

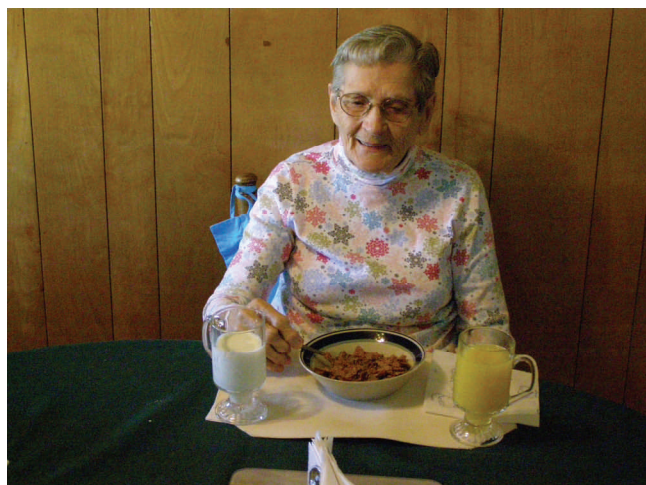
Health promotion for the elderly grant is beneficial to seniors

The Situation

In Idaho it was found that nearly 46% of the Area Agency on Aging clients were at high nutritional risk based on data collected from the senior dietary risk assessment tool. Many factors have been identified as possible reasons including the high cost of food, getting to the grocery store and shopping at the store with limited mobility, denture problems, social isolation, lack of hunger, low activity levels and no knowledge or understanding of nutrition. Seniors that are at high nutritional risk have more problems with chronic diseases such as diabetes, sarcopenia, osteoporosis, hypertension, and vascular diseases resulting in higher medical and care-giving expenses. The Southeast Idaho Council on Government through the Area Agency on Aging had funds available to reach this vulnerable population with nutrition education and was willing to collaborate with another agency to teach their clients.

Our Response

The University of Idaho Extension Nutrition Programs has been successfully reaching high risk limited income populations for 15 years. The senior nutrition education program was a good fit with what the Extension Nutrition Program had already in place. A grant proposal was written to apply for the Area Agency on Aging funding to teach the high risk seniors and was accepted in the fall of 2008. A nutrition advisor that was trained to teach with the ENP was hired to work with the seniors. Curriculum was purchased that had lessons on basic nutrition, food safety, and food resource management. The series of lessons included eating a variety of foods from MyPyramid, preparing quick, low-cost nutritious meals and snacks, food safety, meal planning and shopping for food, using nutrition to manage health



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conditions (The Healthy Diabetes Plate for diabetes, DASH diet for hypertension) and hydration. All of these lessons were based on the needs of the individual senior that the nutrition advisor worked with in their homes or community centers. Clients were referred to take classes from the Area Agency on Aging.

Program Outcomes

Each participant took a pre-post Senior Food Behavior Checklist at the beginning of the program and then after they had had six lessons. The Food Behavior Checklist was created for the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and has been tested and validated by that program. The checklist fit the needs for this program with limited changes to the verbiages. The results of the pre-post Senior Food Behavior Checklist showed that 100% of the clients improved in the area of not adding salt when they

prepare foods. Sixty-seven percent of the clients more often planned meals ahead of time and were more likely to think about healthy food choices when they planned meals. Thirty-three percent of the clients were more likely to eat breakfast. In the area of food safety 33% were less likely to thaw frozen foods at room temperature. Many positive comments were reported by the clients to the nutrition advisor concerning the program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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