

Behavioral Economics in the Lunchroom: 9 Key Ideas



Behavioral economics = the study of how our environment influences our choices

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The environment (appearance, placement, ambiance, prompts, etc.) strongly influences how people select, eat, and enjoy foods. > You control the lunchroom environment. > Change the environment → change the students' food choices. 	<p>TRY IT AT HOME: This month, choose 2+ ways to rearrange your kitchen, pantry, or refrigerator to promote healthy eating at home.</p>
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HOT STATE VS. COLD STATE DECISION-MAKING

<p>In a hot state, you are emotional, impulsive, or rushed. This leads to less-healthy food choices. Remember: "STRESSED" is "DESSERTS" spelled backwards!</p>	<p>In a cold state, you feel logical and calm. You make better long-term decisions about your health, including eating more healthy foods.</p>	<p>Plan ahead: Pack snacks and lunches the night before. Shop for groceries after a meal, when you are full.</p>
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6 PRINCIPLES OF BEHAVIORAL ECONOMICS IN THE LUNCHROOM

PORZION SIZE	Serve correctly sized portions, especially of treats	Ex.: small utensils for condiments, single-serving snacks	Don't eat snacks from the container. Serve yourself one portion in a small bowl.
CONVENIENCE	Make healthy foods quick and easy to reach	Ex.: healthy foods window, grab and go, foods up front within easy reach	Put less healthy snacks on the top/bottom shelves, in the back. Put healthy choices front and center.
VISIBILITY	Make healthy foods impossible to overlook	Ex.: signs; color; foods first in service line, in front, & by register	Place fruits & veggies on eye level shelf of refrigerator, in front. Place a bowl of handheld fruit on kitchen table/counter.
TASTE EXPECTATIONS	Foods that look good will taste good	Ex.: food is neat and colorful, garnish, clean service area	Bright, colorful serving-ware (plates, napkins, placemats, utensils, etc.) makes foods look more appetizing.
SUGGESTIVE SELLING	Talk up healthy foods, positive customer service, smile	Ex.: signs, verbal prompts, smiles; promote healthy choices	Ask, "Which vegetable would you like?" Offer 2+ options.
SMART PRICING	Offer deals on healthy foods and reimbursable meals.	Ex.: healthy snack combo deals, expanded RM options	Resist combo meals. Buy only what you want to eat. If you "go large," put half away before eating, for later. Pay cash.