

South Dakota Consumer Research Report

Focus Group & Grocer Interview Summaries
Regarding Fruit & Vegetables



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary..... i

Moderator’s Guide..... ii

Report #1..... 1

 Sioux Falls A

 Sioux Falls B

 Rapid City A

 Rapid City B

Report #2..... 10

 One-On-One On-Site Interviews with South Dakota Grocers

Report #3..... 18

 Rapid City Facebook Users A

 Rapid City Facebook Users B

Report #4..... 26

 American Indian group

Appendix A

 Sample Creative

Appendix B

 Grocery Store Locations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research Objective

There is an existing body of nationally based surveillance data pointing to fruit and vegetable consumption patterns which identifies South Dakota as having the lowest percentage of adults consuming vegetables three or more times per day, one of the lowest fruit intake percentages, as well as a downward trend over the last ten years. A small amount of South Dakota specific formative assessment verifies these findings to some extent, but does not give much insight as to why South Dakota ranks so low.

The purpose of the consumer research summarized herein is to assist in the identification specific resistance points among South Dakotans and be a springboard for the development of strategies to improve the consumption of fruits and vegetables in South Dakota.

Overview & Rationale

The national research indicates a somewhat predictable pattern. Healthy diets are more likely to be found among upper income and well-educated populations with access to a better variety of food and more competitive shopping opportunities, while among those who are poor, rural, and less well educated, fruit and vegetable intake is lower and the incidence of diabetes, obesity, and other diet-related problems is higher. Given the predominately rural geography and lower than average household income levels, South Dakotans may face some unique challenges not only in terms of access and availability, but also in terms of overall education, and quite simply, day to day familiarity with fruit and vegetables as our cultural habits with regard to eating may be reflective of the predominately grain based crops grown here combined with a limited growing season.

A series of eight focus groups were conducted with a variety of South Dakota audiences designed to include a cross section of rural and metropolitan groups of both low and middle income levels from both sides of the state. One session was comprised of American Indians, and one session was designed to collect data from grocers across the state.

Please note that the primary purpose of focus group research is to get a sense of some of the emotional triggers and value satisfactions participants have with regard to consumption of fruit and vegetables. As with all focus group sessions, a list of questions was used as a guide for information gathering, yet the conversation was fluid and the exact number of questions asked was at the discretion of the moderator. Please see the Moderator's Guide used for these sessions on the following page.

As a second component to the initial focus group research outlined in this report, a statewide consumer poll has also been developed to allow for cross reference of the attitudes, habits, and patterns with regard to fruit and vegetable consumption in South Dakota.

MODERATOR'S GUIDE

Fruit and Vegetable Initiative

I. Introduction

- A. Explanation of focus group technique
- B. Introduction of topic to be discussed
- C. Introduction of participants—name, occupation, household composition (number of adults; children by age)

II. Grocery Shopping Patterns

- A. How often do you shop for groceries?
- B. What determines how often you shop?
- C. Do you do all your shopping at one place? Why do you shop there?
- D. If more than one, how do you decide where to shop?

III. Meal Preparation (For each, probe for mention of fruits, vegetables, grain, meat, dairy, snack foods, and beverages).

- A. What is your typical breakfast? Does it differ by family member?
- B. Is the mid-day meal served at home? If not, where? What is a typical meal?
- C. Does your family eat together at supper time? What is a typical meal?

IV. Specific Inquiry: Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables

- A. Why is it important to have sufficient fruits and vegetables in the diet?
- B. What quantity per day (servings) is recommended?
- C. What barriers, if any, exist to make it less likely that minimal level will be reached?

V. Probes and Elaboration

- A. Availability – seasonal variations, finding fresh produce, keeping it fresh
- B. Cost – high cost even when in season, cost of fresh, frozen and canned items
- C. Family member food preferences
- D. Preparation time
- E. Recipe complexity, unfamiliarity with ways to prepare

VI. Suggestions for Counteracting Each Deterrent Listed Above

VII. Imagine you are all members of a committee convened to come up with a program designed to encourage South Dakotans to include more fruits and vegetables in their diet. What would the program look like? What messages would you try to get across to people in print, on television or some other way?

(Moderator asks group to appoint a chairperson, instructs them to spend ten minutes exchanging ideas, and leaves to consult with viewers on other side of the mirror.)

VIII. De-briefing

- A. What did you come up with? Why do you think it will be effective?
How about you, will you change your eating habits and those of other family members after this discussion tonight? Why or why not?

PLEASE NOTE: Sample creative was not available for the Sioux Falls focus groups or Facebook users sessions, but was discussed with all other groups during the Probes and Elaboration portion of the interviews.

Research Report #1

Consumer Focus Groups Regarding Fruits and Vegetables

Sioux Falls A & B
Rapid City A & B

Introduction

Government statistics indicate that South Dakota currently ranks near the middle with regard to adult obesity, a condition associated with abnormally high incidence of diabetes, heart attacks, and hypertension. One prominent cause of obesity is poor nutrition—in particular a diet deficient of fruits and vegetables.

A marketing research program has been initiated to explore attitudes and behavior regarding the purchase and consumption of produce. One aspect of the research program involved focus group discussions with consumers in Sioux Falls and Rapid City.

Two group sessions involving eleven or twelve women each were held in the two cities. One group in each city involved people earning a family income less than \$35,000 and/or receiving food stamps. The other group was comprised of women whose families earned between \$35,000 and \$75,000.

Each participant qualified for a group on the basis that she was the principal grocery shopper and meal preparer in the household and had one or more children aged 5 to 18 living at home.

The Sioux Falls group sessions were held in the offices of American Public Opinion on September 22, 2011. Rapid City group sessions took place at the Rushmore Plaza Holiday Inn on October 24, 2011. All groups were moderated by David F. Miller, Ph.D., a marketing psychologist.

A Word of Caution

Focus groups are a qualitative research technique. They are exploratory by nature. They involve small groups of subjects. Questioning does not follow a strict form but rather consists of a wide-ranging dialogue between a trained professional and group participants. The information gathered from such group sessions can provide valuable insights, but findings should be considered as hypotheses to be confirmed by quantitative research such as a public opinion survey.

Grocery Shopping Patterns

We note some variation in shopping patterns, with grocery store visits ranging from twice a week to once a month. On average, people make one main visit per week, picking up the bulk of their grocery needs, supplemented on occasion by a second visit to pick up forgotten items, replenish fast-moving foods, or purchase perishable items such as fruits and vegetables and milk.

Only a few people make one visit a month. One woman plans her menu for the entire month and constructs a shopping list that enables her to get everything she needs in a single trip to the grocery store. Others are not as systematic but still manage to fill their needs by shopping no more than twice a month.

In Sioux Falls, some women reported that they make bulk purchases of certain items at Sam's Club or Walmart because the pricing is attractive. Then they complete their shopping at Hy-Vee.

Meal Consumption Patterns

There was a time when all family members ate meals together, but that is rarely the case these days. Family dining most often occurs at supper time, but even then family members may not all gather at the table at the same time due to differing schedules. For example, a high school student might stay at school for sports practice or music-related activities. The mother will serve the evening meal to the younger children and then have a “second sitting” when the teenager arrives home.

At breakfast time we get the impression of a flurry of activity as each family member prepares for the day’s activities. Mother may concentrate on packing her children’s lunch and wait until they’re out the door before making her own meal. If she has a job outside the home she may grab something to eat on the job, or she may skip that meal altogether. In some households each child is responsible for making his own breakfast, which often consists of whatever can be assembled in the shortest period of time without regard to nutritional value.

In discussing typical breakfast fare, people mention fruits only rarely. Most frequently they mention fruit juice, but this is by no means a common item at the breakfast table. More often, people report serving hot or cold cereal, bread products, and coffee or milk.

Typically lunch is consumed individually rather than as a family. One exception is when the stay-at-home mom serves lunch to her preschoolers while grabbing something for herself. School age children usually eat their meals at school, but not always the cafeteria fare. Many mothers in both cities said they send children off to school with a lunch in their backpack. This was commonplace when the school sent an advance menu to parents. Mother and child would review the menu and the child would, in effect, dictate that nothing on the next day’s menu appealed to him. Whereas some mothers say, in effect, “That’s tough, kid,” others indulge their children’s preferences and prepare a substitute meal. Sometimes it’s a lunchmeat sandwich. Other times it may be more healthful items such as an apple, fruit cup, or yogurt.

Whether at home or at their workplace, many mothers eat a salad that provides the only vegetable content at midday. Some don’t even get a salad, preferring instead to pick up something at a fast-food take-out window.

Dinnertime offers the best opportunity to close in on the target of five servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Some families do in fact include fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables. Too often, though, the evening meal will consist of a pasta dish or bowl of chili. These meals are easy to prepare, they’re popular with family members, they can be made in large quantities to provide for multiple meals – and the ingredients are relatively cheap.

Consumption of fruits and vegetables increases during summer and early fall when these items are in greater supply. But South Dakota’s relatively short growing season means that consumers must pay significantly higher prices for these products when they are grown elsewhere and shipped in. Rather than pay the elevated price, lower income families simply stop buying these products.

Another problem with store-bought vegetables is the hidden cost due to spoilage. In contrast to frozen and canned vegetables, if the fresh vegetables are not consumed rapidly, they will soon become

inedible and will have to be thrown away. This may prompt a second visit to a store during the week to pick up fresher vegetables, but this is inconvenient if the purchase of vegetables is the only reason for scheduling a return trip.

In both cities, several women reported that they maintain their own gardens, growing tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, and carrots. A Sioux Falls woman has what she calls a “salsa garden,” with tomatoes, onions, and two pepper varieties. These home gardens represent a plentiful source of inexpensive, fresh, and nutritious food during the growing months. Another woman who maintains a garden gathers with her friends to stage a big canning operation in her kitchen. They make a social occasion out of it.

In Sioux Falls, several women on food stamps said they are often offered produce that acquaintances have grown in their garden but don’t need for their own table.

Importance of a Healthy Diet

People nod knowingly when they hear that everyone should have at least five servings of fruit and vegetables. Yet many seem to take the attitude that it may be a valid goal but isn’t important enough to influence the diet that their family is used to.

When asked to articulate the reason that adequate portions of fruits and vegetables are important, most are hesitant to venture an opinion. In Rapid City, after the group pondered the question, one woman mentioned that these foods are good sources of vitamins and contribute to one’s energy level. An added benefit, she points out, is that such foods are a good source of fiber and thus keep people “regular.” The link between poor nutrition and obesity does not come quickly to women’s minds. Many do not see that connection at all. If pressed, they acknowledge that foods rich in carbohydrates like pasta and pizza can add pounds, but they are less ready to conclude that substitution of fruits and vegetables for those other products will prevent obesity.

People’s reactions to fruits differ from the way they feel about vegetables. Fruits are an easier sell, perhaps because of their greater sugar content. They taste good whereas vegetables are an acquired taste. One Sioux Falls mother emphasizes the difference by saying that breast-fed babies are accustomed to the slightly sweet taste of mother’s milk and therefore will take more readily to sugary fruit puree than puréed vegetables. She deliberately fed her infant vegetables before introducing fruit so that the child could become accustomed to the taste of vegetables.

Mothers who make conscientious efforts to get children to eat vegetables will use various ploys. For example, one places the vegetables in the section of the plate closest to the child. Another requires her children to try a vegetable twice, at two different meals, before it is no longer required. Other parents resort to bribery: Eat your broccoli or you won’t get a snack.

Mothers resort to sly tricks to get their children to eat vegetables. A Sioux Falls mother adds broccoli to her hamburgers in a ploy that she referred to as “stealth cooking.” A Rapid City mother mixes vegetables into her spaghetti. Another woman casts aside all subtlety. She designates one night a week as vegetable night, whether her family likes it or not.

