

269532 Online Tools: Increase Access of Low-Income Moms to Relevant and Realistic Messages

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Judy F. Wilson, MSPH, RD, Food & Nutrition Service, Office of Research and Analysis, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alexandria, VA

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The technology gap is decreasing, creating new opportunities to reach low-income populations and improve their access to health information including new dietary guidance. In 2010 and 2011, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service conduct 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% of poverty. These focus groups captured information on household food practices, nutrition knowledge and beliefs of mothers, feedback on nutrition message concepts and provided insights into the information seeking behaviors and preferences of these mothers. These insights were used to develop communication concepts for conveying key nutrition messages to mother which were subsequently tested. This session will describe key findings from this research including where mothers expect to find nutrition information, preferences, their access to and use of the internet and other technologies as well as websites they visit. The research findings and 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. Online education tools can increase the reach of health messages targeting low-income mothers. The presentation presents the online tools, web trends and feedback from health professionals.

Learning Areas:

Administer health education strategies, interventions and programs
Communication and informatics
Diversity and culture
Public health or related education

Learning Objectives:

„X Describe the key research findings regarding the information seeking behaviors and preferences of low-income moms, their feedback on various communication tool concepts and how USDA used this information in the development process. „X Identify ways to integrate the audience-tested communication tools and related materials into education, counseling and health promotion activities. „X Discuss and apply the process used in developing these resources in practice.

Keywords: Technology, Nutrition