Program)



# Giving students more healthy choices

- When given only a choice of carrots, 69% of students ate them. When given a choice between carrots & celery, 91% of students who chose carrots ate them.

(Cornell University Center for Behavioral and Economic Research in Child Nutrition Program)



# Implement a **food recovery**

## **program**

- Involve students in recovering, cataloging, & delivering wholesome, excess food to local food pantry or soup kitchen
- Students can learn about food insecurity in their own community & learn to value food



# Contact Information

Jimmy Nguyen  
USDA Food and Nutrition  
Service

[Jimmy.nguyen@fns.usda.  
gov](mailto:Jimmy.nguyen@fns.usda.gov)

703-305-2530