

SNAP, our nation's largest child nutrition program, is a crucial foundation for public health. SNAP **protects children from costly health problems** including low birth weight, malnutrition, infections, hospitalizations, mental health issues, impaired brain development, and, later in life, diabetes and heart problems.



1 in 4

One in four children in the United States live in families participating in SNAP. Policies that deprive them of adequate SNAP benefits damage the health of our children's bodies and brains.

What are the health benefits of SNAP?



Improves child health

Young children in families participating in SNAP are **healthier, grow better, and are more likely to develop well emotionally and academically for their age** compared to their peers in likely eligible families not participating in the program.



Improves caregiver health

Children need healthy families to thrive. Consistent participation in SNAP has been associated with **positive maternal mental health and lower risk of heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension** in adults.



Increases food security for families and children

Caregivers often try to protect children from hunger by forgoing meals themselves. Compared to families who are likely eligible, but not participating in SNAP, families with young children participating in SNAP are **22 percent more likely to be able to afford enough food for all members**. Additionally, they are **33 percent more likely to have enough resources to protect children from having the size of meals cut**.



Alleviates other economic hardships

Working in tandem with other programs to preserve family health, SNAP has a positive ripple effect. **Families participating in SNAP are 28 percent more likely to be able to pay for medical expenses** without foregoing basic necessities like food, rent and utilities.

Doctor-Approved Policy Recommendations

Like any vaccine, the proper dosage of SNAP is essential for long-term success. Cutting SNAP increases food insecurity and puts the health of young children and their families at risk. Expanding SNAP access and benefit levels is good for families, good for public health and reducing health care costs, and good for the future of our country.

