

A collage of various healthy foods including fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes. The top section shows a bowl of mixed berries, a bowl of almonds, fresh spinach, a green apple, a red apple, a bowl of lentils, and a head of broccoli. The bottom section shows a bowl of blueberries, a green apple, a sliced red onion, a loaf of bread, a sliced orange, a yellow bell pepper, a head of broccoli, a bowl of cashews, a bowl of green peas, and a bowl of chickpeas.

Healthy Eating Made Practical: Choices, Access, and Real Life

Caitlin Daw

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Family and Consumer Sciences



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Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) is a field focused on helping individuals, families, and communities build practical skills to improve everyday life. It brings together areas like nutrition, health, financial literacy, food safety, and family well-being to support informed decision-making and long-term stability. Through education and community partnerships, FCS programs provide hands-on, research-based guidance that helps people make healthier choices, manage resources effectively, and strengthen their overall quality of life.

What makes it hardest to eat healthy where you live?



Cost

What makes it hardest to eat healthy where you live?



**Access
& Distance**



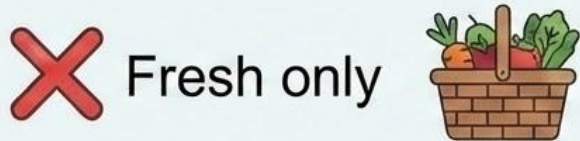
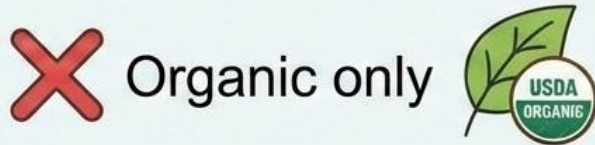
**Time
Constraints**



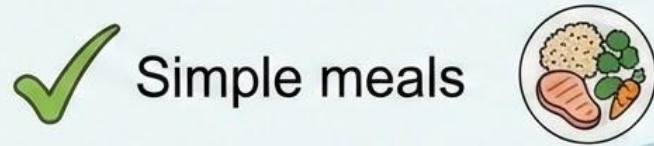
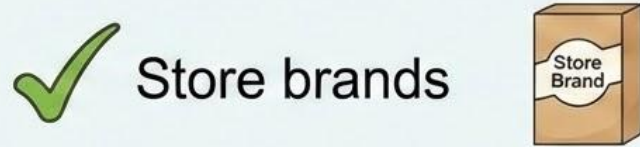
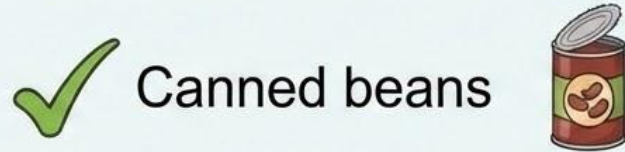
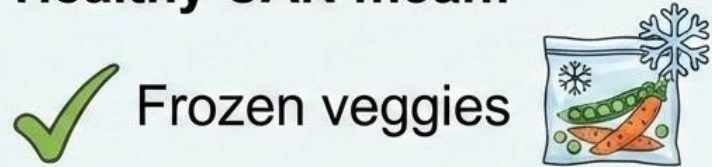
**Quality &
Availability**

Rethinking “Healthy”

Healthy doesn't have to mean:









Healthy CAN mean:



All Forms Count



Smart Shopping Tips

-  **Fresh produce** costs less when it is in season
-  Stretch your food dollars with canned and frozen fruits and vegetables
-  Compare prices.
-  Store brands may cost less than national brands
-  Check unit price labels and store sale fliers
-  Wash and cut your fresh produce at home. Pre-cut costs more than whole fruit and vegetables.

All can be healthy!



Fresh

Great when available



Frozen

Long-lasting, nutrient-rich



Canned

Convenient, affordable



Tip: Choose Low sodium / no added sugar when possible!

Promote Healthy Food Choices

Pack Healthy Boxes and Bags.



Pack Healthy Boxes and Bags.



