

IMPACT



University of Idaho
Cooperative
Extension System

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ENP Promotes Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2000

The Situation

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, developed by the USDA and Health and Human Services, present strategies to promote health and reduce the risk of chronic diseases. The aim is to help Americans ages 2 years and older to make food choices that build healthful eating patterns. These guidelines provide the basis for federal nutrition policy and nutrition education activities and are revised every five years.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2000 include the following messages:

Aim for Fitness

- Aim for a healthy weight.
- Be physically active each day.

Build a Healthy Base

- Let the Pyramid guide your food choices.
- Choose a variety of grains daily, especially whole grains.
- Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily.
- Keep food safe to eat.

Choose Sensibly

- Choose a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat.
- Choose beverages and foods to moderate your intake of sugars.
- Choose and prepare foods with less salt.
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.

Our Response

The Idaho *Extension Nutrition Program* (ENP) has responded by incorporating these guidelines into the lessons that are taught by ENP Nutrition Advisors in 22 Idaho counties. ENP is designed to reach limited income families that could benefit from practical instruction in nutrition and management of food and resources, leading them to improved health and well being.

In FY2000 ENP reached 555 adults who were enrolled in a series of small group or one-on-one lessons in nutrition, food safety, and resource management. ENP also reached 21,520 adults with a one-time nutrition education contact, providing nutrition and budgeting messages.

Program Outcomes

Enrolled adult participants completed 24-hour food recalls at entrance and again at graduation. From these recalls we can report the following improvements in dietary quality of ENP graduates:

- Overall 75.5% of ENP graduates increased their consumption in at least one of the five food groups.
- The number of graduates that had 2 plus servings of fruit per day increased from 18% at entry to 31% at exit.



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- Those consuming more than 3 servings of vegetables daily increased from 33% at entry to 41% at exit.
- Graduates who consumed 2 or more calcium rich products daily increased from 18% at entry to 26% at exit.
- Graduates had increased their intake of vitamin A, vitamin C, and vitamin B6 at exit.

Enrolled ENP participants also complete a Food Behavior Checklist at entrance and then again at graduation. The results indicate that ENP helped clients meet the “Build a Healthy Base” dietary guideline. The following information reflects improvement in:

Food Resource Management Practices

Of the graduates 84% showed an improvement in at least one or more of the food resource management practices (i.e. plans meals, compares prices, does not run out of food, or uses grocery lists).

Nutrition Practices

In nutrition 86% showed improvement in at least one of the nutrition practices (plans meals, makes healthy food choices, prepares foods without adding salt, reads nutrition labels, or has children eat breakfast).

Food Safety Practices

In the area of food safety 57% showed improvement in one or more of the food safety practices (thawing and storing foods properly).

Success Stories from ENP Nutrition Advisors

I visited with a parent at our local fair. She told me her daughter had been taking the nutrition lessons through ENP in the school. She said how surprised she was when her daughter insisted that she purchase fruits for snacks instead of chips and soda. The parent shared that as a family they never bought much fruit because no one would eat it. Fruit is now the “snack of choice” in their home!

Michelle was very interested in the Food Safety lesson. She related to me that her husband had always told her not to put things in the refrigerator until they had cooled down. I told her that we recommend putting foods away as soon as we are finished eating even if it’s still hot. It won’t hurt the refrigerator at all. Also she had been thawing frozen foods on the counter. She was glad to discover the things she had been doing that were not healthy in the kitchen. She promised that she would incorporate the information that I gave her into her daily kitchen routine.

Norma is a recent ENP graduate who has gone from shopping three or four days a week to planning weekly menus and shopping only once a week. She has learned how to plan her menus for each week based on what is on sale that week, make and use a shopping list based on her weekly menu, and use coupons. Norma figured that she saved around \$100 last month on her food bill.

I recently enrolled a couple that was referred from Health and Welfare. They found the food safety lesson particularly valuable since they were unaware of many basic food-handling practices. When we did the food recall there was a lot of junk food and soda consumed at every meal. They have made some mini goals and are working to eat healthier and save some money at the same time.

For More Information

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