

# impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

## Preparing meals at home with hands-on cooking under pressure workshops

### AT A GLANCE

To encourage preparing meals at home, a hands-on electric pressure-cooking program was developed. Participants gained new knowledge and built confidence in “Cooking Under Pressure” workshops.

### The Situation

People are eating out more and spending less time preparing meals at home. Meals prepared away from home are typically higher in calories, fat and sugar.

A study found that people who cook most of their meals at home tend to follow a healthier diet (Wolfson & Bleich, 2015). Most Americans are willing to spend no more than one hour a day cooking. Wolfson & Blich also emphasized the importance of educating the public on the benefits of cooking and identifying strategies that encourage and enable more home cooking. With the recent popularity and sales of electric pressure cookers, Idahoans need research-based programming on how to properly use them. Cooking meals in electric pressure cookers can decrease cooking time, reduce energy use and retain higher nutrient quality than foods cooked by other methods. This contributes to allowing more time for other family-focused activities.

### Our Response

To encourage opportunities for Idahoans to learn how to prepare quicker healthier meals at home and expand their cooking skills, University of Idaho Extension educators developed a hands-on cooking program



Cooking Under Pressure program participants completing a recipe during a workshop.

focusing on safely using an electric pressure cooker. This program emphasizes preparing meals at home that are simple, fast and incorporate components of food safety. Cooking Under Pressure is taught in a hands-on format, and safe appliance use is demonstrated by the educator and then practiced by the participants. During the demonstration, Extension educators emphasize the benefits of preparing healthier meals at home versus eating healthier foods prepared outside the home.

A team of Extension educators has taught and/or will teach this program in their southern Idaho regions. This interactive program allows participants to retain more program content, stimulates learning with an engaging environment, develops critical thinking skills

and provides hands-on experience while building confidence.

Figure 1: Average (mean) of program participants responses ranging from one (No knowledge) to five (A lot of knowledge) when answering the survey question “How much do you think you know about the following topics?”

	Mean (Before)	Mean (After)
I understand how to use the functions on the electric pressure cooker.	1.68	4.13
I understand the difference between Quick Release (QR) and Natural Release (NR).	2.25	4.37
I know the safest way to open the pressure cooker lidl.	2.53	4.66
I know how to replace the silicone sealing ring.	2.44	4.48
I understand the safety precautions in using my electric pressure cooker, including the recommendation to not allow its use for pressure canning.	1.95	4.68
I am confident in how to properly operate my electric pressure cooker.	1.91	4.16
I clean the silicone sealing ring, condensation collector and additional lid parts after each use.	2.16	4.50
I don't put food in my electric pressure cooker more than one hour before I begin cooking the food.	2.45	4.53

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

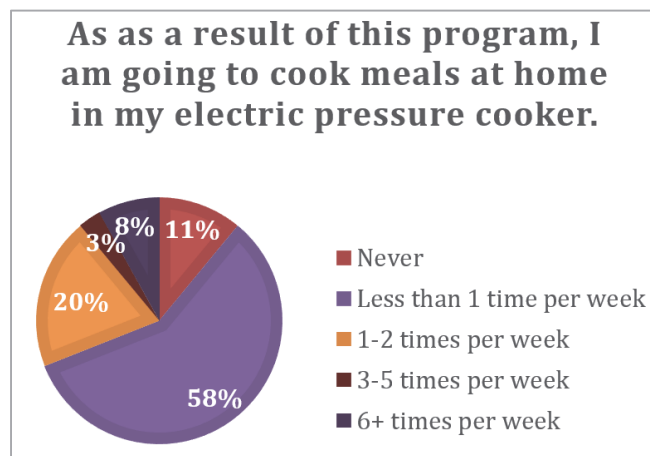
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**Program Outcomes**

To date, over 400 individuals have attended hands-on Cooking Under Pressure workshops throughout Idaho. Retrospective surveys were given to the participants asking knowledge, confidence and skills gained.

Figure 2: Percentage of overall responses for each category (N=143).



**The Future**

Cooking Under Pressure programs will continue to be taught throughout the state, allowing opportunities for more Idahoans to participate and improve kitchen skills to optimize their nutrition.

UI Extension educators involved in this program are reaching new audiences by teaching this program in cooking schools. The program is being adapted to teach youth audiences as well as analyzed to find ways to simplify diabetes education and meal preparation.

Wolfson, J.A., Bleich, S. (2015). Is cooking at home associated with better diet quality or weight-loss intention? *Public Health Nutrition*, 18(8), 1397-1406.