Price Trends Are Similar for Fruits, Vegetables, and Snack Foods

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Abstract

An increase in the price of fruits and vegetables relative to less healthy foods could reduce consumers’ incentives to purchase fruits and vegetables and result in less healthy diets. Whether such a change in relative prices and incentives has occurred in the United States is difficult to prove because of substantial quality improvements in many fresh fruits and vegetables. For commonly consumed fresh fruits and vegetables for which quality has remained fairly constant, analysis of price trends reveals a price decline similar to that of dessert and snack foods. This price trend evidence suggests that the price of a healthy diet has not changed relative to an unhealthy one, although a healthy diet might not include every fresh fruit or vegetable currently available.

Keywords: fresh fruit and vegetable prices, price trends, quality change

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