

Retail initiatives to improve the healthiness of food environments in rural, regional and remote communities.

Review of 21 studies across 3 countries:

Supermarkets, restaurants, and community settings:

Strategies included education for businesses, consumers, and broader communities, marketing strategies to promote healthy foods, and initiatives to improve the availability of health foods.



Key messages/ positive findings

- Initiatives were able to increase stocking, purchasing and consumption of healthy foods, as well as staff knowledge and appreciation of health foods
- The most effective programs tended to be those which used multiple strategies, and included contributions from community members in the study design
- More research on consumer behaviour and dietary intake is needed as this often wasn't measured



Negative findings

While price discounts for fruits and vegetables led to more of these items being purchased, this was sometimes accompanied by an increase in the purchase of unhealthy items (such as sugar sweetened drinks) with the money that was saved.

Providing vouchers for fruit and vegetables was not an effective way to increase purchasing – this strategy led to a 7% decrease in the purchase of fruit, no change in the purchase of vegetables, and the redemption of vouchers was low (less than 30%)

Supermarket/store settings:

Effective strategies include marketing, recipe cards, and staff training. Outcomes include sales of healthy foods, variety of healthy foods available and consumer behaviour (purchasing and eating healthy foods).



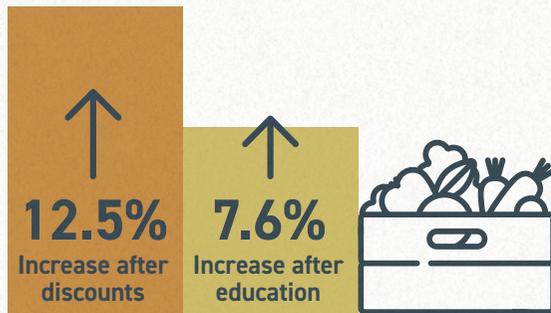
Limitations

Findings differed between studies, and there weren't enough studies to get clarity. E.g. while two studies found that price decreases were associated with an increase in the purchasing of fruit and vegetables, another study found that a natural decrease in the price of fruit and vegetables over a 26-year period led to no notable change in sales or diet quality.

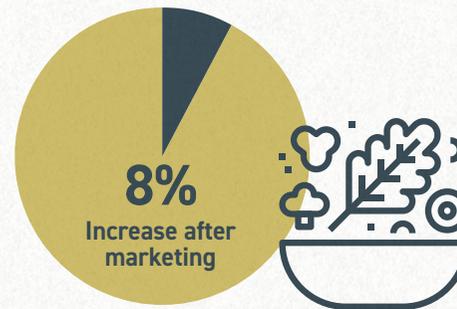
AUTHORS: Laura V Alston^{1,2}, Kristy A Bolton³, Jill Whelan¹, Erica Reeve¹, Anna Wong Shee^{2,4}, Jennifer Browne¹, Troy Walker¹, Vincent L Versace², Steven Allender¹, Melanie Nichols¹, Kathryn Backholer¹.

Retail initiatives statistics

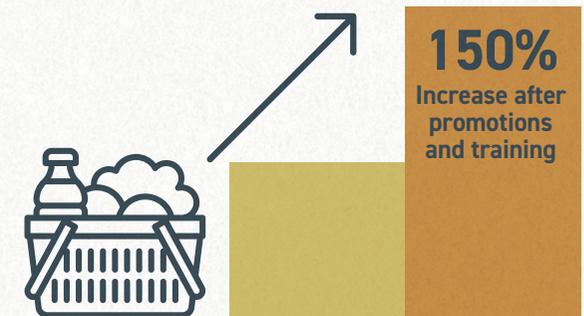
Purchasing of fruit and vegetables increased by **12.5%** following price discounts, and **7.6%** following consumer education



Marketing to consumers (including recipe cards) led to an increase of **8%** in fruit and vegetable purchasing



A combination of promoting healthy produce and training staff (to maintain freshness of produce), increased the purchasing of healthy produce by **150%**



The provision of recipe cards led to an almost three-fold increase in the likelihood of customers purchasing fruit and vegetables **2-3 times per week**



Providing incentives to store owners increased the range of healthy foods available **40%** increase in the **stocking of healthy foods** in rural stores and **20%** increase in variety



AFFILIATIONS: 1) Global Obesity Centre, Institute for Health Transformation, Deakin University, Geelong, VIC. 2) Deakin Rural Health, Deakin University, Geelong And Warrnambool, VIC. 3) Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition, Deakin University, Geelong, VIC. 4) Ballarat Health Services, Ballarat, VIC.

Supporting rural health and medical research for a stronger and healthier rural Australia | spinifexnetwork.com.au

