

IMPACT



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Bingham County's Students are Crazy about Calcium!

The Situation

Children and teens are a prime audience for education about the benefit of optimal calcium intake throughout life. Unfortunately, youth are drinking soda and fruit flavored drinks at an increasing rate. Currently, kids are consuming twice as much soda as milk. Nine out of ten teenage girls and seven out of ten teenage boys are not meeting their dietary calcium requirements.

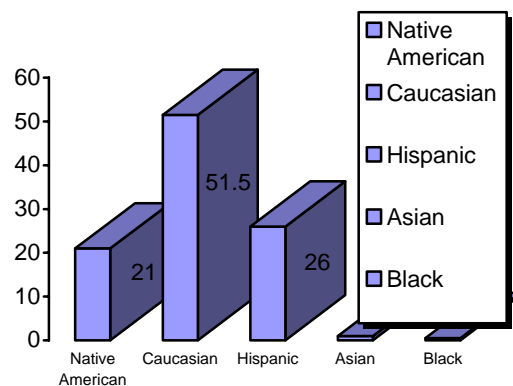
Our Response

In order to confront these trends, this University of Idaho extension educator developed and shared the school enrichment nutrition program "Crazy about Calcium!" with elementary-age children in Bingham County and the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. During the 2003-2004 school year, students in five local elementary schools have participated in this program, and have participated in the following discussions and activities:

- Examining the amount of calcium in our bones at different ages (demonstrated by bags of flour).
- Discussing the role of calcium in the body.
- Brainstorming a variety of dairy products and other calcium-containing foods.
- Reviewing the recommended calcium intake for children of various ages.
- Learning a simple method to track their daily dairy intake.

Throughout the class students were encouraged to incorporate a variety of dairy products in their diets, and to consume the recommended number of servings for their age.

Forty-six sessions of "Crazy about Calcium" were taught to a total of 1,001 students this school year. Fifty-four percent of the children were male, and forty-six percent were female. The participants came from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, with 21 percent Native Americans, 51.5 percent Caucasian, 26 percent Hispanic, one percent Asian, and one-half of one percent Black.



Program Outcomes

Students were given a questionnaire three weeks after participating in the program. Fifty-six percent (562 of 1,001) of the students completed the survey.

Results of the survey include the following:

- Eighty-two percent of the students were able to list something new they had learned from the program.
- Eighty-seven percent of the students were able to list one or more foods that belong to the dairy group.
- Eighty-two percent of the students were able to state the recommended number of dairy servings for their age group.
- Seventy-six percent of the students stated that they consumed the recommended number of dairy servings each day.
- Ninety-two percent of the students that were correctly able to state the recommended number of dairy servings for their age group reported consuming the recommended amount daily.

Future Plans

This extension educator has been asked to continue school enrichment nutrition education programs with elementary school students. Concepts for the 2004-2005 program are currently being developed.

For More Information

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