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Effects of Food Assistance and Nutrition Programs on Nutrition and Health

Volume 4, Executive Summary of the Literature Review

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**Effects of Food Assistance and Nutrition Programs on Nutrition and Health:
Volume 4, Executive Summary of the Literature Review.** By Mary Kay Fox and
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Abstract

This report provides a summary of a comprehensive review and synthesis of published research on the impact of USDA's domestic food and nutrition assistance programs on participants' nutrition and health outcomes. The outcome measures reviewed include food expenditures, household nutrient availability, dietary intake, other measures of nutrition status, food security, birth outcomes, breastfeeding behaviors, immunization rates, use and cost of health care services, and selected nonhealth outcomes, such as academic achievement and school performance (children) and social isolation (elderly). The report is one of four volumes produced by a larger study that includes Volume 1, Research Design; Volume 2, Data Sources; Volume 3, Literature Review; and Volume 4, Executive Summary of the Literature Review. The review examines the research on 15 USDA food assistance and nutrition programs but tends to focus on the largest ones for which more research is available: food stamps, school feeding programs, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Over half of USDA's budget—\$41.6 billion in fiscal year 2003—was devoted to food assistance and nutrition programs that provide low-income families and children with access to a healthy diet.

Keywords: Dietary intake, food expenditures, nutrient availability, nutrient intake, nutritional status, nutrition and health outcomes, USDA's food assistance and nutrition programs

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