A Sioux Falls mother finds it amusing that, when she takes her daughter to Burger King, the child asks for apple fries. In truth they are not a fried food but rather raw apples sliced and packaged to look like French fried potatoes. In this instance it appears that the packaging and presentation holds the key to the child's acceptance of this nutritious snack.

In short, many mothers feel that serving vegetables is an obligation—something they OUGHT to do whether or not they or family members like it. It may be a good idea in theory, they seem to say, but they're not totally convinced that it will make a significant difference in their family members' health.

It defies explanation, but we sensed a sharp difference in attitude between the Sioux Falls and Rapid City women. In Sioux Falls it seemed that parents as well as their children shied away from fruits and vegetables. More accurately, they gravitated toward pasta, pizza, and what they themselves termed as "junk food." Women in Rapid City were more health-conscious. They gave the impression of being disturbed at the lack of fruits and vegetables in their family's diet and were genuine in looking for a way to correct the situation.

Two women, one in each city, subscribe to an Internet-based menu planning program. It is actively promoted by Dave Ramsey, a radio personality and Internet based expert in personal finance. The menu program, available at www.e-mealz.com, takes into account the subscriber's menu objectives (gluten-free, vegetarian, low-fat, etc.), the size of the family, and stores in the subscriber's shopping area. It then provides a menu plan, indicating how much the family will spend if purchases take advantage of current prices at Walmart, Safeway, etc. The service costs \$5/week. The two subscribers are confident that cost is more than offset by savings at the check-out counter.

Other Deterrents to Produce Consumption

As noted, women in both cities cite cost and personal tastes as reasons for falling short of nutritional guidelines for produce consumption. Other factors play a role as well.

To some extent convenience plays a role. It takes no time at all to empty the contents of a package and cook up enough rice, chili, or pasta to feed the family for one meal and maybe two or three. Vegetables require more time and attention. Frozen vegetables, women note, are an exception. Put them in the microwave in a couple of minutes and they're ready to serve. But frozen foods are expensive.

We asked whether people feel comfortable cooking vegetables, or do they need some help in that respect. This doesn't appear to be a major deterrent to purchase, except in the case of less familiar vegetables such as brussels sprouts, eggplant, and rutabagas. In those instances, women say, they are not likely to buy unless they learn more about how to prepare it. We will have more to add about the role of recipes later in the report.

Women admit that convenience plays a role in another way. They lead hectic lives, juggling one or two paying jobs with child-rearing. They spend a lot of time in their automobile, running errands, driving from home to work and back again and chauffeuring kids to after-school activities. This can make for an exhausting day. How much easier it is to stop off at McDonald's on the way to a soccer game and eat a hamburger and fries in the car. Or pick up a pizza for consumption at home.

Reaction to Munch Code

Visitors to the website, www.HealthySD.gov, can access a child's game designed to increase knowledge about nutrition. Pictures of various snack foods the child might find at a concession stand are displayed. On the same screen are three circles – green, yellow, and red. The colors were selected deliberately to remind people of a traffic light. Children are challenged to show their food savvy by dragging each snack to its appropriate circle, where green means good for you, red means it should be eaten in moderation, and yellow fits somewhere in between. Children receive audible congratulations from the computer when they make the correct choices.

In Rapid City the moderator showed a storyboard as well as a poster that displayed snacks and the three circles. Women applauded the rationale behind the nutrition game. Whether seen on the website or in the form of posters at concession stands, it has the potential to inform kids about some basic principles of good nutrition. In both Rapid City sessions, women exposed to the graphic said there was room for misinterpretation of the color scheme. It might not create a problem for older children, they say, but there's a risk that younger children will confuse the color of the circles with the color of a snack. A tomato is red, the reasoning goes, so it goes in the red circle, the one that cautions against eating too much of that item.

Recall of and Reaction to YUM PSA

In the Sioux Falls focus groups no one reported seeing the YUM PSA. The PSA was screened for participants in the Rapid City group sessions. Again no one recalled the ad but all were favorably disposed toward it. It was described as upbeat, fun to watch, colorful, and likely to attract the attention of a young audience. They noted the reference to "ask for South Dakota-grown" and liked the phrase, but in each group someone asked where in the store the South Dakota items were located. For full impact, then, it will be necessary to have point-of-sale signage of some sort. (In a separate report on interviews with grocers, we confirmed that most already use signage to identify "locally grown" produce.)

Additional Communication Messages

The Rapid City sessions offered an opportunity to pre-test alternative communication approaches. One message reverses roles of parent and child. It shows a young boy or girl persuading a parent to try a vegetable by extending it on a fork and using the very verbiage that parents have used to cajole their children into trying a new food. Of two alternative layouts, people more readily accepted one that showed a little boy dressed as a chef. It reminds that children would be more receptive to healthful food if they had a hand in preparing it.

Group participants found the concept amusing and felt their children would find the message hilarious. One suggestion for improvement involves the substitution of a vegetable like broccoli in place of a strawberry because someone would need no persuasion to eat a strawberry but might balk at broccoli.

A series of test billboards tried alternative approaches to good nutrition. Of five tested messages, women were most receptive to one with the line, "Nation's perfect weight loss program." They rejected another

that referred to fruits and vegetables as the ideal diet pill. They have no quarrel with a program to help people lose weight. They simply feel that use of the word pill is not the best way to get across the thought that fruits and vegetables are good to eat.

Two other billboard ideas were rejected because the clothes the women wore were too provocative. An additional one, with the caption "O-o-o-open up wide" was well received except that the young child portrayed in the billboard appeared to be wearing heavy lipstick. Reactions to all three might be more positive if the illustrations were modified.

One person advised that the people portrayed in the illustrations should include all segments of the population. She intimated that American Indians are the group most in need of a conversion to healthier eating patterns.

Coupons and Recipes

A potential incentive to purchase more fruits and vegetables would be coupons accompanied by recipes that provide instructions for preparing these foods. This topic was introduced in the Sioux Falls group sessions. In Rapid City, we went one step further, showing sample coupons with recipes attached.

Group participants reacted positively to this concept. Food stamp recipients visualized that the coupons, perhaps worth a dollar or two off a particular product, would be part of the regularly monthly mailing. The recipe would serve as a further stimulus to coupon use. It would educate the consumer as to what the finished product would be like, what other ingredients are required, and how easy or complicated the dish will be to prepare.

One example shown in Rapid City involved collard greens. A traditional Southern dish, it was not familiar to most group members. They said they would not likely buy collard greens if they didn't know what they tasted like and what was involved in terms of time and ingredients. The coupon and recipe would go a long way toward prompting them to try this vegetable.

Those familiar with the popular WIC program see some similarity between WIC and the program described above. Some suggest that the WIC concept, currently restricted to low-income mothers with small children, should be extended to all food stamp recipients. That would be a strong incentive to buy fruits and vegetables.

When the middle-income group in Sioux Falls was given the assignment of devising methods for increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables, they concentrated all their attention on coupons. As a group they decided it would be best if the coupons were not product-specific. That is, they could be applied to apples, collard greens, carrots, or anything else in the produce department. Under such circumstances, one woman acknowledged, they were more likely to redeem the coupon on something they routinely buy (like apples) because they don't have to buy the other ingredients specified in the recipe.

Several people reject the notion that coupons should be offered on the Internet. A few don't have computers; others have a computer but no printer. In any case they see it as less convenient than if

coupons were mailed to them or available at their regular store. One person in Rapid City visualized a row of machines each spitting out a coupon for a different vegetable. Another suggested that coupon information be entered on the store affinity card so that the discounted price would automatically be charged at the check-out counter.

Cooking Demonstrations

What if these coupons were distributed as part of an actual cooking demonstration in the store? This idea doesn't get universal acceptance. As one woman articulated, when she goes shopping, often with small children in tow, she has neither time nor patience to watch a cooking demonstration. She wants to get in and out as fast as possible. She has her shopping list and isn't likely to add another item on a whim. Better, she says, that she take a coupon home, study the recipe and then decide whether to add that item to her next shopping list.

As an extension of the idea of in-store demonstrations, the lower-income group in Rapid City came up with a plan for a no-charge event where women can learn about unfamiliar foods and how to prepare them. They'd like to see this as a social event as well as an educational experience. It should be fun, so that attendees will persuade their friends to attend future sessions. An opportunity to swap recipes with other attendees could add to the fun and educational value. Inclusion of free child care will remove a barrier to attendance. They didn't specify where these events would be held; if promoted widely, it would probably have to be held in a separate location rather than in stores.

Conclusions

Attitudes and behavior won't change overnight. Even the most aggressive and innovative program to change eating habits will take time. Yet there are hopeful signs from our conversations with consumers that the tide can be turned. First we list the challenges. Then we'll present several ways to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables and thereby reduce obesity in the state.

- Challenge #1: This is the era of multi-tasking. There are more two-earner families than ever before. There's also a growing number of single-parent families where one person must undertake all the duties that otherwise would be shared by two adults. People are constantly short on time as they juggle career with family life. In such circumstances it is tempting to rely on meal preparation that is both quick and convenient.
- Challenge #2: People have a vague awareness that fruits and vegetables are good for them and their family, but they haven't grasped the connection between insufficient amounts in their diets and incidence of obesity. They have internalized the thought that they should be serving more healthful meals but are unaware of the consequences of following their present diet.
- Challenge #3: Women are convinced that they can serve meals to their family cheaper if they're based on items like pasta and pizza than on fruits and vegetables. Those in the low to middle income group feel they can't afford to buy produce in large quantities.
- Challenge #4: In the opinion of group participants, schools are not doing a good job of encouraging kids to eat a healthy noontime meal. Few vegetables are available and the meal portions are smaller than they recall in the past. As a consequence, this argument goes, children are still hungry after lunch and gorge themselves on snack foods later in the afternoon.

- Challenge #5: Though South Dakota is largely an agricultural state, crop production centers on grains rather than vegetables. This fact, coupled with a short growing season, means that fruits and vegetables must be imported from other states, making them less fresh and more expensive when they finally show up in stores.
- Challenge #6: Consumers like the idea of South Dakota-grown produce but don't know how to find it in the store.

Potential steps toward better nutrition:

- Develop an intensive communication program designed to emphasize the link between good nutrition and obesity. Create added persuasion power by spelling out the consequences of obesity—diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease. This second step is essential to success, since many people think the only negatives associated with obesity are physical appearance and reduced energy level.
- Explore ways to make fruits and vegetables more affordable. The prototype for this effort is WIC, which issues vouchers that can only be used for fruits and vegetables. If this modest program were extended beyond its present recipient base (low-income mothers with small children), it would give consumers a financial incentive to buy more produce and serve to remind that the government is concerned about their welfare.
- Increase awareness of fruits and vegetables and their benefit by staging public meetings where dietitians and culinary experts address this issue and demonstrate how to prepare healthful meals at home. One food store chain, Hy-Vee, is doing this now.
- Work with schools to offer a wider selection of fruits and vegetables for their luncheons. Explore with school dietitians ways to accomplish this and still stay within cost guidelines. Bring back home economics in the classroom so that boys and girls can become better acquainted with fruits and vegetables while learning how to make delicious meals from them. Extend to lower grades so that small children can discover the flavorfulness of vegetables before they develop a prejudice against this type of food.
- Encourage the development of home gardens. They take up little space yet can provide a constant stream of the freshest produce available – from garden direct to table. No more concern about store-bought vegetables spoiling and having to be thrown out. Involve children in the gardening process. They will learn about vegetables and take pride in eating something that they have helped to grow.
- The phrase “South Dakota-grown” has positive associations. Its positive impact will be increased by adding point-of-purchase signage. Interviews with grocers indicate that they routinely designate produce as “locally grown.” This is fine as far as it goes but may only be restricted to vegetables grown in that specific community. A standardized sign mentioning the state, replacing the grocer's own sign and broadening its use to refer to produce grown anywhere in the state, will more effectively build interest in fresh, affordable and tasty produce that hasn't been shipped halfway across the country.