Learn how to identify foods from each food group



Sort foods to determine healthiest choices (SWAP method)



Pack more nutritious, whole, single ingredient foods and include less highly processed foods

Give a little nudge.



Give a little nudge.



Share positive food messages with pantry clients to encourage preparation of healthy food choices at home



Promote/highlight healthy food options to encourage pantry clients to select these foods

Promote Healthy Food Choices

Make it a Combo



- ✓ Combine a few food groups together to create meal starters
- ✓ Pair featured foods with healthy recipes

Say it with Signs/ Dazzle with Displays



- ✓ Create signage to promote healthy foods available in the pantry
- ✓ Prepare food tastings and samples to complement food displays, encouraging clients to select and prepare healthy foods at home

Stock up on Health



- ✓ Procure and solicit donations of healthy foods
- ✓ Learn to thank donor partners and to guide their future pantry donations toward more healthy foods which support community needs

Client Choice Matters

Instead of:

✗ Here's what you get



It becomes:

✓ What works best for you and your family?



People deserve options



Choice increases dignity



Leads to better outcomes



Encourages healthier decisions

Client Choice vs Traditional Model

Traditional Food Pantry




- Pre-packaged bags 
- Limited flexibility 
- Higher food waste 
- Less engagement 

Client Choice Pantry



- Client selects items 
- Personalized choices 
- Less Waste 
- More empowerment 

It's the difference between being handed a meal... and being part of the decision. 

Healthy Food Access in Action: Pocomoke High School

“Market Monday”

Supporting Food Access Through
Community Partnerships



- Local farmer donates unsold produce
- Fresh food distributed to the community
- “Take what you need” approach
- Cooking demos + recipes provided
- Builds confidence using new foods



Warrior Roots Garden

Growing Knowledge + Healthy
Habits



- Students grow food from seed to harvest
- Learn nutrition, food prep, and food safety
- Hands-on, real-world learning
- Builds responsibility and teamwork
- Increases willingness to try new foods



Healthy Food Access in Action: Pocomoke High School

School Pantry

From Storage Closet to Student-Centered Resource



- Transformed into a fully functional pantry
- Client choice model implemented
- Families select foods that meet their needs
- Options include:
 - Shopping-style food lists
 - Pre-built meal kits
 - Promotes dignity and reduces food waste

Gleaning with The Society of St. Andrew

Connecting Students, Farms, and Community



- Partnered with The Society of St. Andrew
- Students glean (harvest) leftover crops from local farms
- Produce that would go to waste is recovered
- Fresh food redistributed to the community

SNAP-Ed's Impact in Maryland



Employed over **70 people**, representing offices in each Maryland county



Provided consultation, trainings, and physical resources to **772 partners** including farmers and markets as well as many schools, food pantries and other partners committed to healthy food access and nutrition education.



All of our support offered at **no cost**

Maryland SNAP-Ed: Supporting Families and Producing Healthy Changes in FY25

For more than 25 years, Maryland SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education) has helped local families lead healthy lives through increased food access, improved nutrition, and physical activity. Through partnerships with state and community organizations across Maryland, SNAP-Ed has provided comprehensive programs, which consist of delivering nutrition education and cultivating policy, system and environmental level changes that support healthy choices and behaviors.

FY25 represents the last year of full federal funding allocations for SNAP-Ed and will be the final year of implementation for the statewide program consisting of multi-sectored nutrition education and policy, system, and environmental changes efforts. This report highlights Maryland SNAP-Ed's reach and outcomes in the FY25 program year.



In FY25, Maryland SNAP-Ed reached more than 646,000 Marylanders:

- 441,152 youth and adults at collaborator sites with comprehensive programming
- 58,234 youth and adults through in-person education.
- 31,996 youth through in-person events and tastings.
- 264,200 participants through print or electronic educational materials.
- 793,285 youth and adults through broader educational efforts across the state.

In FY25, SNAP-Ed partnered with 172 local **SNAP-Ed worked directly with individual**

View the full stakeholder report

[here](#)

