Montana’s Smarter Lunchrooms:

Helping students eat better, choose healthier and waste less- it really works

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Rural Health Initiative –Webinar Series – Part I
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The School Lunch Mission

- Serve nutritional meals
- Equal access for all students
- Maintain low cost
- Maintain participation
- Encourage longer-term healthy decisions
Learning Objective
Participants will understand…

1. Understand the definition of behavioral economics and the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement.
2. Understand how behavioral economics influences food choices to help students select and eat healthier foods.
3. List successful Smarter Lunchroom strategies from Montana high schools
THANK YOU

- Montana Rural Health Initiative, MSU for co-hosting this webinar series. This is Part 1 of a five part series.

- School nutrition professionals across Montana who work so hard to serve our students healthful, tasty meals each day to support their growth and development, and fuel academic and athletic success.
Smarter Lunchrooms Techniques in MT Schools

WWMD? – What would McDonald’s do? – Cindy Giese

Mini salad bar at beginning of the lunch line – Becky Green, Malta

Creative names – McRobin’s Breakfast Sandwich – Robin Vogler, Somers

Appealing, reimbursable Grab and Go Meals – Kathy Martin, Corvallis
Poll Question # 1 and # 2

- Do you work in a Montana school?
  
  Yes
  
  No

- If you don’t work in a school, is there one that you will approach about working with to implement Smarter Lunchroom’s strategies in its cafeteria?
  
  Yes
  
  No
  
  Not sure
What is Behavioral Economics?

• The study of how our environment impacts our food choices

• It is based on 6 principles:
  1. Manage portion size,
  2. Increase convenience,
  3. Improve visibility,
  4. Enhance taste expectations,
  5. Utilize suggestive selling, and
  6. Set smart pricing strategies
Mindless Eating
Why We Eat More Than We Think

- Most food decisions are automatic, or “mindless”
  - controlled largely by our environment rather than by our willpower
  - Particularly true for young people
- Use *behavioral theory* to encourage better choices
- These concepts can be applied to other environments like your homes, restaurants and grocery stores

Dr. Wansink’s book -- *Slim By Design*

[www.smarterlunchrooms.org](http://www.smarterlunchrooms.org)

Dr. Brian Wansink – Cornell University BEN Center
WARM-UP CHALLENGE

How many brands and labels can you remember?

1. Look at the following slide for 15 seconds.

2. In 45 seconds, write down as many labels and brands as you can remember from the picture.
WARM-UP DISCUSSION, PART 1

› What brands did you remember?
WARM-UP DISCUSSION, PART 2

- Look back to the picture. Which shelf do most of the items and brands you remembered appear on?
- Why were these the items you saw and remembered most?
FRONT AND CENTER

- We notice and remember items placed in front of us at eye level.
  - Easy to see
  - Easy to reach
  - This becomes our default setting.
LET’S GET SCIENTIFIC

In the language of behavioral economics, these factors are called Visibility and Convenience, and they influence consumers’ choices of everything from snacks to cars to political candidates.

- Choices influenced by environment
- Most choices are so subliminal they seem automatic
- Very hard to “out-think” this tendency, even if you are aware of it
- Change your environment = change your habits.
The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement (SLM)

- Based on 6 easy, research-backed behavioral economics principles
- The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement uses these guidelines to make inexpensive, easy, effective changes to the way kids eat in school.
The following principles are based on research concerning various **environmental cues that influence eating behavior**. They are true in school lunchrooms as well as in restaurants, food courts, and even in your home kitchen!

1. **Manage Portion Sizes**
2. **Increase Convenience**
3. **Improve Visibility**
4. **Enhance Taste Expectations**
5. **Utilize Suggestive Selling**
6. **Set Smart Pricing Strategies**
6 areas:

- Focus on Fruit
- Promoting Veggies & Fruits
- Moving More White Milk
- Entrée of the Day
- Increasing sales of Reimbursable Meals
- Creating School Synergies

**Important Words**

**Service areas:** Any location where students can purchase or are provided with food
- **Dining areas:** Any location where students can consume the food purchased or provided

**Grub and Go Meals:** Any meal with components pre-packaged together for ease and convenience - such as a brown bag lunch or “Fun Lunch” etc.

**Designated Line:** Any foodservice line which has been specified for particular food items or concepts - such as a pizza line, deli line, salad line etc.

**Alternative entrée options:** Any meal component which could also be considered an entrée for students - such as the salad bar, yogurt parfait, vegetarian/vegan or meatless options etc.

**Reimbursable "Combo Meal" pairings:** Any reimbursable components available independently on your foodservice lines which you have identified as a part of a promotional complete meal - For example you decide your beef taco, seasoned beans, frozen strawberries and 1/2 milk are part of a promotional meal called the, “Mi Amigo Meal” etc.

**Non-functional lunchroom equipment:** Any items which are either broken, availing repair or are simply not used during meal service - such as empty or broken steam tables, coolers, registants etc.

**Good Rapport:** Communication is completed in a friendly and polite manner

**All Points of Sale:** Any location where a register/pin-pad is located for example: deli line, snack windows, la carte line, hot line, kiosks/cards etc.

**Focusing on Fruit**
- At least two types of fruit are available daily
- Sliced or cut fruit is available daily
- Fruit options are not bruising, bruised or otherwise damaged
- Daily fruit options are given creative, age-appropriate names

**Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment**

**Instructions**

Read each of the statements below. Visualize your cafeteria, your service areas and your school building. Indicate whether the statement is true for your school by checking the box to the left.

If you believe that your school does not reflect the statement 100% do not check the box on the left. After you have completed the checklist, tally all boxes with check marks and write this number in the designated area on the back of the form. This number represents your school’s baseline score. The boxes which are not checked are areas of opportunity for you to consider implementing in the future. We recommend completing this checklist annually to measure your improvement!

