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**Healthy foods more expensive than junk foods**

Healthy foods are rising in price faster than their less healthy alternatives.

This is the finding of research published in the October issue of *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*.

Cate Burns and her colleagues at Deakin University looked at possible effects of rising grocery prices on low-income earners. They analysed Australian Bureau of Statistics data on the Consumer Price Index.

Overall, there was only a slightly higher increase in healthy food options, but specific items such as milk and bread had increased in price dramatically compared to items such as soft drinks, biscuits and cakes.

“When people are making choices about what they are going to give their kids for a snack and price is a consideration, parents might think twice about serving milk, which is the healthy option,” Dr Burns said.

Diet-related diseases affect more low-income households compared to those in higher socio-economic groups. Cost is seen as a major influence on food purchase.

“We can use this information to inform policy, such as setting government allowances to incorporate the cost of food. If the cost of some foods is going up faster than inflation and the government allowance is adjusted by the general inflation rate, then there is a bigger gap for consumers to meet the cost of healthy eating,” Dr Burns said.

“Dietary allowances have been revised. For certain nutrients, like calcium, the daily requirements have gone up, so if you have two kids and two adults in a household then that is a lot of milk to meet calcium needs.”

For more information about this research, contact the research author:

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