"Healthy Habits" - Changing Eating Behaviors in At-Risk Elementary School-Aged Children.

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Abstract

**Background:** Excessive weight in childhood stems from factors like poor food choices and lack of physical activity. Food preferences and physical activity patterns are formed in early childhood and reinforced by family practices.

**Objective:** The aim of this project is two-fold: (1) to test the subject’s knowledge about healthy eating habits and how their habits correlate to the rising rate of obesity in children, (2) to test whether directed teaching impacts the subjects choices.

**Method and procedures:** A “Healthy Habits” course will be taught involving portion demonstration, 5-day food diary assessment, and food label education. Measures will include BMI average for class and questionnaire results. An anonymous questionnaire will be distributed during an after school program involving children from 3rd grade to 5th grade. Questionnaire results will be scored into three categories: (1) does not meet recommended USDA requirements, (2) meets recommended USDA requirements, (3) exceeds recommended USDA requirements. There will be two scoring results on the questionnaire. The first scoring will establish a baseline as to where the subjects are prior to the educational class. The second scoring will measure course effectiveness a minimum of 5 days after class.