Research Report #2

Grocer Opinions Regarding Marketing of Fruits and Vegetables

Introduction

Government statistics indicate that South Dakota currently ranks near the middle with regard to adult obesity, a condition associated with abnormally high incidence of diabetes, heart attacks, and hypertension. One prominent cause of obesity is poor nutrition—in particular a diet deficient of fruits and vegetables.

A marketing research program has been initiated to explore attitudes and behavior with relation to the purchase and consumption of produce. One aspect of the research program involved interviews with South Dakota grocery store general managers and produce managers. In total, 27 interviews were conducted during the week of October 24, 2011. The stores are identified in the appendix to this report. All interviews were conducted by David F. Miller, Ph.D., a marketing psychologist.

We found a wide range of opinions as to the possible causes of low consumption of fruits and vegetables and an equally wide range of opinions as to the best way to encourage greater consumption. They are summarized in the sections to follow. For simplicity, all respondents, regardless of their titles, will be referred to as “grocers.”

The Role of Convenience

Many grocers cite convenience as the major factor in low rates of produce purchases. As a Mission grocer put it, members of today’s younger generation are now people. They just grab and eat. They’ll buy anything that requires little or no preparation. Others agree that it is a generational phenomenon. Parents and grandparents grew up in an atmosphere where the whole family got together over a home-cooked dinner. In contrast, young people today are likely to buy take-out from a fast food outlet on their way home from work.

That brings up another factor in today’s world that, grocers say, has an influence on eating habits. In the past there was one wage-earner in the family, usually the male head of household. The female managed the home, tended the children and prepared the meals. Today, with two wage-earners, it’s a different story. Both adults are away from home during working hours. After work they may be involved in carting their children to soccer practice or band rehearsals. By the time they settle in at home, they are tired and in no mood to prepare an evening meal from scratch.

A grocer in Arlington, located a few miles from Brookings, reported that many college students live there in apartments and condominiums. His impression is that they do no meal preparation at all, preferring to stop at a fast-food place on the way from campus.

A Mitchell grocer says that McDonald’s represents an attractive alternative to home-cooked food. In his words, “A mother can buy two dollar meals for her kids and say, ‘Here, kids. Here’s your dinner.’”

Another indication of the role of convenience, according to a Huron grocer, is the tendency for consumers to buy frozen vegetables instead of fresh produce. They still get the nutritional value. They may pay a bit more, but the package can be popped into the microwave and be ready to serve in no time.

The Role of Price

Grocers are split in their opinions about the role of price. Some say this is no deterrent to sales. A Madison grocer maintains that the same five-dollar bill that someone spends at McDonald's can buy healthful fruits and vegetables at his store. Balancing that opinion, though, a Sioux Falls grocer says that his customer can buy a whole meal at McDonald's for the price of a bunch of grapes at his store.

An Arlington grocer doesn't feel that high prices can explain low produce sales at his store. He says his prices are cheaper than what Walmart charges in nearby Brookings.

A Huron grocer takes a different view. He says that California visitors remark about high produce prices compared to what they pay at home. The reason is clear: Shipping costs are at a minimum in California whereas most produce, other than what is available during South Dakota's short growing season, must be imported, typically from Texas and California and even more remote places, as in the case of bananas and other tropical fruits.

The Role of Food Preferences

In discussing alternatives to fresh fruit and vegetables, many grocers use the same vocabulary. They refer simply to junk food. A Mission grocer, referring to his reservation customers, says "They like the sweet stuff—sugary stuff." That thought is echoed around the state, indicating that this tendency is by no means restricted to the American Indian population. A Huron grocer says that McDonald's sells salt and sugar. That's naturally attractive to humans, he says. "Our bodies crave them and some don't know how to stop."

Once again young people are perceived as least likely to eat a healthy diet. Another Mission grocer says that his young customers don't seem to give any thought to good nutrition. Poor health is a problem for the very old, they reason, whereas they are in fine shape. He speaks from experience, this grocer says. As a young man he thought as they do and didn't bother to eat nutritious meals. Now he suffers from diabetes and is convinced that young men and women who shop at his store are headed for the same fate.

Traditional eating habits play a crucial role in food preferences among the young. A Ft. Thompson grocer, located on the reservation, says that bad eating habits go back to infancy. In his words, the tradition comes "from the top," meaning the elders. "Kids are raised on beef jerky," he says.

The geographical location of South Dakota is a contributing factor, according to a Brookings grocer. "Here in the Midwest we're all meat-and-potatoes," he says. He's in ranching country and meals have traditionally been centered on beef, a readily available commodity.

The Role of Education

Some grocers explain away consumer avoidance of fruits and vegetables on the basis of education. To amplify that thought, they mention several aspects of education. Some believe that the word hasn't

sunk in that, to have a properly balanced diet, families must include daily intake of fruits and vegetables. Others don't specifically reference health considerations but simply say that many people are in the habit of eating other foods. They haven't grown up with fruits and vegetables. Now that they are adults they continue in the old ways, with the consequence that their children also don't become familiar with this type of food.

Schools have a role to play in breaking this destructive cycle, some grocers say. In Sturgis, the local public school bought \$500 worth of fruits and vegetables from the store and served unusual vegetables such as bean sprouts and parsnips to children. The theory was that the kids would watch to see how they are prepared, taste them and go home to tell their parents how much they enjoyed the food.

The Arlington grocer feels that schools can play another vital role in steering children toward good nutrition. A father of youngsters, he expresses pleasure that the school removed soda pop vending machines from the lower grades.

In Madison the grocery store receives a weekly menu of foods to be supplied to the Kids' Pantry. This project, supported by both private and public funding, benefits children who come from impoverished homes. With parents' permission, a packet of food is placed in the child's backpack at the end of the Friday school day. According to the grocer, the food contained within may be the only food available to the child until he or she returns to school on Monday. Typically the packet will include an apple, a banana, some cereal and an entrée such as macaroni and cheese. As a concession to a child's sweet tooth, a candy bar is commonly included.

An independent Sioux Falls grocer, in summing up his views on the need to educate consumers, says that the process has to start with children. The older a person gets, he maintains, the more ingrained are food habits.

The Hy-Vee chain, which has seven stores in Sioux Falls, has partnered with celebrity chef Curtis Stone to provide recipes for healthful food. The recipes, which change regularly, are available at point of purchase. As an example, during a visit to a store the interviewer picked up a recipe for Roasted Acorn Squash with Cider Drizzle.

* * * * *

To this point we have identified four factors that might explain why so many South Dakotans are not getting the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables: Convenience, price, food preferences, and education. In the remainder of this report we discuss other information gleaned from dealer interviews that bear on the challenge of encouraging more healthful diets.

Possible Solution: In-Store Demonstrations

We asked grocers to imagine that a team came to their store to set up food demonstrations. Demonstrators would show how to prepare meals from fruits and vegetables with an emphasis on produce that may be less familiar to consumers. The demonstrator would hand out samples. Coupons might be available to permit the consumer to purchase the fruit or vegetable at an attractive price.

Almost without exception, grocers said they would have no objection to the program. In fact some said they had their own programs. The Sunshine Foods outlet in Hartford demonstrated how to slice and serve Asian pears and gave samples to consumers. They sold a lot of pears that day but noticed no lasting effect. A Sioux Falls store has given preparation demonstrations for pineapple, but again with no perceptible long-term effect. A grocer in Huron would welcome the program but does not have high expectations for its efficacy, reasoning that the demonstration would affect too few people.

A store in Brookings has an on-site dietitian who gives demonstrations three times a month and also on occasion has convened a health fair with special emphasis on diabetes. They lack a quantitative measure of the program's effectiveness, but the fact that they are continuing it suggests that it does have a beneficial effect.

The Walmart store in Brookings has on occasion scheduled demonstrations. A recent one involved mangoes. If an outside party wanted to give a demonstration that involved cooking, though, it would require approval from corporate headquarters.

The addition of in-store coupons could well increase immediate sales of the featured fruit or vegetable. Grocers envision a coupon worth \$1 or \$2 off a product. This would give added encouragement to the consumer who is intrigued with the featured product. Repeat purchases, of course, will depend on subsequent pricing as well as the family's reaction to it.

The only grocer who expressed hesitation about allowing food demonstrations was concerned about the amount of required space, since his was a small neighborhood store.

Whether connected with food demonstrations or not, coupons on produce meet with a cool reception. A Huron store would accept coupons but only if they are offered in-store. The grocer no longer accepts coupons from the Internet because they are too easy to counterfeit.

In summary, grocers have no objections to in-store demonstrations but are skeptical that they will have noticeable effect on produce sales.

Possible Solution: Donation of Past-Its-Prime Produce

What if poor people, including their children, could have access to produce which is still edible but past its prime? Would grocers be willing to participate in a community program for this purpose?

To approach this question we asked about spoilage in the produce department. Some grocers became defensive when the topic came up. It was as if their skill as managers was being questioned. As a Blackhawk grocer said, "Spoilage isn't a problem. We only order what we know we can sell." A Huron grocer says "the old stuff isn't a problem – I've 27 years experience buying produce." That sentiment was echoed by other grocers around the state.

But what if, for example, a banana develops black spots? Grocers handle this by bagging them and selling them at a deeply discounted price. A store in Highmore sells a four-pound bag for a dollar. The grocery in Arlington has its own bakery. No problem: Overripe banana, perfect ingredient for banana bread!

At the Walmart store in Brookings the ground rule followed by members of the produce department is very strict: If you wouldn't buy it for your own family, throw it out. It goes into a bin which is emptied periodically by representatives of the Hutterite community. The food, mashed together, is fed to their cattle.

Aside from the banana and Hutterite exceptions, the standard approach among grocers is to toss produce that has passed its prime. In the reservations the disposal of such food is mandatory. The U.S. government forbids grocers to give away food.

Grocers would sooner throw food away than give it to organizations serving the indigent population. They feel it reflects badly on the quality of their produce and thus jeopardizes the store's reputation in the community. Some cite legal issues, expressing concern that they would be held liable if someone became sickened from eating food that is past its prime.

Possible Solution: Promotion of South Dakota Produce

Although South Dakota has a relatively brief growing season and has far less acreage devoted to fruits and vegetables than to wheat, corn, and cattle farming, the fact remains that locally grown produce is available during four months of the year. As an example, the interviews were conducted in October. Many stores had special displays with pumpkins and squash.

Could the total consumption of fruits and vegetables be increased by emphasis on the fact that locally grown produce is in plentiful supply during certain months of the year?

Just about every grocery store visited had one or more produce areas with signs that read "locally grown." Grocers routinely place these signs on their stock. They are not sure whether it makes any difference to the consumer. No one thought that this sign necessarily stirred up South Dakota pride. Rather, if it had any effect it was to underline how fresh the produce was. The Walmart grocer said that, when he places the "locally grown" sign on an item, the product "flies outta here." He attributes this to a comparison with other produce that may have sat in a Texas warehouse a couple of days before being shipped to his store.

A Huron grocer says that people ought to prize local produce because it is not only fresher but also more likely to be pesticide-free. A local farmer is not likely to use a pesticide out of concern that it will seep into the soil and contaminate the well water his family depends upon.

One specific South Dakota product stands out in the eastern part of the state. When Forestburg melons are in season there is a buying frenzy. It is a surefire big seller and a good source of profit even though stores must compete with roadside vendors.

The consensus is that it's good business to emphasize that produce is locally grown, but this label is not credited with a major boost in sales volume for the produce department.

Possible Solution: Expansion of SNAP (“Food Stamps”)

Large numbers of low-income and no-income families in South Dakota are recipients of the benefit commonly known as food stamps, although actual stamps have been replaced by debit cards. The program, in effect nationwide for many years, is designed to combat hunger and provide proper nutrition for those who have no alternative food source.

