

## **No choice vs free choice: How serving situations influence pre-school children's vegetable intake**

Annemarie Olsen, Julia Christiane Sick, Per Møller, Helene Hausner

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Corresponding author: Dr Annemarie Olsen, email [ano@food.ku.dk](mailto:ano@food.ku.dk)

### **ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Children's vegetable intake is below the recommendations in many European countries. Parents and caregivers often struggle to find ways to encourage children's vegetable and fruit intake.

**Aim:** The aim of the study was to investigate whether offering a choice (in contrast to no choice) increases the intake of snack vegetables in pre-school children.

**Method:** Children aged 2–6 years were offered three snack vegetables in different serving situations (two no choice situations and two free choice situations).

**Results:** Choice offering did not have a positive influence on children's vegetable intake. When making stimuli-specific comparisons (per vegetable), none or even negative effects on vegetable intake were found with choice.

**Discussion:** Choice offering does not appear very effective. Pre-school children might be too young for potential effects of choice offering to produce changes in vegetable consumption, but it may be more effective in older children or adolescents. The outcome of choice manipulations may also be affected by the number, type, and selection of target stimuli.

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