

# 5

## Focus on Health and Nutrition

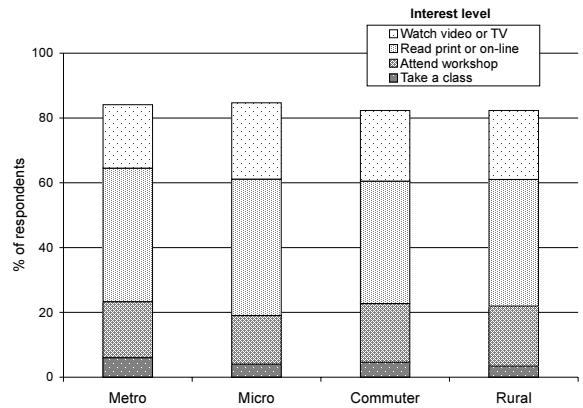
More Idahoans expressed interest in learning about health and nutrition (84 percent) than for any other topic of learning covered by our survey (Fig. 1-6, p. 5). It is particularly noteworthy that more than 60 percent of respondents to our survey reported an informal interest in health and nutrition (willing to read or watch a video), indicating substantial demand for educational materials available for on-demand learning.

General interest in learning about health and nutrition topics did not differ significantly among respondents living in different county types or for county commissioners (Fig. 5-1).

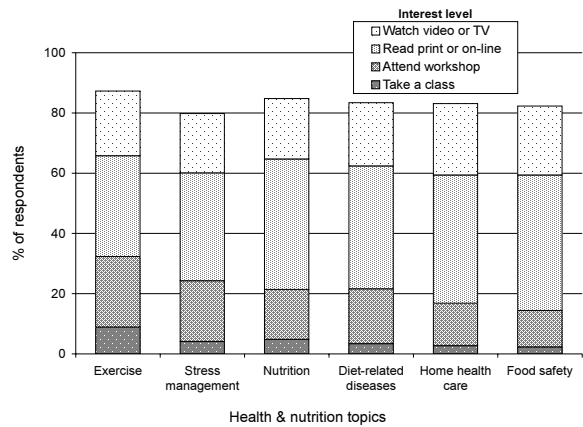
### Specific topics we asked about in the survey included:

- Nutrition
- Food safety
- Home health care
- Stress management
- Diet-related diseases
- Exercise

The number of our respondents willing to take a class, to take a workshop, or to read an article or view a program depended upon the specific topic in question. In our survey, approximately one in three adults expressed willingness to take a class or workshop to learn about exercise (indicating intensive interest in the topic), while one in four adults expressed intensive interest in learning about stress management. The largest number of respondents (more than 60 percent) indicated informal interest (sufficient interest to read or watch educational videos) about nutrition, diet-related diseases, home health care, and food safety (Fig. 5-2).

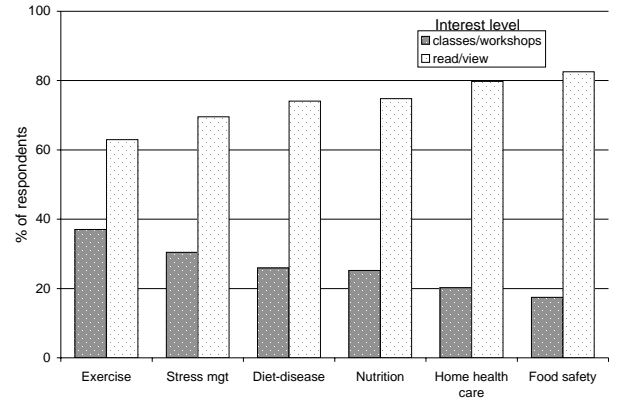


**Fig. 5-1.** Level of interest in family topics by county type.



**Fig. 5-2.** Level of interest to learn about specific health and nutrition topics.

Comparing the ratio of people who expressed intensive vs. informal interest in specific health and nutrition topics, we are able to identify which forms of education may be best adapted to meet public demands. In this analysis, food safety and home health care topics indicated a greater preference for published, on-line, or broadcast-type learning materials (Fig. 5-3).



**Fig. 5-3.** Preferences for learning about health and nutrition.

Our data imply that materials made available to learners at their convenience may serve to expose the public to UI Extension through health and nutrition topics with broad-based appeal. Food safety, for example, has a large potential audience for casual delivery methods but limited demand for intensive education (Fig. 5-4).

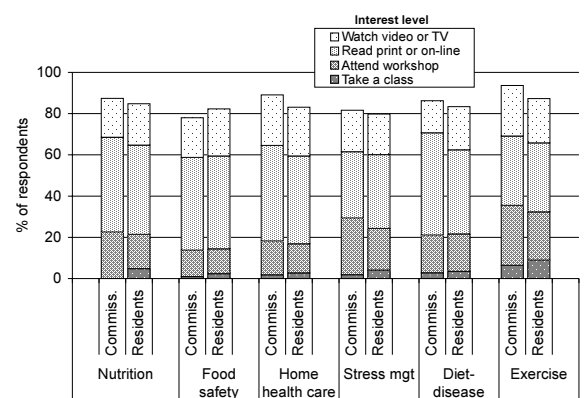
Reaching the public through displays and demonstrations at health fairs, county fairs, and other public events has proven a successful delivery format for this topic area. Once exposed, the public might then be expected to self-select based on interests, thereby expanding participation in face-to-face educational programs of a more individualized nature.