All grocers contacted in this study accept food stamps. They are keenly aware that stamps are issued on the tenth day of the month. Depending on location this may kick off a major consumer buying spree or only a minor ripple. Stores in Pine Ridge and Mission stock up on produce in anticipation of the surge in sales. A Mission grocery stays open till 10 pm on that date. A competitor in the same community reports that total store sales hit \$40,000 compared to a daily average of \$10,000. He is unsure whether produce also has a fourfold increase in sales.

In other parts of the state, grocers report a surge in overall sales but with minimal impact on produce sales. Several are disturbed by this fact. They feel that the program is not reaching the goal of better nutrition because of purchase choices by food stamp recipients. Some examples:

- In Martin: “They should change the program to no-junk food, though actually junk food is a higher profit item for us.”
- In Brookings: “We put on extra staff and have a surge in produce sales, but not as much as boxed stuff.”
- In Ft. Thompson: “They’ll buy a sack of apples but not more perishable stuff.”
- In Arlington: “They load up on pop, potato chips, and pizza, not fruits and vegetables.”

Grocers concur that the food stamp program would be much more effective if recipients were more tightly restricted as to what they could buy. A Sioux Falls grocer underscored the predominate sentiment when, in discussing food stamps, he pointed to a display of Little Debbie cakes and said he has seen recipients snatch up multiple cartons of that product on food stamp day. Another grocer feels that changes in the program are badly needed, but he doubts that anything will happen. The big beverage companies exert a lot of pressure in Washington, he says, and the government is likely to cave in to them. The same grocer said he’s heard that they’re considering allowing recipients to use food stamps to pay for restaurant purchases. If that occurs, he’ll lose some business. But more important, he says, people will use large amounts of their monthly allotment for high-priced food with little nutritional value.

Another government program, Women, Infants and Children (WIC) comes in for high praise among grocers. They applaud that vouchers are specifically earmarked for nutritional items: fruits, vegetables, milk, cheese, and other specified foods. Another aspect that contrasts it with food stamps is the issuance of vouchers more than once a month. This means that people can buy fresh fruits and vegetables confident that the food won’t spoil before it is consumed.

The upshot is that grocers applaud the concept behind food stamps but feel the program would be much more beneficial if junk food and beverages were excluded. A more difficult convention to be changed is the tendency for recipients to buy a large part of their allotment on the tenth of the month. That means that little is left over to buy more perishable goods like fruits and vegetables.

Conclusion: No Magic Bullet

In the interviews with 27 grocers we tested several possible techniques for increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables. The research provides no easy answers. In-store demos may educate the public about unusual foods and ways of preparing fruits and vegetables, but grocers don't feel this will bring about a permanent change in eating habits. Promotion of produce that is locally grown can emphasize that such produce is desirable because of freshness, but the research reveals little evidence that total consumption rises as a result. The food stamp program bears promise but will only reach its full potential if it is modified to eliminate snack food and soda pop. WIC is well conceived but won't have its full impact unless its scope is widened to include more families and provide an increased number of vouchers.

Research Report #3

Facebook Users Consumer Focus Group
Regarding Fruits and Vegetables

Rapid City Facebook Users A & B

Introduction

Government statistics indicate that South Dakota currently ranks near the middle with regard to adult obesity, a condition associated with abnormally high incidence of diabetes, heart attacks, and hypertension. One prominent cause of obesity is poor nutrition—in particular a diet deficient of fruits and vegetables.

A marketing research program has been initiated to explore attitudes and behavior regarding the purchase and consumption of produce. One aspect of the research program involved two focus groups consisting of participants who regularly use Facebook.

These sessions were held at the Hot Pink, Ink offices on September 29 and 30, 2011. The first session included nine participants, all of whom were women. The second session consisted of nine women and one man.

Because South Dakota has a high percentage of Facebook users as compared to other states, and feedback from the initial focus group sessions included use of online services for menu planning, recipe research, and grocery budgeting, we felt it was important to include a known group of women who are engaged regularly in online activities. Participants were recruited via a Facebook advertisement. Each candidate was required to be the primary grocery shopper and meal preparer of the household.

In terms of demographics, these groups skewed older than the Sioux Falls and other Rapid City sessions with age of the participants being between 35 and 65 years old. These participants also had a higher household income overall with most falling into a \$40,000+ bracket. Many of the participants had children—one woman had eight, all living at home, a few had preschool age children, and one had four ranging in age from kindergarten to high school. The rest reported that their children were either no longer living at home or were older teenagers. Several had grandchildren.

A Word of Caution

Focus groups are a qualitative research technique. They are exploratory by nature. They involve small groups and questioning does not follow a strict form, but rather consists of wide-ranging dialogue between a trained professional and group participants. The information gathered from such group sessions can provide valuable insights, but findings should be considered as hypotheses to be confirmed by quantitative research such as a public opinion survey.

Grocery Shopping Patterns

On average, participants shopped at least two times per week. The pattern that appeared to be the most consistent among both groups was one large trip that typically includes a visit to a bulk value center such as Walmart or Sam's Club, and one or more smaller trips to local grocery stores to accommodate day-to-day or specific meal-to-meal needs.

There were a few exceptions to this including one woman who had a teenage daughter living at home. She stated that she "doesn't like to keep a lot of food in the house" consequently, she shops almost daily

and buys only what she will prepare for that day. She noted that her family eats a lot of fish and wild game such as antelope. When she does buy other meat, she looks for organic, grass fed and natural products. And while she did admit to shopping at Walmart and Safeway, she also frequents the local farmer's markets when they are available.

One participant lives about 30 minutes from the nearest large grocery store. She said she buys in bulk about every two weeks. She utilizes her freezer and stocks a large pantry with dry and canned goods. She typically makes a weekly trip for fresh produce, but has learned to rely on slow cooker and casserole recipes as well as heartier produce such as squash and carrots to get her through when she cannot make more frequent trips or runs out of more perishable produce.

There was also one young woman and one young man, both without children, who tended to shop as needed and had a much less organized plan for the week. The young woman stated that she rarely cooks and eats out frequently. This woman reported that she doesn't particularly like or know how to cook and that her parents did not do a lot of cooking when she was growing up. Her busy work schedule does not allow for much free time and she admitted that in the past, learning to cook was not very high on her list. However, she had recently purchased a crockpot and stated that she knew she "should" learn how to prepare at least a few meals and was ready to make an effort in that regard. In contrast, the young man in the group said he enjoys cooking and will experiment with new recipes and ingredients whenever possible. He hunts and fishes and likes to make soups and stews. Unlike many in the group, this young man had no problem eating leftovers of the same meal for days.

Because some of the participants were no longer preparing daily meals for the entire family, we talked in terms of how they shopped when they did have children in the house, and how that differs from current shopping patterns. Most agreed that each scenario presented a different routine. When children were in the house, shopping was not necessarily more frequent, but meals were more planned. As their children grew and left the house, long-range planning is less of a concern as most are cooking for only one or two in the household now.

While it was clear that grocery expenses for these participants were relatively high (\$500+ per month) compared to focus group participants in other sessions, they were also very cost conscious. Several participants reported making specific trips based on sales, flyers, or advertised specials. Members of both groups seemed to know which stores had better deals on meat, which stores had the best produce, and which stores were best for bulk items.

This group also included some members who reported frequenting specialty health food stores, local organic and natural co-ops, farmer's markets, and several participants had gardens.

Meal Consumption Patterns

As one might expect, those with children still in the home have busy mornings that result in quick and easy or on-the-go breakfasts. Toast, oatmeal, cereal, cereal bars, and fruit and yogurt were among the favorites for busy working families. There were also a number of mothers who made sure the children walked out the door with "something in their tummies," but routinely relied on coffee, tea, or in some cases, had nothing to eat themselves. The exception here was a weekend breakfast ritual that either

involved a large home cooked meal or eating out at a local diner on Saturday or Sunday with the entire family.

The older members of the group had more variety and flexibility when it came to breakfast. Their menus included eggs, omelets, turkey bacon, homemade breakfast burritos, protein shakes or smoothies, fruit, or yogurt. However, there were still a few that regularly skipped or “didn’t like” breakfast and reported eating very little right away in the morning which would then result in them having a small snack mid-morning.

The mid-day meal included the widest range of food items. Here again, those with children in school noted that their kids either ate lunch at school, or in the case of those with teenagers, some skipped lunch altogether. One interesting exchange between two participants, both with school age children, began when one reported that she allows her children to make their own choices about what they have at school or pack for lunch. She gave an example of a hot dog or a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and said her “kids have to control something, it’s what they eat.” To that, another participant chastised her to some extent saying that her rule of thumb is to “put the food out. If they eat it they eat it, if they don’t they don’t.” She continued on saying that if you make bad food choices available, kids will opt for them and indicated that she feels it’s her responsibility as the parent to provide healthy food choices for children, adding “they won’t want it [junk food] if it’s not in the house to tempt them.”

There were several who said they “had no time for lunch” and one who noted that her place of employment had very strict rules about lunch foods and their related odors. She was not allowed to bring anything to work for lunch that would emit an odor. Consequently, she packs dry snacks such as nuts, cheese, simple sandwiches, fruit, or yogurt for lunch.

Husbands were often gifted the leftovers for their lunch boxes and several, particularly the working women and the younger members of the group admitted to eating fast food for lunch with a good deal of regularity. One participant noted that lunch is her “big meal” of the day.

The group included one nurse and one teacher. Both reported that their workplaces were notorious for copious amounts of “junk” and “crud” in the break rooms or lounges, making it difficult to “eat healthy” even when they bring their own lunch or healthier snacks.

Although there were a few with admittedly poor lunch time habits including one “pop and chips everyday” response and one participant who reported eating “sunflower seeds” most days for lunch, by and large, the Facebook users had better overall lunchtime habits than some of the other groups interviewed. The older participants in particular said they routinely include homemade soups or veggie burgers and salads for lunch.

The evening meal is far and away the most planned meal of the day and includes the highest number of family members. Families with school age children tended to report making large, simple dishes that could be assembled quickly and accommodate a number of tastes and levels of “pickiness.” Items such as spaghetti, chili, tacos, chicken, and rice continued to top the list.

While some struggle with timing of the evening meal in that no one is home at the same time, or family members get home late enough to feel it’s “too late to eat dinner,” in general, the Facebook users reported being able to work one or two servings of vegetables into the dinner menu most of the time.

Importance of a Healthy Diet

The Facebook users were very well versed when it came time to discuss the recommended daily servings, serving sizes, and what constitutes a “healthy” food choice. These participants appeared to be very knowledgeable in regard to the perceived benefits of organic produce, the dangers of pesticides, plastics, or artificial or synthetic ingredients. In addition, several mentioned specific nutritional benefits of produce items falling into the “wonder-foods” categories such as berries (high in antioxidants), broccoli (heart healthy), and whole grain (lowers cholesterol).

Interestingly, their excuses for not making good choices or not imposing healthy diet ultimatums on family members were equally as complex. For instance, one participant reported that her sixteen-year old daughter “has never touched a vegetable” and has only started eating fruit in the last two years. She credited her daughter’s increasingly healthy eating habits to having watched the movie “Super Size Me.” To this point, this participant did not see a need to require her daughter to eat vegetables, but was pleased to report that she had discovered some motivation for healthier eating habits on her own. Another participant stated that she doesn’t buy produce in plastic because she had read that the toxins from the plastic leach into the food. As one participant began to complain about the lack of “freshness” and poor quality of the fresh produce, an older woman in the group offered her opinion that people have unrealistic expectations of the produce in the supermarkets. She pointed out that people will routinely reject fruit that has one small bruise, or steer away from anything that appeared to be slightly wilted in the produce department, and yet we will happily eat all kinds of misshapen, dented, and bug laden items from our own or a neighbor’s garden.

It appeared to be easier for the older women in the group to balance their meals with adequate servings of fruit and vegetables and there were more comments from the older participants in regard to how eating the “right number” of fruit and vegetables affected how they felt throughout the day. There was very little comment from the younger members as to what effect, if any, a healthy diet had on their day to day energy levels or long range overall health.

