

IMPACT



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Attitude and Behavior Change in *Meal Time in Less Time* Participants—One Month Later

The Situation

The current eating trends paint an interesting picture. Fewer meals are being prepared and eaten in the home. More meals are being purchased from restaurants despite the additional cost. People are less likely to have basic pots and pans in their homes. Consumers are more concerned with convenience than nutrition.

This does not come without a price. One study found a higher prevalence of obesity in those who ate the most meals away from home. Additional, studies have shown that teens that eat five or more meals a week with their families were more stable emotionally and socially, received higher grades, and attained a higher level of education. Teens that ate regular meals with their families were also less likely to use alcohol and drugs, be sexually active, or commit suicide. These positive results were seen regardless of socio-economic status, ethnicity, and family structure. Having family meals together has also been shown to improve the nutritional quality of the foods that children eat. In one study, teens that ate dinner with their families ate more fruits, vegetables and dairy foods. Another study showed that children and teens who participated in family dinner ate less fat, soda, and fried foods and more fruits and vegetables.

Our Response

The University of Idaho Health and Nutrition Topic Team applied for and received a grant for \$5,035.00 from the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

to develop a curriculum on meal planning and preparation. Three Extension Educators took the lead in developing *Meal Time in Less Time*, a three-lesson curriculum for adult and young-adult audiences. It teaches individuals and families how to plan quick and healthy meals, shop to save time and money, and prepare healthy meals in less time. It was published by the University of Idaho College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Educational Communication Department in 2005. The curriculum CD includes a PowerPoint slide show for each lesson, a complete script for each lesson, participant handouts to photocopy, participant activities, evaluation tools, and advertising materials.

Program Outcomes

A post-survey was sent to participants approximately one month after the end of the program. Twenty-eight (28 percent) surveys of the 101 surveys sent were returned. The surveys asked participants to indicate their attitudes, knowledge and behaviors before taking the class and if they were planning to change as a result of taking the class. For attitudes and knowledge, participants had three choices: Disagree, Not Sure, and Agree. For behaviors, participants also had three choices: Never do, Sometimes do, and Always do. Table 1 shows the participants who reported agreeing with the attitude statement before and one month following the program. Table 2 shows the participants always doing the behavior before the class and always doing the behavior one month following the program. A Chi-Square test was used to compare the participant responses for before and after the class.

Table 1. Attitude Changes

Attitudes	Before	After
I know the advantages of meal planning	82%	100%
I think it is important to plan meals.	86%	97%
I understand what to consider in planning meals.	47%	97%
I understand the benefit of using thrifty shopping tips.	87%	97%
I know the importance of handling food safely.	82%	100%
I think it is important to evaluate the nutrition content of foods.	74%	92%
I understand how to read a nutrition facts label. *	68%	95%
I understand time-saving strategies for preparing meals.	51%	92%
I understand how to make healthier recipes.	49%	92%

* $p \leq 0.05$

Table 2. Behavior Changes

Behaviors	Before	After
I plan ahead for meals.*	8%	31%
I have accessible resources for menu planning.	47%	68%
I evaluate my menus for nutrition.	21%	53%
I evaluate my menus for ease of preparation.*	37%	51%
I practice thrifty shopping strategies to save time and money.	38%	53%
I purchase non-food and non-perishable items before buying foods that need to be refrigerated or frozen.	28%	76%
I use the nutrition facts label to evaluate nutrition content of foods.**	34%	46%
I add whole grains, fruits, vegetables and dairy products to my meals.	34%	70%
I practice time-saving strategies for preparing meals.	7%	50%
I use healthy food preparation methods.	24%	73%

* $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$

For More Information

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