

IMPACT

University of Idaho
Extension

Lemhi County, 208.756-2815 ext. 283
Fax: 208.756.6915
200 Fulton, Suite 202, Salmon, ID 83467

Youth take “steps” to better health at 4-H camp

The Situation

Today’s busy lifestyle lends itself to convenience foods, quick foods and eating out. These types of foods are loaded with excess calories. Youth are not getting the exercise they need to be healthy. Current statistics from the Kaiser Family Foundation (www.statehealthfacts.org) indicate that:

- 28% of children (ages 10-17) in Idaho are overweight or obese where as the national average is 32%.
- 55% of Idaho high school students are not meeting recommended physical activity level.

Our Response

After attending workshops on healthy eating and exercise at Idaho State 4-H Leader’s Forum, the 4-H camp committee focused on a healthy lifestyles theme for the week long summer camp. The committee partnered with the Extension Nutrition Program, Idaho Beef Council and United Dairymen of Idaho.

Camp goals were to:

1. Teach youth fun ways to exercise and to encourage them to get active.
2. Teach youth basic nutritional guidelines following the new My Plate guidelines from USDA.

For the exercise portion of camp, youth were given a pedometer to wear during camp. They also attended two hands-on exercise workshops, making and using jump ropes and learning yoga. The number of steps campers took were tallied daily and points were given toward the grand award of the “Golden Spoon” at the end of camp.



Brooke Burnham, Lemhi County, gives a “thumbs-up” when she sees how many steps she has on her pedometer.

Youth attended food workshops on:

- protein
- fruits and vegetables
- dairy
- breads and grains
- portion size
- balanced meals
- tips on shopping for groceries.

Program Outcomes

The campers enthusiastically responded to the use of the pedometers. After four hours the first day campers had an average of 3,515 steps. On the second day for 8 hours campers averaged 14,298 steps. The average number of steps for campers and counselors over the entire camp was 20,620. This equates to 7.8 miles

per camper and a total of 1,523 miles for the entire camp. Workshop instructors commented that youth would walk in place during workshops rather than sit down. During free time, youth could be found walking the trails or laps around the basketball court to get more steps.

At the end of camp, youth were to return their pedometers. As they were being collected, youth and adults began asking if they could keep them. The request was granted and they took an oath to wear the pedometer while shooting for a goal of 10,000 steps per day. One teen camp counselor now wears his pedometer on a daily basis and is “walking” to Washington D.C. One adult now wears her pedometer daily and has lost 10 pounds due to the challenge.

During the final evening at camp, youth were provided the opportunity to cook their own dinner. Campers were supplied with ground beef, vegetables, fruit, biscuit mix, cream soup and spices. They utilized a variety of cooking methods including: charcoal grill, gas grill, Dutch oven, electric skillet or open fire. Each cabin designed their menu and cooked dinner. They gave a presentation on what they cooked and what they learned from this activity. Their presentations indicated an increase in the awareness of the importance of a balanced diet and to include fruit and vegetables with their meals.

Youth and adults filled out a post card survey at the end of camp. The surveys indicated youth and adults learned:

- about food safety and hand washing (37%),
- food groups and meal preparation/cooking (53%),
- and exercising (18%).

Participants also stated (in the survey) that they set goals in the following areas:

- food groups and meal preparation/cooking (50%),
- and exercise (32%).

Future Camp planners are excited about the success and focusing on healthy lifestyles. The plan for 2012 camp is to focus on outdoor and natural resource sports and do more outdoor cooking.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Shannon Williams, Extension Educator
University of Idaho Extension, Lemhi County
200 Fulton, Suite 202
Salmon, ID 83467
Phone: 208.756.2815 ext. 283
Fax: 208.756.6915
E-mail: shannonw@uidaho.edu

Cindy Kinder, Extension Educator
University of Idaho Extension, Gooding County
203 Lucy Lane
Gooding, ID 83330
Phone: 208.934.4417
Fax: 208.934.4092
E-mail: ckinder@uidaho.edu

38-11swilliams-steps.pub
12/11