It is clear that when children are part of the household, parents make more of an effort to incorporate fruit and vegetables into their family’s diets. What stood out among this clearly well educated group was their ability to frame “healthy diet” information in such a way as to support their own personal preferences, attitudes toward certain types of food, and level of convenience.

Other Deterrents to Produce Consumption

Cost, preference, and convenience came up again and again as the top reasons why people don’t eat more fruit and vegetables. In terms of cost, the Facebook users were well aware of the additional expense required to “truck produce in.” Several comments pointed to high costs being due South Dakota’s short growing season. Not only does produce have to be shipped to the grocery stores, but even items that can be grown locally have to be supplemented to accommodate demand. Along those lines, those who travel also confirmed that the cost of produce in South Dakota as compared to other states is considerably higher. One participant stated, “Denver’s fruit and vegetables are cheaper and there’s more selection.”

As one participant put it, "I don't like them so they don't like them." She was referring to vegetables in general and her and her children's preferences. Another mother admitted to doing everything she could to disguise vegetables so her children would eat them and she wouldn't have to "shove it down their throats." The group agreed that when produce is expensive, time consuming, and family members don't like the taste or the texture, it hardly seems worth the fight.

A number of comments regarding the limited or poor selection, particularly of fresh produce, were also discussed. The feeling among many participants is that very often produce that is available looks and tastes bad, add to that the expense and it's hard to make a case for family members to eat more. Several in the group stated they would base shopping trips on which stores would have the better selection at different times during the week or month.

Another mother of younger children commented that her family rarely eats vegetables because her "kids won't eat them and they get thrown away." Still others chimed in, "It's not cheap to buy fruit and vegetables" and "the prices are high and they taste terrible." One participant stated that when she was growing up her parents told her fruit and vegetables were an expensive "treat" and therefore had to be limited. Another added that when she does buy expensive fruit, her children will simply eat it all in one setting. These comments reveal strong emotional cues that suggest members in the group are using an economic argument to support a strong dislike for certain foods.

Habit was another barrier that seemed to be shared by all group members. "We get what we know everybody will eat" noted one participant. Others chimed in to say that they fall victim to using the same recipes and preparing the same meals out of habit and lack of time. One participant said, "The store is full of stuff I don't know what it is or what to do with it."

Confusion and trust were also identified as possible barriers. The group agreed that the guidelines appear to always be changing and as soon as they think they know what's good for them, the recommendations change. In several instances, this became a convenient excuse for allowing poor eating habits. One former home economics teacher noted that she personally has "never eaten everything they say I should." She went on to say she feels the USDA guidelines are excessive, "nobody eats that much." Regardless of whether or not her comment was accurate, the fact remains that there was a clear lack of trust when it comes to accepting what a government agency may or may not have to say with regard to healthy eating habits, types of food, and serving sizes.

Lack of convenience was another deterrent. As one participant noted, "It needs to be fast, cheap and taste good." Specifically the amount of work involved with planning, shopping, and preparing fruit and vegetables seemed to be an issue, especially for the participants with young children. One went so far as to say, "salads take too much time." Here again, perception and emotion appeared to be generating these types of responses rather than the reality of how long it really takes to make a salad versus how long it takes to prepare a box of macaroni and cheese for example.

Reaction to Munch Code & Recall of/Reaction to YUM PSA

Several among the group had seen and/or played the Munch Code game on Facebook and reaction

to the premise of the game overall was favorable. All agreed that the game was geared toward younger children and would be more effective in an elementary age school setting rather than on Facebook where kids must be 13 to be able to navigate the site.

Very few had seen the YUM TV PSA. Reaction to the ad was positive. Many commented on the pleasant audio and liked the clean crisp display of fruit and vegetables throughout.

Additional Communications Messages

These groups were asked to brainstorm some ideas to get South Dakotans to eat more fruit and vegetables. While some of the ideas centered more on stretching value for the dollar rather than specific strategies for increasing consumption of fruit and vegetables, some of the ideas were springboards for rough concept models which were shown to subsequent groups for feedback.

One idea was to have children turn the tables on adults and employ the same tactics parents use when trying to get their children to eat their vegetables. Other ideas that generated a good deal of enthusiasm included combining coupons and recipes. The group noted that rarely are produce coupons available. A money savings combined with a new recipe or idea or suggestion for preparation would encourage trial.

This group also suggested some social media strategies along the lines of a "support group" similar to the counseling services offered through the South Dakota QuitLine. Many of the participants were fans of online services for menu planning and recipes, but they were also supportive of group activities such as the meal planning and preparation service offered by companies like "My Girlfriend's Kitchen." These retail stores offer a variety of services including meal planning, on-site group preparation, and social activity rolled into one. One of the participants commented about the recent closing of the store in Rapid City saying, "The saddest day of my life was when that place closed. I actually cried."

The group also acknowledged the opportunities to reach children at an early age through the schools. Most agreed that school lunches were awful and suggested that may be one of the reasons children don't like vegetables. In addition to the obvious call for revisions to the school lunch program, participants proposed that there be more involvement from the community via demonstrations, cooking class or cooking day, or vegetable of the week, and more school gardens.

Conclusions

Beliefs about what is healthy when it comes to food vary almost as much as political opinions. The good news is that in general, most would agree that increasing their daily intake of fruit and vegetables is a smart idea and most "should be" doing it. The challenge will be creating enough momentum on a variety of levels, to accommodate such a wide range of preferences and emotions in order to change behavior. The Facebook audiences are well versed. They know how and where to look for background information and support materials, and by the same token, they also know how to choose the information that fits their personality or their family's personality the best.

There are a number of barriers that need to be addressed including:

Having to Be the Meal Drill Sergeant:

"Husbands won't choose it [vegetables], kids won't choose it. We have to make the rest of the family eat right. We have to determine what the meals are going to be. If somebody made me a meal, I would eat it whatever it is."

Lack of Ideas & Resources:

"[It is] boring to always have to be thinking up recipes and menus and discouraging that nobody wants to eat it."

Lack of Time & Energy:

"[Cooking is] less frustrating when other's help. Cooking meals is not fun, making dessert is fun."

Taking Responsibility:

"Only have in your house what's good for them. You are responsible for your kids health. It's not up to them, it's up to you."

Complete Lifestyle Change:

"Not everyone wants to eat like I do."

In order to change behavior the audience must first be aware that something needs to be changed. The stage is already set for people to embrace the idea of incorporating more fruit and vegetables into their diets. People are clearly interested in finding better, smarter, healthier, and more economical ways to feed their families. The challenge now is to respect the consumer in this, their evaluation stage, by offering multiple incentives, ideas, tools, and resources to encourage them to take responsibility for their health as they enter the trail stage of adding more fruit and vegetables to their diets.

Research Report #4

American Indian Consumer Focus Group
Regarding Fruits and Vegetables

Introduction

Government statistics indicate that South Dakota currently ranks near the middle with regard to adult obesity, a condition associated with abnormally high incidence of diabetes, heart attacks, and hypertension. One prominent cause of obesity is poor nutrition—in particular a diet deficient of fruits and vegetables.

A marketing research program has been initiated to explore attitudes and behavior regarding the purchase and consumption of produce. One aspect of the research program involved a focus group consisting of American Indian participants in Rapid City.

This session was held at the Hot Pink, Ink offices on October 28, 2011. The session involved nine participants, eight women and one stay-at-home father. Participants qualified by having school age children in the household who were part of the Head Start program, household income of less than \$35,000, and were the primary grocery shopper and meal preparer of the household.

A note with regard to the American Indian audience. Compared to the other 49 states, South Dakota has a relatively high concentration of Native American citizens, with 8.8% of its population being American Indian compared to approximately 1% nationwide. Further, they are not evenly distributed. The largest population center, Sioux Falls, has a mere 2.7% concentration of tribal citizens, while the second largest metro, Rapid City has 12.4%.

There are seven designated reservations in South Dakota. Reservation lands in South Dakota are comprised of some of the poorest counties in the nation, and the people who live there endure numerous poverty-based health care challenges and relatively inadequate health care systems. As many as 80% of some reservation people are addicted to alcohol. There has been an alarming increase in suicide rates among the youth, and the incidence of diabetes in some areas approaches 50% of all adults over 40.

American Indians off-reservation in general fare somewhat better health-wise, but overall the Lakota Nation faces profound life challenges both on and off the reservation. Indeed, those day to day challenges are so commonplace for them that not only do they accept or even expect them, but by and large the rest of the non-Native population is either unaware or simply does not acknowledge them, thereby perpetuating the tragic nature of the situation. Given these significant health related challenges, we feel this audience segment requires special attention.

A Word of Caution

Focus groups are a qualitative research technique. They are exploratory by nature. They involve small groups and questioning does not follow a strict form, but rather consists of wide-ranging dialogue between a trained professional and group participants. The information gathered from such group sessions can provide valuable insights, but findings should be considered as hypotheses to be confirmed by quantitative research such as a public opinion survey.

Grocery Shopping Patterns

As a general rule, this group reported they do most of their grocery shopping on or shortly after the 10th of the month when food stamps and/or supplemental government checks are made available. For many in the group, this is the only time during the month they have money to buy food. This trip constitutes the "bulk" shopping for the month and is done primarily at Walmart or Sam's Club because of perceived value. Several in the group reported being "buy in bulk and freeze" shoppers. This larger trip is followed by one or two additional trips to local grocery stores including Safeway, Family Thrift, and Family Dollar.

There were three participants in the group that visit the grocery store once a week. One woman commented that she has to supplement her big trip on the 10th with weekly trips because her "kids eat it too fast." Another woman says she shops every Friday for the weekend and following week. And one more participant reported that she has to shop everyday to keep up with the needs of her family.

Meal Consumption Patterns

As we discussed what a typical breakfast usually includes, the majority of the group reported hot or cold cereal, frozen pancakes, waffles, cereal bars, pop tarts, or toast as usual fare. These were listed as the "go-to" items because they are fast and easy, children can often prepare them themselves and as one participant suggested, everyone in the household would eat cereal. One mother noted that she drops her children off early at school and they eat breakfast there.

Fruit and yogurt were mentioned only sparingly, one mother said she would sometimes have hard boiled eggs on hand, and only one participant regularly cooked a larger meal of eggs, bacon and hash browns for her pre-school age son. Interestingly, this mother also noted that her son was a "big boy" and required larger meals.

Fruit juice was not initially mentioned as part of the breakfast offering and when questioned, some admitted having it in the house, but most appeared to be wary of their children getting "too much" juice as it leads to cavities and contains "so much" sugar. These parents agreed that they would rather have their children drink milk or water or when they do have juice, they require it to be watered down. Expense was also noted here. Several members of the group agreed that even though they try to have fruit such as apples and bananas available everyday, other fruit such as watermelon, cantaloupe, and cherries are available only seasonally and even at that are very expensive.

For most families, children are eating lunch at school. One participant reported that his children pack their own lunches in the morning before school and noted the stress of having to make sure the kitchen was adequately supplied to accommodate (which often requires a quick stop at the grocery store the night before) as well as the added rush of activity in addition to trying to make sure everyone eats and gets out the door.

Packed lunches typically include some sort of sandwich, a piece of fruit, and pretzels or chips. Another participant said she will pack a lunch for her children occasionally and it will typically include a lunchable, grapes or fruit, and a juice. For those staying at home, lunch is often leftovers or sandwiches. For those working outside the home, several admitted their habit is to pick up fast food for a quick lunch.

Dinner time appears to be the most important meal of the day not only in terms of getting the most nutrition and variety of food, but also in terms of spending time together as a family. Across the board, this group reported that dinner consists of meat, a “side dish,” and a starch (potato, pasta, bread or rice).

