

Medical research confirms: The federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) improves health, reduces health costs.

When compared with demographically similar people without SNAP, research confirms –

Children who receive SNAP have:

- Increased intake of vitamins
- Lower risk of anemia
- Lower risk of obesity
- Lower risk of poor health
- Fewer hospital admissions for failure to thrive
- Less likelihood of developing metabolic syndrome (high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, obesity) as adults
- Better academic performance
- Increased high school completion rates
- Increased economic self-sufficiency and earnings as adults¹

Adults who receive SNAP have:

- Better self-reported health, fewer sick days
- Fewer hospitalizations
- Lower risk of high blood pressure
- Lower risk of diabetes and better management of diabetes
- Higher birthweight babies²
- Reduced likelihood of long term care for frail seniors and severely disabled adults³

SNAP reduces MassHealth costs.

In 2009-2010, the American Recovery and Responsibility Act (ARRA) boosted SNAP benefits by 13.6%, but sunset October 31, 2013.⁴ A recently published study of MassHealth costs from 2006 to 2012 found that, when SNAP benefits were increased during the ARRA SNAP boost, MassHealth costs declined, primarily due to a drop in hospitalizations.⁵

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¹ Deborah Frank, M.D., S. Ettinger de Cuba, M.Sandel, and M. Black, “SNAP cuts will harm children in the USA,” *The Lancet*, vol 382, no 9899, (2013), pp.1155-6 ; Executive Office of the President of the United States, “Long-Term Benefits of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program,” December 2015,

https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/documents/SNAP_report_final_nonembargo.pdf, pp.24-8.

² “Long-Term Benefits of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program,” Ibid, pp. 23-4.

³ Sarah Szanton, R. Cahill, R. James, and J. Wolff, “Access to Public Benefits to Reduce Risk for Nursing Home Entry Among Maryland’s Dual Eligible Older Adults,” Johns Hopkins University, 2015, at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284174095_Access_to_Public_Benefits_to_Reduce_Risk_for_Nursing_Home_Entry_Among_Maryland's_Dual_Eligible_Older_Adults

⁴ USDA Economic Research Service, ARRA summary, November 2015 [http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-\(snap\)/arra.aspx](http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-(snap)/arra.aspx)

⁵ Sonik, Rajan, “Massachusetts Inpatient Medicaid Cost Response to Increased Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Benefits,” *Am J, Public Health*, March 2016, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26794167>