

## **Do kids graze their schools**

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A new study under way by the [Tulane Prevention Research Center](#) is studying usage of school salad bars, adding to previous studies focused on how salad bars can be successful in schools.



A new study under way by the Tulane Prevention Research Center evaluates whether or not cafeteria salad bars encourage children to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables. (Photo from Masterfile)

In New Orleans, the United Fresh Produce Association provided salad bars to 43 schools through the nationwide “Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools” program over the past few years.

With the salad bar initiative having such a large presence in schools across the city, the Prevention Research Center decided to design an evaluation study to provide useful information to schools about the use of salad bars in cafeterias.

“We know that eating more fresh fruits and vegetables can help prevent obesity, can help children be healthier overall, and may even lead to better focus and attention in school,” says [Carolyn Johnson](#), director of the Prevention Research

Center. “We want to know what factors influence students either to eat or not to eat salad bar items so that we can promote the fresh produce in an effective way.”

Roughly 30 student research assistants and 20 dietetic interns will visit 23 schools for the study. Data collection for the study began in January and will continue through the spring semester. The research team believes that multiple factors within schools influence the use and effectiveness of the salad bar.

“Once we analyze the data and see what factors influence use of the salad bar, we want to share the findings with key stakeholders, like school officials and lawmakers, throughout the city and state,” says Lori Andersen, a PhD student at the [Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine](#), who is helping lead the evaluation project.

The salad bar evaluation is being conducted through a Special Interest Project grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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