

# Kids experiencing food insecurity drink more sugary beverages, eat less fruit in summer

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Credit: LightFieldStudios

While children experiencing food insecurity benefit from school-based nutrition assistance programs during the school year, little is known about what foods they consume during the summer when those programs are not available.

A recent University of Minnesota School of Nursing study published in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* sought to increase that knowledge with a secondary analysis of data from two National Institutes of Health-funded, community-based randomized control studies. Participants included [children](#), ages eight through 12.

"The analysis showed children who experienced [food insecurity](#)—those who had a limited availability of nutritionally adequate food—ate less fruit and consumed more sugary beverages during the summer, particularly on the weekends," said Research Associate Jiwoo Lee, Ph.D., R.N., lead author.

Generally, children are prone to gain weight over the [summer months](#). The researchers suggest that their research points to a need for ongoing and new efforts to improve weekend food access for children, particularly for those who experience food insecurity.

"We found that the summer food intake of children whose households were food insecure was less ideal than those from [food](#) secure households. We suspect that this may be due to reduced access to nutritious foods. The under-utilization of summer nutrition assistance programs may be contributing," said Lee.

"In addition to the need for community support of healthy foods through summer programs, community events, farmer's markets and the like, these findings make it clear that nutrition assistance programs are needed year-round," said Professor Jayne Fulkerson, Ph.D., co-author of this study.

**More information:** Jiwoo Lee et al. Diet Quality and Fruit, Vegetable, and Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Consumption by Household Food Insecurity among 8- to 12-Year-Old Children during Summer Months, *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* (2019). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jand.2019.03.004](#)

Provided by University of Minnesota

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