



LimeTree Camp social media postings (2019-2020)

Rebecca Laes-Kushner

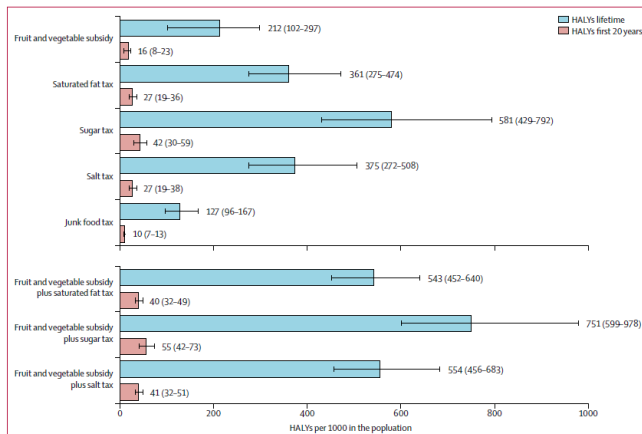


Figure 1: Health gain in HALYs per 1000 people for tax and subsidy policies at a 0% discount rate
Data are n (95% uncertainty interval). HALYs=health-adjusted life-years.

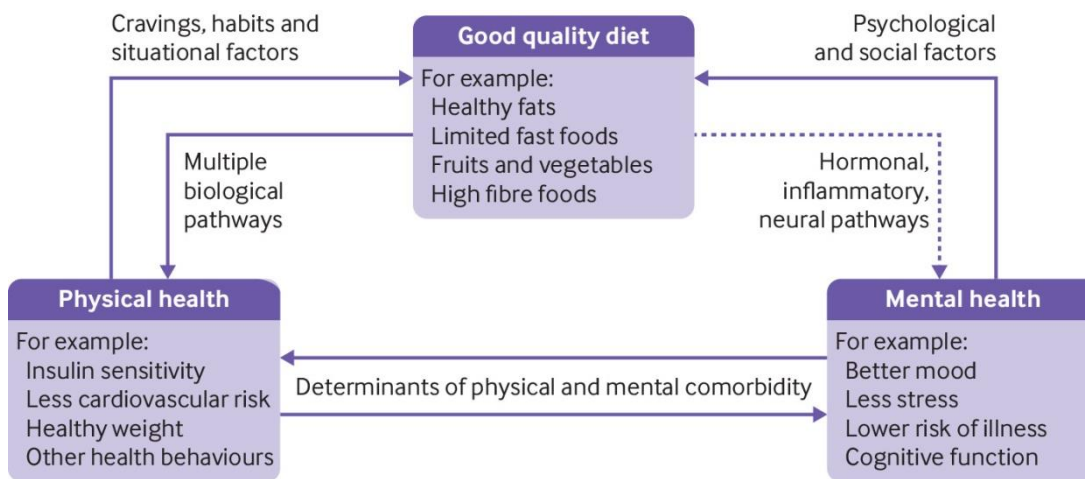
What are the health benefits of taxing unhealthy foods and subsidizing healthy items? A research study on the health and cost impacts of food taxes in New Zealand, as a high-income country, showed health gains for both junk food taxes and produce subsidies as well as a modest savings in health expenditures

The study looked at the effects of a 20% fruit and vegetable subsidy, taxes for saturated fat, salt and sugar, and an 8% junk food tax. Researchers then modeled changes to food purchases and subsequent health status as defined by changes in health-adjusted life years (HALYs).

Clear health gains, as defined by HALYs per 1000 people, were found for all the financial measures for the targeted foods: the impact of the junk food tax was 127 HALYs, for the produce subsidy 212, for the sugar tax 581 and for the salt tax 375.

The study also found that although food substitution does occur, such as replacing sugary foods with foods high in saturated fat, nevertheless net health gains remain. In particular, a reduction in energy-dense foods led to lower BMIs and thus lower rates of diabetes.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667\(20\)30116-X/fulltext?dgcid=raven_jbs_etoc_email](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(20)30116-X/fulltext?dgcid=raven_jbs_etoc_email)



The relationship between diet, physical and mental health is complex. Studies have shown a Mediterranean diet, which highlights fruit, vegetables, nuts & legumes and limits red meat, is associated with a reduced risk of depression.

Similarly, research shows people whose diets contain more high glycemic index foods, such as refined carbohydrates and sugar, have a higher incidence of depression. These diets are also a risk factor for physical health issues such as obesity and diabetes, which themselves can lead to depression.

High-calorie meals and high-saturated fat foods stimulate the immune system and are linked to chronic inflammation, which can have negative effects on brain health. The Mediterranean diet, in contrast, contains nutritious foods with anti-inflammatory properties, such as omega-3 fats, which can reduce markers of inflammation.

Depression has also been linked to higher inflammation; anti-inflammatory drugs can reduce depressive symptoms. But the causal factor in the relationship is not clear because people who are depressed often turn to high-fat, high-carbohydrate comfort foods.

More research is needed to understand how diet and nutrition influence the brain and how dietary interventions can improve mental health.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/369/bmj.m2382>

A healthy childhood diet helps protect against non-communicable diseases (#NCDs). According to the WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (#COSI), almost one-third of children are overweight while others face #undernutrition and #malnutrition.

A recent study looked at the diets of 132,000 children age 6-9 years in 23 European and Central Asian countries. Based on parental questionnaires, researchers found only 23% ate fresh vegetables daily, with 8% consuming it less than once a week or never, and 10% had sweets and soft drinks daily. Diets differed widely by country: 73% of children in Italy ate fruit daily versus only 19% in Lithuania, while almost no children in Denmark ate savory snacks daily but over 20% did in Bulgaria.

The study highlights the need to create healthy food environments, at home and in and around schools. Schools can offer students fresh fruits and vegetables and water instead of soda, as well as teach nutrition education. Governments can use fiscal incentives to promote better #nutrition and make nutritious food #affordable, as well as restrict the marketing of unhealthy food to children, in particular online, per #WHO recommendations.

Parents and caretakers also need to be engaged so they pack healthy lunches, provide appropriate portion sizes and give children nutritious snacks.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32824588/>



The solution to picky eating isn't forcing children to clean their plates or bribing them with dessert. A new study in the journal *Pediatrics* found picky eaters may stay picky over time. The study followed children from low-income families from 4 to 9 years of age and found 29% of kids were persistently low-picky; they ate whatever their parents gave them. Over half (57%) stayed medium-picky, meaning they sometimes were willing to try new food. The final 14% were persistently high-picky, refusing vegetables and new foods.

The study found that pressure from parents did not decrease a children's pickiness. Experts explain parents should respect their children's decision to reject certain foods or only eat a few favorite dishes.

Parents should introduce children to a variety of foods as early as possible, ideally before they are toddlers. Involving toddlers and children in food preparation will help waken their curiosity and willingness to try new foods. Parents can also put a small portion of a new food on a child's plate to try without pressure.

Ensuring mealtimes have a positive and relaxed atmosphere will promote healthy eating habits.

https://eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2020-05/mm-u-scm051920.php