Many in the group noted that they have very set dinner menus for the week. One participant listed off the meals by day (on Monday it’s chili, on Tuesday it’s lasagna etc.). This participant went on to note that the menu is very specific for a number of reasons: the meals are easy to prepare; everyone in the house will eat them; they can be made in large batches without having to refer to recipes; because they are served often, many ingredients are already on-hand.

Several others said that they cook three or four larger meals over the weekend and freeze for use later in the week. One participant reported drawing from a freezer full of wild game including: buffalo, venison, pheasant, walleye and even mountain lion. She commented that she will often make a large roast for “Sunday dinner” and her family will eat leftovers for several days.

Vegetables by and large appear on the dinner table as the “side dish.” Most commonly, corn or green beans. A few other vegetables were also specifically mentioned, broccoli (when slathered in cheese sauce), asparagus (adults like it, but it’s expensive and the kids won’t eat it), carrots and celery (usually served raw with dip). There was only one in the group that had a garden.

One participant reported liking the “prepared” frozen vegetables, but noted she does not always buy them as they are expensive. While this group regularly serves vegetables with dinner, portion size appears to be small in comparison to the rest of the meal, and variety is limited.

The group was also asked about snacking habits. Most admit to giving in to the convenience of simple carbohydrates (crackers, pretzels, and chips) whether it was for themselves or their children. Other snacks mentioned included: fruit; peanut butter and jelly sandwiches; Kool-Aid; Gatorade; and flavored milk.

Dining out as a couple or family is rare for this group. Several members admitted to allowing their family the occasional “Taco Tuesday” meal or perhaps a once every few months trip to a “sit down” restaurant.

There were two women in the group with type-1 diabetes, and one who had a child with diabetes. These women were more concerned with “healthy eating.” One of the participants said she is still “learning to eat right and monitor carbs,” while another noted that when preparing meals she was trying to make sure there were “a lot of colors on the plate.”

Importance of a Healthy Diet

The group was aware that the recommended daily allowances for fruit and vegetables was somewhere between five and eight. All in the group agreed that including fruit and vegetables in their diet was important but few thought their family was getting the recommended five servings per day. In general, this group felt that their children were coming close most days to getting five servings, but they themselves were probably further from the mark.

Everyone agreed that it is not difficult to get kids to eat fruit. One participant suggested that her challenge was getting her children to eat fruit rather than a cupcake. It should be noted that the while group admitted there were some vegetables their children simply would not eat and therefore were not included in regular meal planning, there did not appear to be much emphasis placed on serving more than one vegetable at the dinner table or incorporating vegetables into snack or lunch offerings.

When asked about the consequences of not eating enough fruit and vegetables, the group seemed to be on track with standard short-term answers of: weight gain, crabby, sluggish, depressed, or tired. However, even the diabetics in the group did not readily offer more serious long-term conditions such as diabetes, heart attack, or hypertension.

This group was also very familiar with and disapproving of the commodities provided to friends and family on the reservations. One participant referred to the offering as a “starch bucket” and in general the group agreed that commodities are mostly unhealthy and the fruit and vegetables that are supplied are less than desirable. Related to this, and according to the group—food prices on the reservations are twice as high as they are off of the reservations. In other sessions with non-Indian/higher income participants, the high price of buying fruit and vegetables was a common theme. It would seem that the most impoverished segments of the population have an even more serious challenge when it comes to the cost of preparing meals containing adequate servings of fruit and vegetables.

Deterrents to Produce Consumption

It was clear that this group felt that eating fruit and vegetables was important. However, when push comes to shove, the participants in this group are likely going to stick with what they know in terms of what their family will eat and not stretch those boundaries very often. As with most working families, parents simply don't have the time to research new recipes and prepare unfamiliar meals. Add to that the possibility that some of the produce will not get eaten or will go to waste and there is little to motivate them to try something new.

While the group agreed that “fresh is best,” they were willing to use frozen just as often. The biggest deterrents had to do with cost and preference. The perception among the group was that fresh and frozen vegetables are expensive and when forced to choose between the asparagus they like, and the green beans that are less expensive (and they know their children will eat), they will settle for the less expensive option, rather than purchase both.

Canned produce was viewed almost as a “last resort”—something to have in the pantry in case of emergency. At the same time, there was much discussion about the lack of “freshness” of produce available at the grocery store. Several minutes of discussion surrounded comparisons of one store's produce at a given time during the month to another's. When asked if they would consider substituting canned produce for less than desirable fresh produce when meal planning, response was less than enthusiastic. It was almost as if the group would rather go without produce at all than have to substitute canned.

The group also brought up limitations of food stamps and vouchers from the WIC program. One participant said that even though she is “on WIC” she does not always use her full allotment, adding

“how much milk do you need in a month?” Some of the conversation included complaints about what could be purchased and when, as well as an exchange of “tricks and tips” they use to maximize the amount of produce they purchase.

As one participant stated junk food is “convenient, easy, and cheap.” When combined with the “whine factor” from children that is inevitable between three and five o’clock in the afternoon, busy working parents will often give in to the path of least resistance. Much of the problem stems from what kids will eat. The notions of “my kids won’t eat it” and “I have a picky eater” continued to arise. In fact, one member of the group said that meals for the entire family are actually planned around the pickiness of one child. Rather than deal with one child’s complaint about menu selections, the rest of the family is essentially penalized because produce options are narrowly directed by that child’s preferences.

It would seem then that there is a dissonance between what people perceive their family is getting in terms of fruit and vegetable intake, and the actual levels of consumption. Most of the group initially thought their families were “close” to getting the required number of servings, but as the conversations continued, they became more aware of the fact that they could only account for a few servings of fruit and vegetables per day, with the primary offering being at the dinner table. One participant noted that getting enough fruit and vegetables throughout the day was extremely important, but that even when they make produce available, “the kids don’t want to eat it.”

Another deterrent adding to the challenges is the adult’s preferences. While most in the group reported pushing fruit and vegetable consumption when it came to their children, most admitted they rarely follow through themselves. One mother commented that it’s “harder for adults to change eating habits.”

Reaction to Munch Code & YUM PSA

Facebook users and visitors to www.HealthySD.com can access a game designed to increase knowledge about nutrition and snacking. Images of various snack foods the player might find at a concession stand are displayed. On the same screen, are three color-coded circles. The circles (green, yellow, and red) were selected deliberately to remind people of a traffic light. Players are challenged to show their food savvy by dragging each snack to its appropriate circle, where green means good for you, red means it should be eaten in moderation, and yellow fits somewhere in between. Players receive audible congratulations when they make the correct choices.

While no one in this group had played the game, response was positive particularly with their own young children in mind. The group agreed that having a game like this available to kids in school would be a good idea.

Response to existing printed materials was also met with a positive response. The group found the graphics to be colorful and interesting, noting that their children would likely find them attractive as well. Overall the idea of categorizing various foods by color was agreeable to the participants.

Several members of the group were familiar with the YUM TV PSA, and reported having liked the message and vibrancy of the ad. Those that had not seen the commercial responded positively to it. The only negative comment was that “those veggies don’t look as good when you get to the store.”

The group as a whole agreed that the ad was pleasant and would be well received by members in their families if it ran more often.

Additional Communications Messages

In addition to the existing marketing materials, the group was also shown several concepts and asked which, if any, would be more or less appealing. The concepts ranged from humorous ideas featuring kids, to straightforward ideas featuring bright and fresh looking produce, to more provocative concepts featuring young women. All of the ideas were created with the notion of generating emotional responses and encouraging discussion.

Please see accompanying PDF for sample creative shown.

Two television concepts involved reversing the typical “adult/child” roles wherein the children were the ones doing the coaxing to get the adult to eat his or her vegetables. Overall, the group responded very positively to these ideas, some even laughed out loud at the irony and noted that their children would indeed enjoy the opportunity to reverse roles. One member commented that it is a good reminder for adults as well to involve kids in the meal planning and preparing process.

The group was also presented a series of possible billboard concepts. Five approaches were tested. One concept was similar to the television idea and featured a young girl offering a fork-full of vegetables with the caption “O-o-o-open up wide.” Both concept and visual met with positive comments from all in the group.

Other concepts included some headline variations including “Nature’s perfect weight loss program” and “Nature’s perfect diet pill.” Participants felt that references to the words “diet” and “pill” were somewhat negative, however, references to “losing weight” were viewed in a much more positive light. One participant suggested an alternate headline of “Nature’s perfect snack food” that was appealing to the rest of the group. The group also responded positively to the word “healthy” and suggested “Nature’s healthy snack” as yet another idea. All of the visual images featured a variety of bright, fresh fruits and vegetables and feedback from the group was positive overall. The only possible negative was, as one participant expressed, “the veggies don’t look that good in the grocery store.”

The last billboard concepts featured beautiful young women and a variety of fruit and vegetables. The headline “Not your grandma’s veggies” was used. Among the Lakota in South Dakota, grandmothers are known to be trusted and respected matriarchs of the family. This attempt to suggest people to try new or different vegetables prepared in new and alternate ways was viewed as somewhat disrespectful from this group.

Coupons, Recipes & Cooking Demonstrations

As with other groups surveyed, overall response to coupons, recipes, and cooking demonstrations were met with enthusiastic response. Everyone in the group agreed that having them available at the point of purchase would be the best way to persuade them to try new or different foods as well as new recipes.

Many in the group noted that they fall into the habit of preparing the same recipes the same ways over and over again and need to be reminded to try something new.

As the conversation continued, the group began to brainstorm other ideas to either piggyback on or incorporate into the concepts being discussed. Many of the suggestions included ways to get the “eat more fruit and veggies” message in front of children. One participant suggested that vegetables should be promoted in “everything they see” on TV, with displays at the grocery store and posters at school. Another suggested using their heroes and mascots to help, saying “if you put Dora on it my daughter will eat it.”

Yet another suggested associating vegetables with fun rituals such as shopping for vegetables the same way they shop for toys in the holiday flyers and toy catalogs. A variety of ideas involving games were also discussed. The idea of encouraging kids to “play with their food” was well received as it not only would appeal to the kids, but could give parents some ideas as to how to convince their children to try new or eat more fruit and vegetables.

Overall, the group felt that the younger the kids were when exposed to healthy eating habits the easier it would be to continue the behavior. They also agreed “if kids see other kids doing it, they’ll do it.” One participant offered an idea involving a coloring book containing fun recipes for kids. Another suggestion was showing kids images of bright smiles, healthy hair, and teeth and saying “if you want these... then you have to eat these.”

In addition to having point of purchase reminders, coupons, recipes, and/or demonstrations to help motivate adult shoppers, the group also suggested cooking classes. In discussing this idea, most agreed they would be more likely to attend a class if child care was available. Along these lines, the idea of using an online service to help with meal planning was only warmly received. This group appeared to like the idea of a “community” or “hands on” type of event much more. They also agreed that a tribal radio promotion would be appealing. One participant suggested having a “very lively” commercial followed by a “call-in-get-a-veggie-of-the-day-prize” type promotion.

Conclusions

Some ideas with regard to fruit and vegetables appear to be constant regardless of ethnicity. In general, we know that attitudes and behaviors aren’t going to change overnight, however, it is promising to note that better eating habits and the notion of incorporating more fruit and vegetables were welcomed by the participants in this session. Devising tools to help make it “easier” to buy and/or prepare produce would also be a sound strategy, as would simply putting the message out there with increased frequency as a constant reminder to incorporate fruit and vegetables into today’s menu.

In fact, all of the participants in the American Indian group were very succinct and adamant about this point, “we know what we’re supposed to do, we just need constant reminding.”

Overall, except for the cost factor, it seemed that there was very little opposition to eating more fruit and vegetables, save the complaint from the picky eater, but rather a sense of being so overwhelmed by day to day challenges of working, shopping, planning, and preparing that the default behavior is to “go with what you know.”

