

Health Benefits of SNAP

June 14, 2023

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. SNAP combats hunger and enables millions of individuals and families to better afford fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods.
2. Studies show that SNAP participation is linked with improved health outcomes, which may positively impact individual healthcare cost savings.

What is SNAP?

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federal nutrition and health program administered by states. SNAP benefits are meant to supplement the food budget and provide additional for eligible adults and children.(1)

- More than 41 million U.S. residents (12%) and 3.4 million Texas residents (11% of the state's population) received SNAP benefits in 2022. (1)
- More than 79% of SNAP participants in Texas were in families with children, and more than 27% were in families with older adults or people living with a disability. (1)
- In addition to the economic benefits of SNAP, the SNAP program is also linked with improved health outcomes for children, adults, the elderly, and those with disabilities. (1)
- According to the USDA, 6-month SNAP participation was associated with a 5-10% decrease in food insecurity, including households with children experiencing food insecurity. (2)
- SNAP helps 1 in 10 Texas workers put food on the table by helping them afford food, which is especially important given current inflation rates. (3)

SNAP HELPS
1 IN 10
TEXAS WORKERS
PUT FOOD ON
THE TABLE

Reference #3

SNAP Utilization & Improved Health Outcomes

SNAP combats hunger and helps low-income workers, families, the elderly, and people with disabilities purchase nutritious foods. (1,4)



- SNAP enables low-income individuals and their families to afford both the adequate quantity and quality of food they need to live healthy lives and improves access to fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods. (1)
- This frees up additional monetary resources that can then be used on health-promoting activities, preventive care, and medication. (4)

- Receiving preventive and ongoing care is associated with better diagnosis and management of chronic diseases and other health conditions. (5) As a result, research shows SNAP utilization is linked with improved current and long-term health. (4)
- SNAP participants report better health status in comparison to non-participants. (4) Additionally, adult SNAP participants miss fewer workdays because of illness, make fewer visits to the doctor’s office, and have a reduced likelihood of exhibiting psychological distress.

Health Outcomes for Children

Children with access to SNAP have a reduced risk of developing these conditions as adults: (6)



high blood pressure



heart disease



diabetes

- Access to SNAP for pregnant mothers and in early childhood improves rates of food insecurity, birth outcomes, and long-term health as adults. (4)
- Children who live in households that participate in SNAP report better health than their counterparts who do not and are less likely than low-income non-participants to be in fair or poor health, or to be underweight or have obesity, and more likely to see medical professionals for regular checkups. (4,6)

Health Outcomes for Older Adults

In 2020, approximately 5.3 million seniors used SNAP benefits to afford an adequate diet, accounting for about 29% of all SNAP recipients nationally. (7)

- Despite this, the USDA estimates that only 42% of eligible seniors participate in SNAP nationally and only 33% of eligible seniors participate in Texas. (8)



TEXAS - 33%



NATIONAL - 42%

- SNAP helps low-income seniors afford food and pay other household expenses. (9)
- Seniors are particularly at risk for the health consequences of food insecurity, such as diabetes. (9)
- Older adults who receive SNAP benefits are less likely to be admitted to nursing homes or hospitals. (4)
- Among older adults, those who do not participate in SNAP are less likely to meet the full prescribed dosage of their medication due to cost. (4)
- Being enrolled in SNAP enables older adults or seniors to better adhere to the medical treatment necessary to maintain good health. (4)

Health Outcomes for People Living with Disabilities

In 2018, about 21% of SNAP participants, representing approximately 8 million individuals nationally, were living with a disability. (10,11)



- The poverty rate among people living with disabilities is 26%, more than twice the rate of those living without disabilities. Households with individuals living with a disability also need 28% more income to maintain the same standard of living as those without a disability. The additional funds provide adaptive resources to perform daily tasks. (12)
- Households with adults receiving disability benefits are 3 times more likely to experience food insecurity compared to those households without an adult with a disability. The likelihood of experiencing food insecurity increases to nearly 4 times in households where an adult with disabilities does not receive benefits. (12)

- Individuals with disabilities are more likely to have obesity, heart disease, diabetes, or chronic diseases which are also more likely among those experiencing food insecurity. Up to one-third of adults with disabilities have healthcare needs that are not being met due to the cost of healthcare services. (13,14)
- More research is needed to understand how SNAP benefits specifically improve the health and wellbeing of people with disabilities. (15)

Nutrition benefits from SNAP can support the economic well-being and food security of people with disabilities.

Reference #15

- Having a disability can make it more difficult to work, put food on the table, and afford health care. Therefore, nutrition benefits from SNAP can support the economic well-being and food security of people with disabilities. (15)
- Strict program definitions of disability, an average 3-to-5-month appeal process, and 5 month waiting period after approval for government disability benefits exclude many people from SNAP's life-changing benefits. (15-17)
- States can also simplify the application process and make it accessible so that people with disabilities can fully access SNAP benefits. (15)

Additional Resources

[Community Eligibility Provisions](#)

[College Students and SNAP Utilization](#)

[Produce Prescription \(Rx\) Programs](#)

[TX RPC Lunch & Learn Event: Food Insecurity in Texas](#)

[Double Up Food Bucks: A SNAP Produce Incentive Program](#)

[Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\): Work Requirements](#)

[Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\): Vehicle Value Limits](#)

[Data Brief: Food Access in Texas and Texas Legislative Districts](#)

Food Insecurity in Texas brief (upon request)

School Meal Programs (upon request)

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