

AL5 Reduce Food Waste, Save Money

Intervention design ●

Goal: To encourage a reduction in avoidable food waste generation as a means to save money. Provide resources to empower households to act: improve food planning; efficiently purchase, store, and prepare food; and use leftovers. **Implementation:**

- A subset of 160 volunteer households were randomly selected for the pre intervention baseline audit (418 out of 1263 households completing the survey volunteered to participate in the study).
- Amount of household food waste placed in the garbage was measured on a household’s garbage collection day (sorting sampled garbage).
- 47 treatment households were provided with the intervention package.

Evaluation of the long-term effectiveness of the intervention by comparing direct measurements of household food waste disposal for the same treatment and control households (before and during the COVID-19 pandemic). The intervention package used a commercially available 4-L container, designed to extend produce life, as an “envelope.” The package included a “Reduce Food Waste, Save Money” postcard affixed on the top of this container, along with a fridge magnet version of the postcard, and food waste reduction tools including an explanatory letter, freezer stickers, and a grocery list pad inside the container. All messaging included directions on how to access a purpose-built website, which provided additional details on the various food waste reduction tips provided on the postcard and fridge magnet.

Drivers: poor food literacy.

Levers: Personal economic benefits of food waste reduction and strengthened capacity to act.

Effectiveness: Treatment households significantly reduced their avoidable food waste generation by 31%.

COUNTRY ●

Canada

DURATION ●

2/10/2017 – 25/10/2017, June 2020 (long-term, follow-up)

IMPLEMENTED BY ●

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Information sourced from:

Swannell, R., Bruns, H., Brüggemann, N., Candéal, T., Casonato, C., Diercxsens, C., Garcia Herrero, L., Gil Roig, J.M., Haglund, Y., Van Herpen, E., Kaptan, G., Kasza, G., Mikkelsen, B.E., Miranda Pires, I.M., Obersteiner, G., Vainioranta, J., Vittuari, M., Watanabe, K. and Sala, S., Evaluation of consumer food waste prevention interventions, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2023, doi:10.2760/224541, JRC133003

Sustainability of the intervention over time●

Treatment households did continue to generate a similar amount of avoidable food waste in June 2020 (1.523 kg per household per week) compared to October 2017 (1.498 kg per household per week). The insignificant change in avoidable food waste generated by treatment households between these two time periods indicate a long term, sustained 30% reduction of avoidable food waste following the implementation of the “Reduce Food Waste, Save Money” intervention

Transferability and scalability●

The intervention should be transferable to other contexts, it should be noted that it was monitored through kerbside collection of waste and that the targeted households were single-family households.

Key features for replicability●

The intervention could draw more learnings if treatment households:

- socioeconomic characteristics were given
- could measure food waste per capita
- were interviewed to learn about what helped them sustain their food waste performance over time.

Note that food waste measurement during pandemic, especially over lock down period could be different than in normal period as more time available for “food care”.