**Fig. 5-4.** Specific interest in food safety.

Of all topics for which respondents indicated their interest in learning, exercise and stress management appeared most likely to attract Idaho residents to classes and workshops (Fig. 5-5). Including exercise and stress management topics as a part of other educational programs (for example, managing stress as part of a home health care program) might be an innovative way to capture the interest of the public for health and nutrition education programs.

County commissioners' level of interest in learning about specific health and nutrition topics was not significantly different from that of other residents (Fig. 5-5). County commissioners appeared somewhat less likely to invest their time to actually take a course in health and nutrition topics (very high interest), but they were more willing to participate in informal forms of education. Consequently, their overall interest was comparable with the interest level of their constituents.

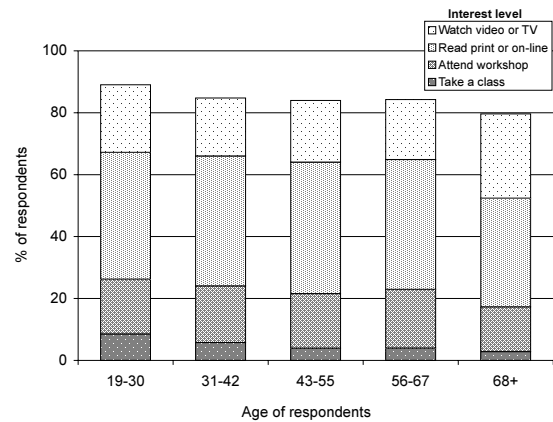


**Fig. 5-5.** County commissioner and resident interest in learning about health and nutrition.

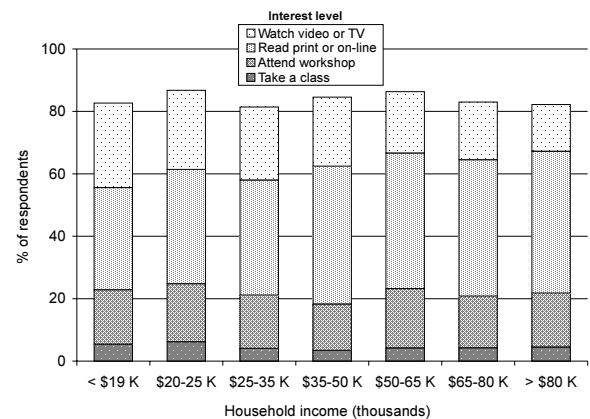
The relationship between age and interest in learning about health and nutrition topics was not significant (Fig. 5-6). For health and nutrition topics, as for most of the topics we investigated, the number of people who expressed sufficient interest to take a course seemed to decrease as the age of respondents increased.

Income had little effect on the level of interest our respondents expressed in health and nutrition topics (Fig. 5-7).

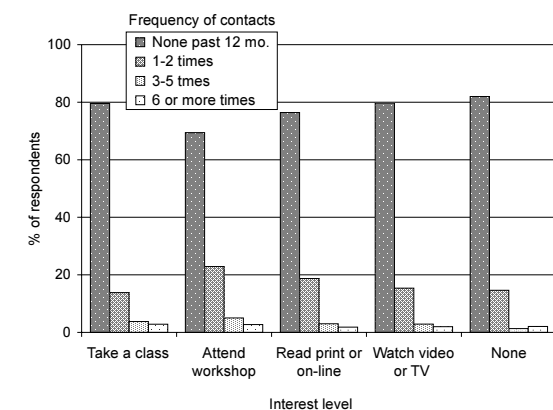
People with high interest in health and nutrition topics more often reported contacts with UI Extension during the past year ( $P < 0.01$ ) than did other respondents (Fig. 5-8). However, those willing to take a course reported fewer contacts with UI Extension than those willing to attend a workshop. This finding may indicate that in-depth learning opportunities such as formal courses and serial programs are more attractive to the very-interested group than are more general workshops and one-time programs often associated with UI Extension.



**Fig. 5-6.** Relationship between age and level of interest in health and nutrition.



**Fig. 5-7.** Relationship between annual household income and level of interest in health and nutrition topics.



**Fig. 5-8.** Frequency of contact with UI Extension during past 12 months compared to interest in health and nutrition.

## Conclusions

Learning about health and nutrition topics is of interest to a wide range of residents and is not dependent on age, income, or place of residence.

Educational publications and videos about health and nutrition topics should appeal to most Idahoans.

Exercise and stress management topics should attract the most learners to classes and workshops and are particularly appealing to younger adults.

People who expressed very high interest in health and nutrition may be more likely to use UI Extension if intensive training and credit courses were available.