

Sample Blog

Using online tools to increase access to nutrition messages for low-income mothers

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Research presented on Oct. 29 at the American Public Health Association's 140th Annual Meeting & Exposition discussed the process of developing new online communication tools that promote healthy eating behaviors to low-income mothers.

The study, led by Judy Wilson of the Office of Research and Analysis in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), also looked at the information-seeking behaviors of low-income mothers as well as the message attributes that they found most appealing.

In 2010 and 2011, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service conducted focus groups with low-income mothers in six locations across the country. Focus group participants were culturally diverse mothers living in households with incomes at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty line. These focus groups captured information on household food practices, nutrition knowledge and beliefs, feedback on nutrition message concepts, and provided insights into the information-seeking behaviors and preferences of these mothers.

The focus groups found that mothers preferred messages that evoked feelings of empowerment, spoke to their influence on children's long-term health, offered practical tips, addressed health benefits, and included novel and relevant information and ideas. The focus groups also showed that mothers had regular Internet and computer access and sought information online by visiting multiple websites. Mothers said they expected to find nutrition information on Facebook, websites, through email (including newsletters), through online or TV news, and in grocery stores, doctor offices, and in schools.

These findings along with stakeholder input informed development of new online communication tools including three rollover widgets addressing whole grains, low fat milk, and child feeding methods that foster healthy eating skills in young children. The new online tools convey the messages and actionable tips in a format that mothers found appealing and accessible.

View slides from Wilson's presentation [here](#).

<http://nccor.org/blog/?p=1311>

- See more at: <http://nccor.org/blog/?p=1311#sthash.vbty9LCe.dpuf>

