

Parent diet interventions help children's eating habits

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Healthy diet interventions have been shown to be especially important for fruit and vegetable consumption, with research demonstrating that parental modeling, preferences and intake are positively associated with

children's food preference, as well as children's intake of fruit and vegetables.

To further explore this influence, researchers conducted the "Time for Healthy Habits" translational trial over a 12-week period that recruited more than 450 [parents](#) of children aged from 2 to 6 years, offered as a free population-wide service across New South Wales between May 2019 and March 2020, with follow-up contact until March 2021.

The trial involved two remotely delivered (telephone or online) interventions, but while the results showed improved dietary outcomes for both parents and children, is not clear what is the most effective, readily embraced means of providing interventions.

While more parents expressed a preference for the online intervention, this still registered a lower level of engagement—with a completion rate of only 26% versus a telephone completion rate of 33%.

Study results indicate that parents who received the telephone intervention significantly increased their [vegetable](#) but not [fruit](#) consumption, relative to parents who had received online interventions.

"Because participant engagement remains a barrier for technology-based health interventions, it's important that future research focuses on better understanding that barriers and enablers to parent engagement with technology-based [intervention](#)," says Flinders University's Dr. Chris Rissel, who was part of the research team. "We need this knowledge to optimize improvements to family lifestyle behaviors."

The researchers conclude that the effectiveness of two remotely delivered healthy lifestyle interventions (telephone and online) can help increase parent fruit and vegetable intakes—however, given the relatively small sample size of this trial, they recommend exploring more

methods for optimizing parent engagement with technology-based interventions, to enable greater health benefits for both parents and their children.

The paper, "Parent Fruit and Vegetable Consumption Outcomes from the Translational 'Time for Healthy Habits' Trial: Secondary Outcomes from a Partially Randomized Preference Trial," is published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*.

More information: Rebecca J. Wyse et al, Parent Fruit and Vegetable Consumption Outcomes from the Translational 'Time for Healthy Habits' Trial: Secondary Outcomes from a Partially Randomized Preference Trial, *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* (2022). [DOI: 10.3390/ijerph19106165](https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19106165)

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