

Fresh food can be profitable in corner stores

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Tulane Prevention Research Center study says fresh produce in corner stores is more profitable than originally thought. (Photo by Nick Kallman)

Many neighborhood corner stores don't stock fresh fruits and vegetables under the belief that these items aren't as profitable as snack foods and beverages with a longer shelf life.

However, fruits and vegetables may be more profitable for corner stores, according to a study by the [Tulane Prevention Research Center](#) (PRC), which was recently published in the *Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition*.

The study looked at changes to one New Orleans neighborhood store in 2010. Changes included the addition of a produce cooler and promotions announcing

availability of these items through local organizations.

Sales were analyzed before and after the changes and researchers found that produce accounted for three percent of gross store profit — a greater percentage than energy-dense snack foods like candy, cookies and pastries.

Additionally, a customer survey found that those exposed to promotions about the changes were much more likely to have noticed the cooler than those who didn't receive any promotional material. Specifically, 80 percent of those exposed to a promotional component noticed the cooler versus 49 percent of those who were not exposed.

“The biggest take away from this paper is the profitability of produce and that the multiple components of the intervention – installation of the cooler, promotional items and activities – together could encourage store owners to promote and stock healthier items,” said Lauren Dunaway, a research manager at the Tulane PRC and one of the study's authors.

This study – though for only one corner store – suggests that stores supplying fresh produce could increase their profitability while at the same time improving access to healthy foods for their neighborhood, said Dunaway.

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