

## Bingham County youth get going with grains

### The Situation

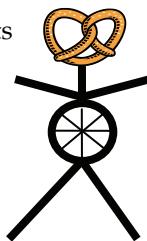
The document *Healthy People 2010* includes the objective to “increase the proportion of persons aged two and older who consume at least six daily servings of grain products, with at least three being whole grains.” Unfortunately, national dietary survey data indicate that few children meet this objective. In one study of 2- to 18-year-olds, average whole grain intake was found to total a mere 0.9 servings per day. Only 13.3 percent of participants consumed an average of two or more servings per day.

### Our Response

Nearly 2,000 students from seven elementary schools in Blackfoot and on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation participated in “Get Going with Grains,” a presentation designed to teach kids about the importance of consuming grains, especially whole grains. Students came from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. One percent of the youth were African American, 15 percent were Native American, and 19 percent were Hispanic.

Younger students assembled a “grain guy,” made of a pretzel head, pasta torso, and chenille stick arms and legs strung with oat o-shaped cereal. While assembling the grain guys, students learned about grain-group foods and brainstormed ways to eat more whole grains. They also listened to a children’s literature book, *Bread and Jam for Frances*, which illustrated the importance of eating a variety of foods. Children’s theme-based literature enhances learning processes because the students relate to the characters.

Older students learned their fiber needs, which is their age plus five grams per day. A 10-year-old re-



quires 15 grams fiber each day. The students were then given a list of foods and asked to design a one-day diet to meet their fiber needs. Low-fiber and high-fiber options were included on the food list. For example, a cup of corn flakes has less than one gram of fiber, while a cup of bran flakes has seven grams. A cup of chicken noodle soup has one gram, but a cup of chili has six grams of fiber. The children enjoyed choosing foods they enjoyed that helped them meet their fiber needs.

The length of the digestive system, approximately 25 feet, was illustrated with a rope stretched across the classroom. This allowed the children to visualize the distance their food travels and made the importance of fiber in their diets seem more “real.”

### Program Outcomes

Third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students completed a seven-question true/false quiz before the program and immediately after the program. Results of the survey include the following:

Question, N= 521	Percent correct	
	Before	After
The grain group contains wheat, corn, rice, rye, and oatmeal.	90.1	97.1
Kids need as much fiber as adults do.	51.2	81.1
You need more foods from the grain group than any other group.	55.3	83.8
Fruit juice has as much fiber as a piece of fruit.	51.9	80.7
Popcorn is in the grain group.	45.9	88.1
Fiber helps food move through your 25-foot-long digestive system.	79.0	92.4
White bread has as much fiber as whole wheat bread.	62.3	77.3

Further statistics on the survey are:

	Percent correct	
	Before	After
Average correct	62.21	85.52
Minimum	14	14
Maximum	100	100
Standard deviation	20.588	20.611

**The Future**

School enrichment nutrition education programs will continue to be taught in area elementary schools. The topics are taught on a six-year cycle so that students will participate in a different class in each of their elementary school years.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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