

The Food & Eating Module of the American Time Use Survey

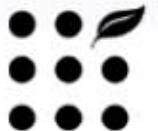
Karen Hamrick
USDA Economic Research Service

Food and Eating Consequences of Time Use Decisions:
A Research and Policy Conference
July 13, 2004, Washington, DC



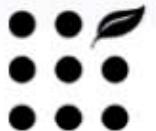
Food & Eating Module of ATUS

- ERS is planning a module of questions to accompany the American Time Use Survey
- By adding a small number of questions, the ATUS data can be used to analyze the relationship among time use patterns and:
 - Eating patterns, nutrition, and obesity
 - Food assistance programs
 - Grocery shopping and meal preparationThe module is organized around these three themes.



Eating Patterns, Nutrition, Obesity

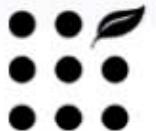
- Motivation—our research questions:
 - Are certain patterns of eating and of time use associated with obesity?
 - How does meal preparation time affect nutrition and other indicators of well-being?



Eating Patterns, Nutrition, Obesity

- Eating as a secondary activity

“Now I’d like to ask you about when you ate your meals and snacks. Yesterday, you reported eating and drinking between [fill in times]. Were there any other times you were eating or drinking as your MAIN activity OR while you were doing something else?”



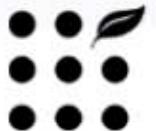
Eating Patterns, Nutrition, Obesity

- Height and weight

Allows for the calculation of Body Mass Index (BMI)

“Now I would like to ask you some questions about your health. In general, how is your health? How tall are you without shoes? How much do you weigh without shoes?”

ATUS time diary will have information on the amount of time spent being active and the amount of time being sedentary.



Food Assistance

- Food stamps and WIC—our research questions:

Are food assistance recipients more time pressured than others? What does this mean for:

- Welfare to work
- Access to food stamp application and recertification
- Time costs of participation
- Thrifty Food Plan

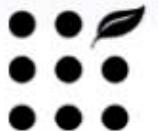


Food Assistance

“In the past 30 days, did anyone in this household get food stamp benefits, that is, either food stamps or a food-stamp benefit card?”

“During the past 30 days, did anyone in this household get food through the WIC program?”

- Screen – Children in household, or woman of childbearing age
- Potential small sample problem



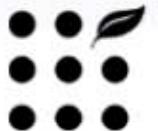
Food Assistance

- Time spent applying for food assistance

“In the month of [survey month], did you apply for or obtain recertification for food stamps or other food assistance?”

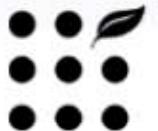
“How much time did it take to apply for or obtain recertification for food assistance, including travel time, wait time, and time with the case worker.”

- Potential small sample problem



Food Assistance

- School meals—our research questions:
 - What are the time benefits of school meals?
 - What are the time use patterns of parents whose children participate in school meal programs versus others?



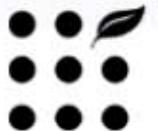
Food Assistance

- School meals—breakfast

“Yesterday, did [Fill names of children] eat a BREAKFAST that was prepared and served at a school, a paid day care, or Head Start center or a summer day program? This question refers ONLY to BREAKFASTS prepared at the school or center—not meals brought from home.”

“Which ones?”

- All households with children asked; no income screen.



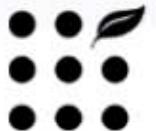
Food Assistance

- School meals—lunch

“Yesterday, did [Fill names of children] eat a LUNCH that was prepared and served at a school, a paid day care, or Head Start center or a summer day program? This question refers ONLY to LUNCHES prepared at the school or center—not meals brought from home.”

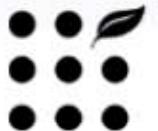
“Which ones?”

- All households with children asked; no income screen.



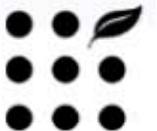
Grocery Shopping & Meal Preparation

- Food preparation and grocery shopping:
 - “Are you the person in the household who usually plans meals and prepares food?”*
 - “Do you usually do the major food shopping?”*
- Time versus money trade off:
 - “How much money does this household usually spend on food and beverages per week?”*
 - “How much money does this household usually spend per week eating out?”*



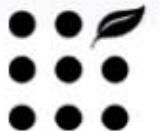
First priority questions

- Eating as a secondary activity
- Height and weight
- Food stamp participation
- School meals—breakfast and lunch
- “Are you” questions—grocery shopping and meal preparation
- Update household income



Status of Module

- Pre-testing expected to begin soon
- Module expected to be added to the ATUS in 2005
- Continued development of module questions
 - Food spending



Contact Information

- Module development team:
Karen Hamrick, Margaret Andrews, Joanne Guthrie, Betsey Kuhn, Lisa Mancino, Constance Newman, and David Smallwood
- Karen Hamrick
202-694-5426
Khamrick@ers.usda.gov

www.ers.usda.gov