What was clearly a larger challenge for the American Indians in this group was the cost of providing quality fruit and vegetables for their families. Their budgets are not only limited, but so are the number of shopping trips they can make in a given month. In addition to limitations on shopping frequency, this population segment is further hindered by limits on "how much" per shopping trip can be spent on produce. Add to that the fact that those who receive commodities find the offerings to be of low quality and perceptions that fruit and vegetables "taste bad" are solidified which will perpetuate the cycle of not buying them because their family won't eat them and they are expensive.

Given past research concerning this particular market segment and some of the ideas discussed in this session, community oriented outreach programs would be a good place to begin exploring strategies that will have a lasting effect on this population. Additional educational materials for children inviting them to try and ask for more fruits and vegetables, educational programs for adults including cooking classes and information regarding the potential health consequences of not incorporating more produce in their diets, and coupons or programs that speak to the ongoing issue of cost and availability should also be developed.

Welcome to our  Tasty Game!

MUNCH CODE!

Colors to *live* by.

Find out what the Munch Bunch knows about **picking the right snacks** at concession stands. To learn the Munch Code, play the game. It's easy, and you can win some **very cool prizes**. **Have fun!**

PICK THE RIGHT SNACKS  **COLOR YOURSELF** *healthy*

I Want to Play! 

MATCH THE COLOR CODE!

Pick a snack from below, place them on the right colored shelf and you win!



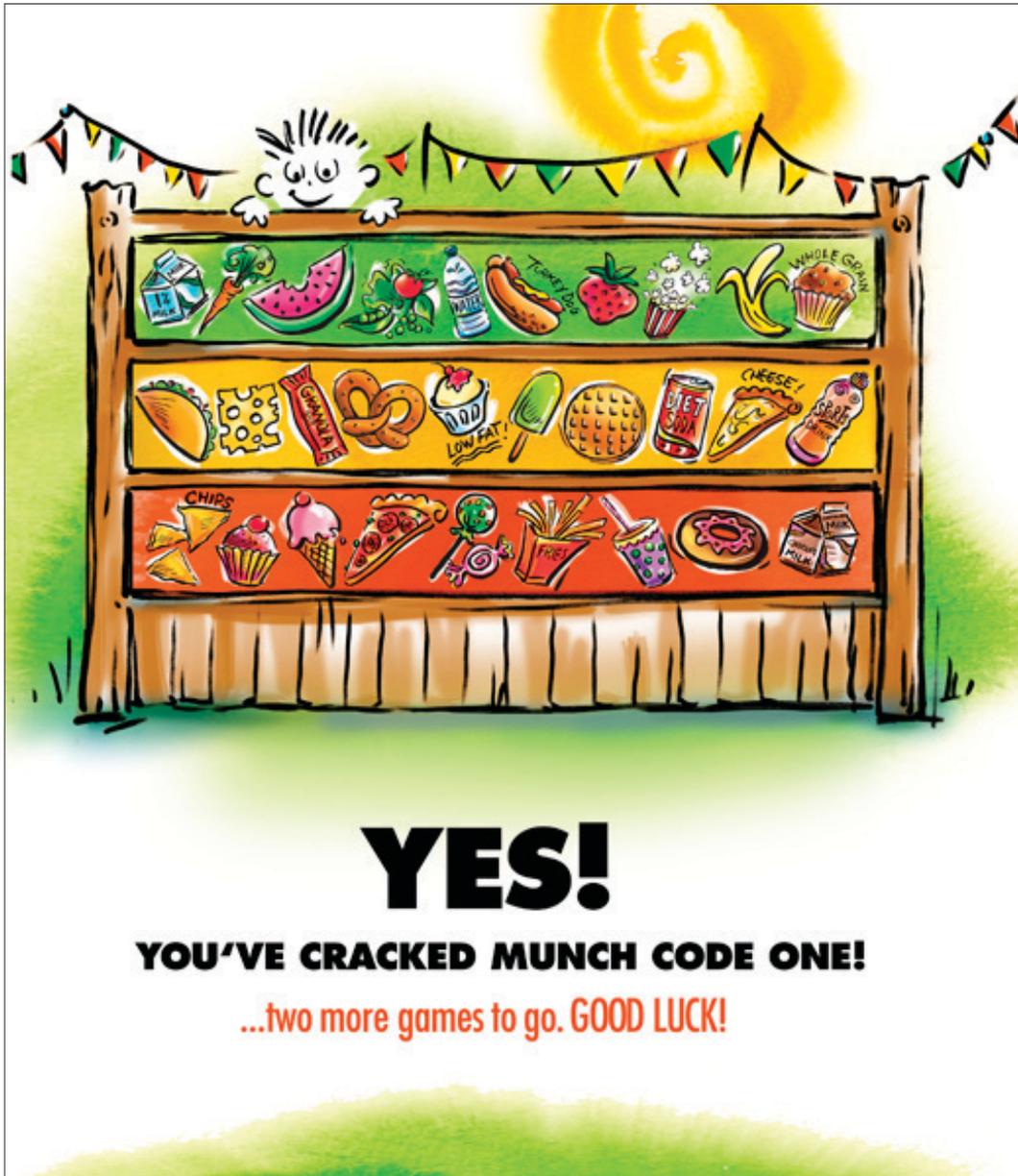
EAT A BUNCH!

JUST A LITTLE!

NOT SO MUCH!



HINT, HINT...
If you need one, click here!



HELP ME PICK THE RIGHT SNACKS!

EAT A BUNCH!

JUST A LITTLE!

NOT SO MUCH!

I have an unbalanced mix of snacks in today's snack basket.

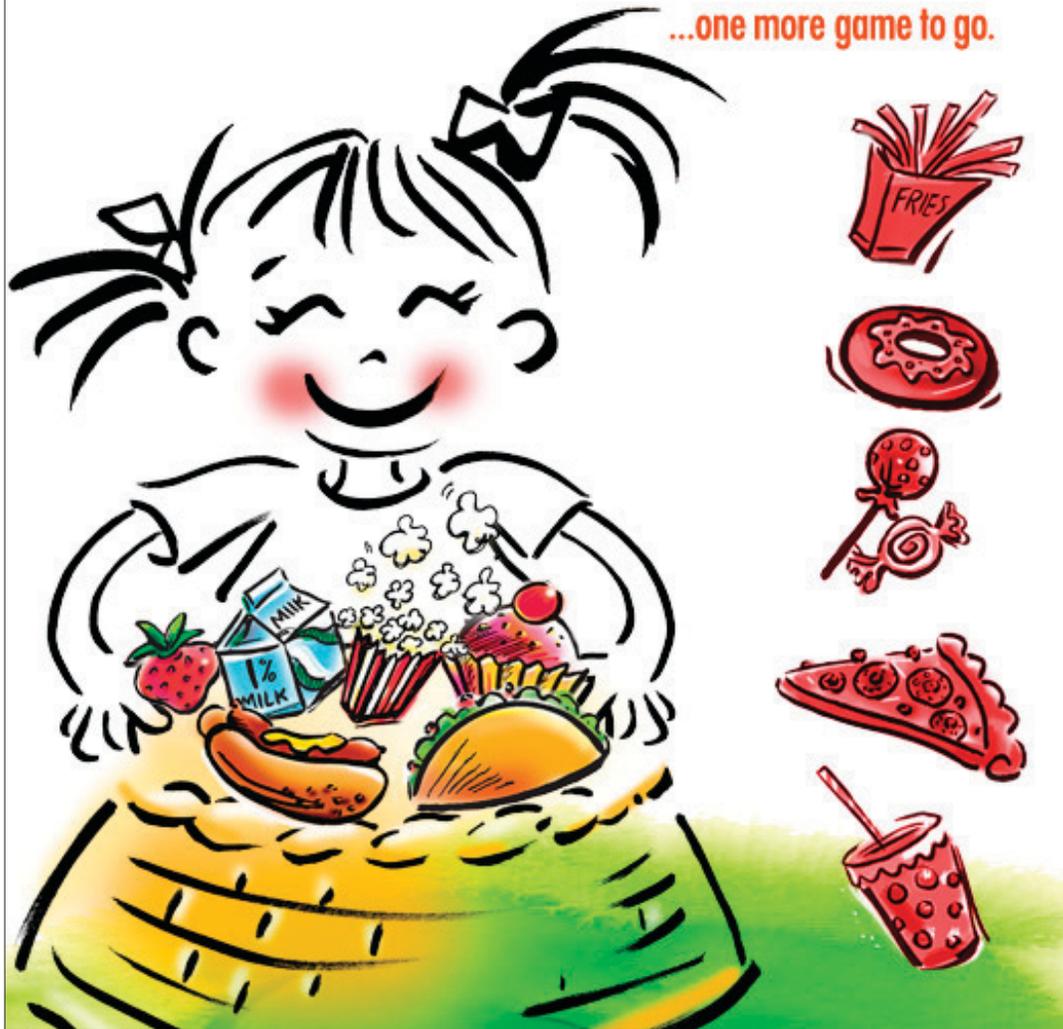
Drag any three 'Red Munch Code' snacks out of my basket and place each one on top of a healthier snack choice to the right. Make three healthier choices and you win!



YAY!

YOU'VE CRACKED THE CODE AGAIN!

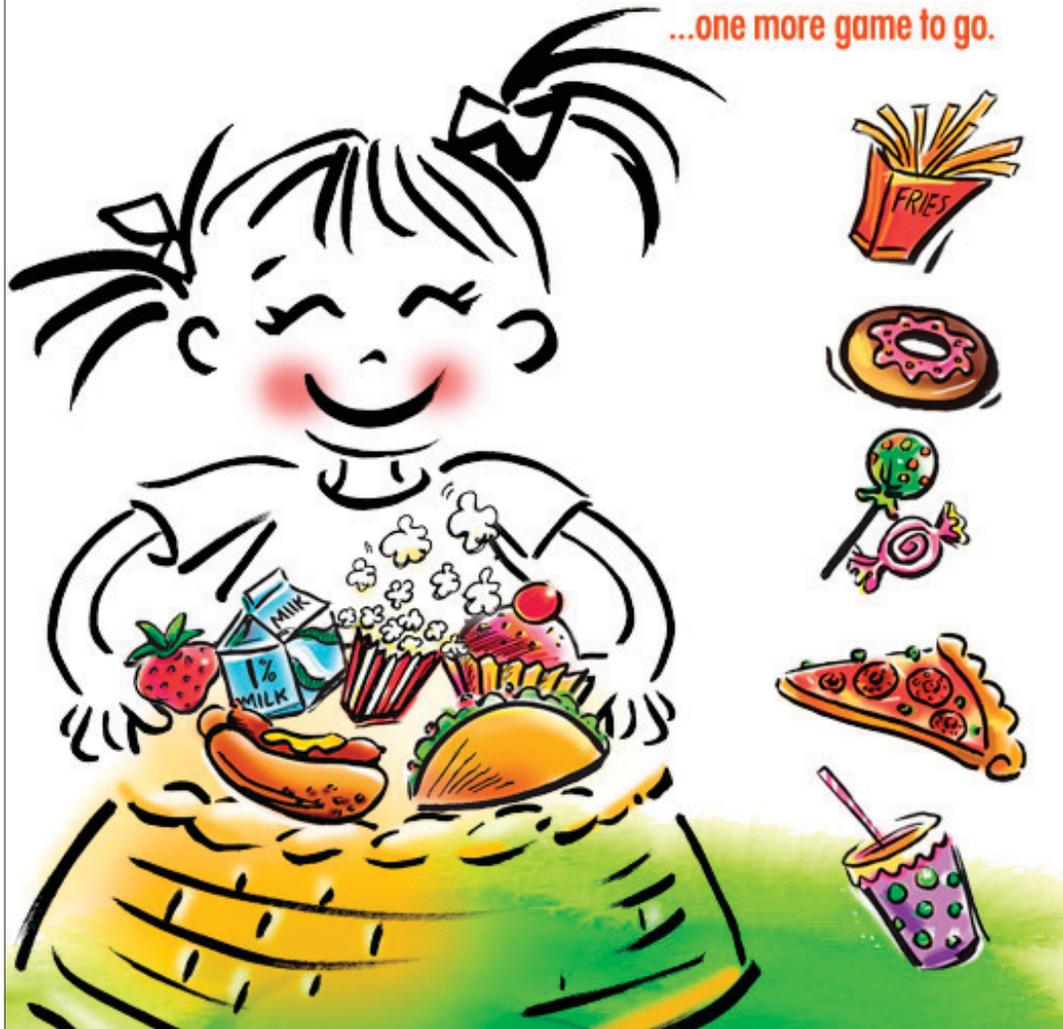
...one more game to go.



