Understanding and influencing food choice for health promotion and disease prevention

Food choice involves the processes by which people consider, select, prepare, distribute, and consume foods and beverages. Food choice behaviors are integral to social and economic expression of identities, preferences, and cultural meanings and ultimately influence nutrient intake and health. Drivers of food choice include interconnected biological, psychological, economic, social, cultural, environmental, and political factors. Influencing food choice involves efforts to promote and facilitate the purchase, provision, and consumption of healthier foods of individuals, families and communities and includes emphasis on food environments.

Current novel research efforts at USC include understanding:

i. Drivers of food choice among the poor in countries that are among those with the greatest burden of undernutrition, primarily in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa

ii. Food-choice decisions for children by mothers and alternative caregivers related to later chronic diseases

iii. Influence of Children on Parent’s Food Shopping for Children’s Consumption in South Carolina

iv. Policies and programs to improve feeding and nutrition of mothers, children, and adolescents

v. Role of food environment in shaping food choice behaviors and dietary intake