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| Fruit is available at all points of sale (deli, snack windows, a la carte lines etc.) |
| Daily fruit options are available in at least two different locations on each service line |
| At least one daily fruit option is available near all registers (If there are concerns regarding edible peel, fruit can be bagged or wrapped) |
| Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chaffing/hotel pans) |
| A mixed variety of whole fruits are displayed together |
| Daily fruit options are easily seen by students of average height for your school |
| Daily fruit options are bundled into grab and go meals available to students |
| Daily fruit options are written legibly on menus boards in all service and dining areas |

**Promoting Vegetables & Salad**
- At least two types of vegetable are available daily
- Vegetables are not wilted, browning, or otherwise damaged
- At least one vegetable option is available in all foodservice areas
- Individual salads or a salad bar is available to all students
- The salad bar is highly visible and located in a high traffic area
- Self-serve salad bar utensils are at the appropriate portion size or larger for all fruits and vegetable offered
- Self-serve salad bar utensils are smaller for croutons, dressing and other non-produce items
- Daily vegetable options are available in at least two different locations on each service line
- Daily vegetable options are easily seen by students of average height for your school
- A daily vegetable option is bundled into grab and go meals available to students
- A default vegetable choice is established by pre-plating a vegetable on some of the trays

| Available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names |
| All vegetable names are printed/written on name-cards or product IDs and displayed next to each vegetable option daily |
| All vegetable names are written and legible on menu boards |
| All vegetable names are included on the published monthly school lunch menu |

**Promoting More White Milk**
- All beverage coolers have white milk available
- White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers
- White milk crates are placed so that they are the first beverage option in all designated milk coolers
- White milk is available at all points of sale (deli-line, snack windows, a la carte lines etc.)
- White milk represents at least 1/3 of all visible milk in the lunchroom
- White milk is easily seen by students of average height for your school
- White milk is bundled into grab and go meals available to students as the default beverage
- White milk is promoted on menu boards legibly
- White milk is replenished so all displays appear “full” continually throughout meal service and after each lunch period

**Entrée of the Day**
- A daily entrée option has been identified to promote as a “targeted entrée” in each service area and for each designated line (deli-line, snack windows, a la carte lines etc.)
- Daily targeted entrée options are highlighted on posters or signs
- Daily targeted entrée is easily seen by students of average height for your school
- Daily targeted entrées have been provided creative or descriptive names
- All targeted entrée names are printed/written on name-cards or product IDs and displayed next to each respective entrée daily
School Wellness Policy Linkages

- Smarter Lunchrooms may be a component of a school’s wellness policy implementation plan.

- It is the basis for a school achieving a HealthierUS School Challenge/Smarter Lunchroom award.
Make healthy foods more convenient.

The easier it is to see a food, the more likely we are to eat it!

- Put fruit and vegetables 2-3 places on line
- Add soup, salad and homemade bread to salad bar
- Put fruit bowl by cash Register

Hardin, Columbia Falls, Troy High School Smart Strategies
Fresh, inviting salad bar is the first option hungry customers see at Hardin High School
Out of sight, out of mind.

* Simply *seeing* a brownie or other high-calorie food can lead to unplanned consumption – we crave it and eat it before we think twice.

* Conversely, the image or presence of a healthy food option can lead to consumption of healthier foods. Simply moving a salad bar to improve access to it can *increase (3 X in one school)* salad sales!
Hardin’s High School Smart Strategy for Increasing **Visibility** of Fruit

It is more FUN to choose an orange from an Orange Mountain than from a chaffing dish…… Even for high school students!!
Enhance Taste Expectations

**Talk It Up to Spice It Up!** Get kids excited about healthy foods by creating fun, imaginative names such as “X-ray Vision Carrots.” Increase the allure of adult foods by adding appealing details: “tangy smoothie,” “Texas barbecue,” or “crisp garden salad.”

Why it works: It’s (almost) all in your head!

- Montana Made Meal served monthly
- Fruit Smoothies Served Daily for Lunch
- Fun Signage at Salad Bar
- Park, Skyview (Billings) and Troy High Schools
Students requested a Smoothie Bar and suggested to use leftover fruit to make the Smoothies.....

Notice the enticing names.....creates the expectation that the smoothies will taste delicious!
Enhancing Taste Expectations and Suggestive Selling

Livingston’s Park High School
Smart Strategies
New décor along serving line

Billings Skyview HS
Strategies in Montana high schools

With student input from a Smarter Lunchroom Advisory Team…

- Increased convenience and visibility of fruit and vegetable menu offerings
- Redesign of service line and/or salad bar
- Implementation of a fruit or vegetable sharing basket
- Enhanced marketing efforts of healthy items
POSITIVE OUTCOMES

1. 33% increase in Scorecard total scores
2. Increased student selection at the salad bar
3. Decreased waste of fruits/vegetables and milk
4. Increased participation levels
LETS MAKE OURS A SMARTER LUNCHROOM!

Learn more: SmarterLunchrooms.org
Action Steps

- Take the B.E.N. Cornell University free course: Smarter Lunchrooms Module (2 hours). It is located at this link: https://cornell.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3CVLswwEZI5qdak

- Plan to participate in Webinar Series: Part 2 on November 3, 2015 at 4:00-4:30 pm
  
  Discover the HealthierUS School Challenge: Smarter Lunchrooms Award

- Contact us if you would like assistance
Kalispell School District, MT

Questions or Comments
Poll Question # 3

Did your knowledge of behavioral economics increase as a result of this webinar

1 = Yes
2 = No
For more information, please contact

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