YAY!

YOU'VE CRACKED THE CODE AGAIN!

...one more game to go.



BALANCE IS THE KEY!

EAT A BUNCH!

Choose the right number of snacks for the day.

How many **Red** snacks? How many **Yellow** snacks?

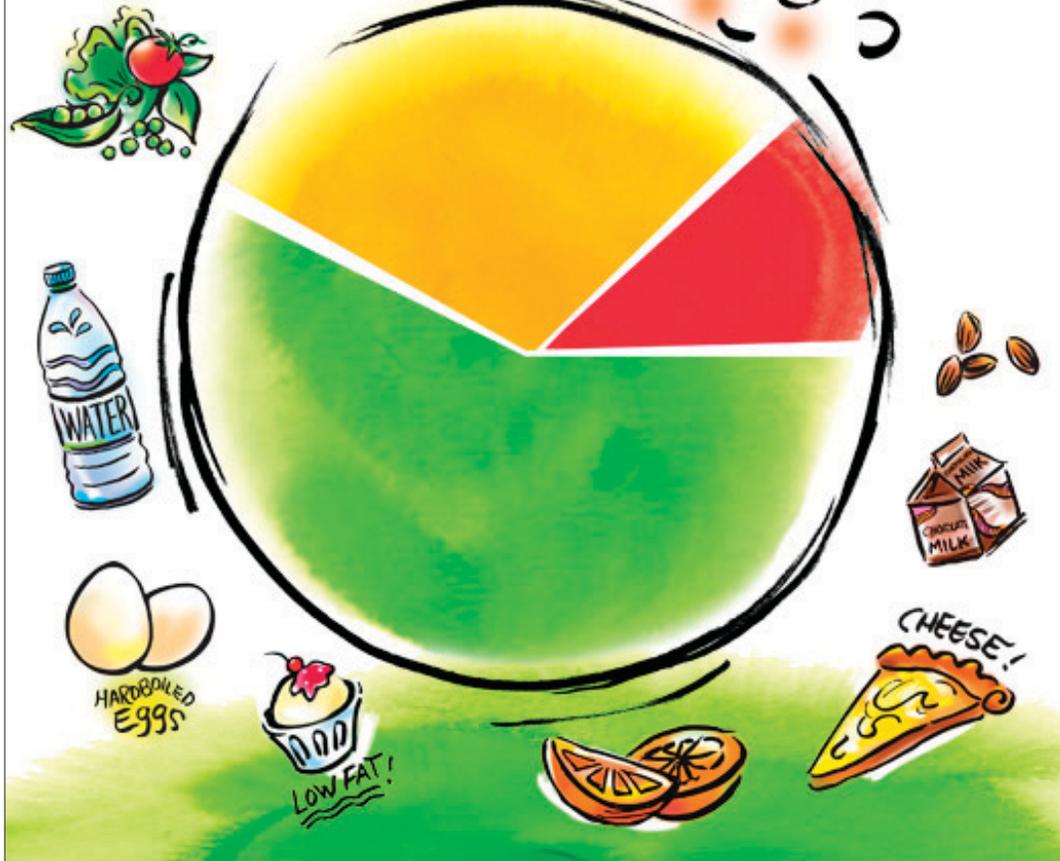
How many **Green** snacks?

JUST A LITTLE!

Pick the from the snacks below & drag them into the Munch Code plate.

NOT SO MUCH!

When you get the right number of foods in the right color you win!



WOOHOO!
YOU GOT IT!

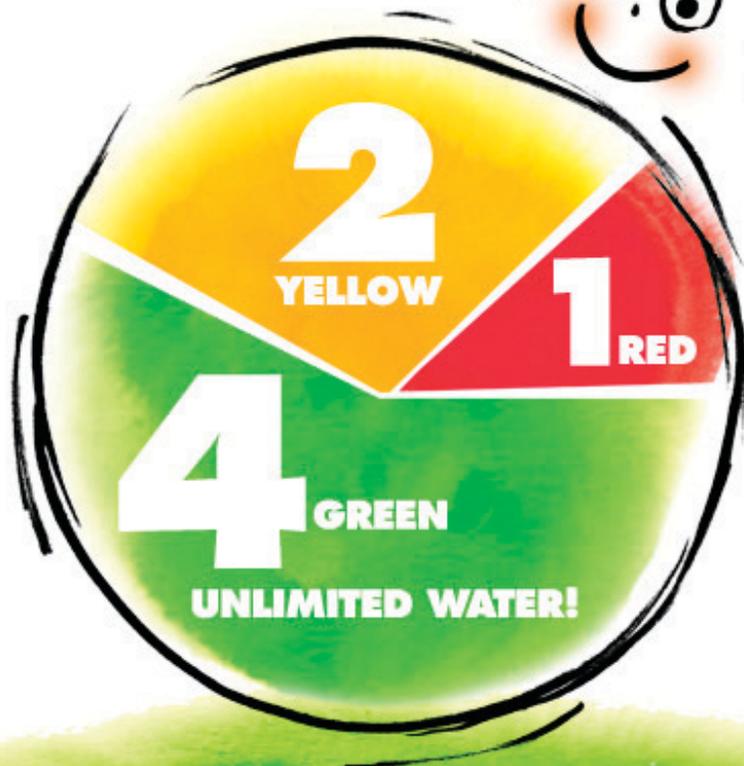
ENTER TO WIN COOL PRIZES...NOW!



THANKS FOR PLAYING THE MUNCH CODE GAME!

WOOHOO!
YOU GOT IT!

ENTER TO WIN COOL PRIZES...NOW!



THANKS FOR PLAYING THE MUNCH CODE GAME!



...enter below for your chance to win. **GOOD LUCK!**
A NEW PRIZE WINNER EVERY WEEK

1 GRAND PRIZE BIKE!
 Check our Facebook page for Grand Prize details & weekly winners!

Choose the prize YOU would like to win here!

- **FOOTBALL**
- **TENNIS RACKET**
- **SOCCERBALL**
- **BASEBALL & BAT**
- **BASEBALL GLOVE**
- **BIKE HELMET**
- **BACKPACK**
- **CAMPING GEAR**
- **LADDER GAME**

MUNCH CODE!
 Colors to *live* by.

*For official rules click here

YOUR NAME EMAIL

PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN NAME EMAIL

STREET ADDRESS

CITY ZIP CODE

PHONE

GRADE SCHOOL NAME

SCHOOL LOCATION (CITY)





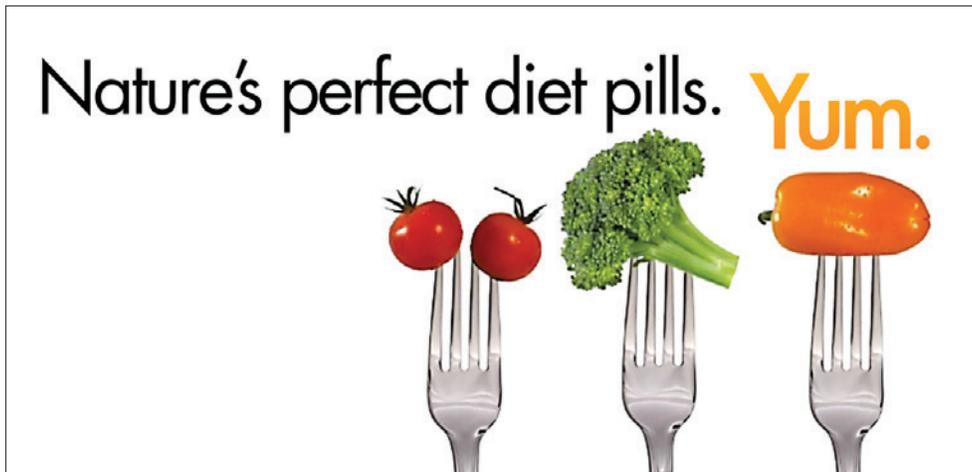
TV Concept #1



TV Concept #2



Billboard Concept #1



Billboard Concept #2



Billboard Concept #3



Billboard Concept #4



Billboard Concept #5



Yum!

THINK HEALTHY THINK COLOR

Fresh is best, frozen is fantastic, canned counts. No matter how you get your veggies, eat 8 servings per day. For more yummy recipes, go to healthysd.gov

VEGETARIAN "SOUTHERN-STYLE" COLLARD GREENS

Ingredients

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 tablespoon olive oil | 1 clove garlic, finely chopped |
| 1 tablespoon butter | 1 pound collard greens, chopped |
| 1/2 large onion, chopped | 3 cups vegetable stock |
| 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes | 2 tomatoes, seeded and chopped |
| | Salt and freshly ground black pepper |

Directions

In a large pot over medium heat, heat oil and butter. Saute the onions until slightly softened, about 2 minutes, then add the red pepper flakes and garlic, cook another minute. Add collard greens and cook another minute. Add the vegetable stock, cover and bring to a simmer. Cook until greens are tender, about 40 minutes. Add tomatoes and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Yum! RECIPE 28



1 BUNCH OF COLLARD GREENS

SAVE \$2.00



Coupon Card #1 Front and Back



Yum!

THINK HEALTHY THINK COLOR

Fresh is best, frozen is fantastic, canned counts. No matter how you get your veggies, eat 8 servings per day. For more yummy recipes, go to healthysd.gov

CHICKEN & BROCCOLI STIR-FRY

Ingredients

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1/3 cup soy sauce | 1 teaspoon cornstarch |
| 2 tablespoon brown sugar | 1 1/2 pound chicken (cut in bite-size pieces) |
| 1 clove garlic, crushed | 1 tablespoon oil |
| 1 teaspoon ginger | 1 bunch broccoli |
| | 1 large onion |

Directions

Combine first 6 ingredients with 1/4 cup water in bowl, mixing well. Marinate chicken in sauce for 10 minutes or longer. Drain chicken, reserving marinade. Heat oil in skillet. Add chicken in small amounts to prevent crowding. Stir-fry until brown. Remove from skillet and set aside. Add broccoli and onion to hot skillet. Stir-fry 1 minute. Add 1/4 cup water, cover and steam for 3 minutes or until broccoli is tender-crisp. Return chicken to skillet, adding marinade. heat through, stirring constantly. Serve over rice.

Yum! RECIPE 28



1 BUNCH OF BROCCOLI

SAVE \$1.00



Coupon Card #2 Front and Back

Appendix B - Grocery Store Locations



Blackhawk: BJ's



Summerset: Haggar's



Sturgis: Grocery Mart



Hot Springs: Lynn's Dakotamart



Pine Ridge: Sioux Nation



Sharps Corner: Common Cents



Kyle: Kyle Grocery



Martin: Waggoners' Grocery



Mission: First Stop Grocery



Mission: Turtle Creek Crossing



Mission: Buche Foods



Ft. Thompson: Lynn's Dakotamart



Highmore: Vlceks



Miller: Tucker's SuperValu



Huron: Fair City Foods



Huron: Coburn's



DeSmet: Maynard's



Volga: Jager's Grocery



Brookings: Hy-Vee



Brookings: Walmart



Arlington: Plagman's



Madison: Sunshine Foods



Hartford: Sunshine Foods



Tea: Sunshine Foods



Sioux Falls: Sunshine Foods



Sioux Falls: Franklin Food Market



Mitchell: County Fair Food Store