

# impact

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

## Extension educators partner to provide American Heart Association Healthy for Life

### AT A GLANCE

University of Idaho Extension educators in Bingham, Bonneville and Franklin counties taught online classes to community members to improve health and well-being.

### The Situation

In 2019, the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare stated over 50,000 Idaho adults self-reported they have angina or heart disease. Of residents who reported angina or heart disease, 31% reported they have diabetes; 71% reported they have high blood pressure; and 68% reported they have high cholesterol. UI Extension educators provide health programs to impact their communities. To increase outreach, Healthy for Life evidence-based community nutrition and well-being program from the American Heart Association and Aramark was selected to help empower people to make healthy food, nutrition and lifestyle choices. Six possible educational experiences, which included PowerPoints, handouts, recipes and support to facilitators were offered by the Healthy for Life® program.

### Our Response

UI Extension family and consumer sciences educators Leslee Blanch, Bonneville County; Julie Buck, Bingham County; and Laura Sant, Franklin County, collaborated to teach an online live Zoom course to adults to build food literacy and increase knowledge of how to connect food choices with daily goals. Four topics were chosen: Your Well-being, Cooking Skills & Food, Grocery Shopping and Globally Inspired Home Cooking.



Healthy for Life® is a community nutrition and well-being program supporting healthy lifestyle choices. Photo credit Bigstock.

The goals were to increase frequency around shopping and preparing healthy food, increase confidence in shopping and preparing healthy home-cooked meals, and to increase consumption of healthy foods, such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains using lecture and recipe demonstration.

A welcome email was sent to everyone who expressed interest in participating through responses to recruitment fliers, social media and email contacts. Lessons included two hours of learning using three thirty-minute demonstrations and content segments.

### Program Outcomes

Registrations included 28 people from six counties in Idaho representing a variety of ethnicities. Attendance

each week at the live Zoom broadcasts was Lesson 1-eight people, Lesson 2-four people, Lesson 3-six people and Lesson 4-five people. An online pre/post-survey was given to participants (n=4 for Lesson 2, n=6 for Lesson 6) at the end of each of the lessons. Participants indicated knowledge and confidence, using a three-point Likert scale. Each point was assigned a number (one=low to three=high). The responses were averaged.

Table 1. Average Pre and Post Knowledge Ranking

Lesson 2 Cooking Skills and Food	Pre	Post
Using a slow cooker or one dish meal to save time and money	2.5	2.75
The difference between a whole grain and a refined grain	2.25	3.0
The daily recommended servings of whole grains	2.0	2.5
Decreasing fat, salt and sugar in our favorite recipes by swapping ingredients	2.0	2.25
Lesson 3 Grocery Shopping	Pre	Post
Shop the perimeter of the store for best buys	2.57	2.67
Cook once, eat twice	2.83	2.8
Meal planning saves time	2.5	2.8
Making a shopping list saves time	3.0	3.0

Table 2. Average Pre and Post Confidence Ranking

Lesson 2 Cooking Skills and Food	Pre	Post
Using a slow cooker/preparing one-dish meals	2.5	3.0
Preparing two different types of whole grains	2.5	2.75
Swapping refined grains for whole grains	1.75	2.75
Swapping less healthy ingredients for healthier ingredients	1.75	2.75
Lesson 3 Grocery Shopping	Pre	Post
Shopping the perimeter of the grocery store	2.43	3.0
Cooking once and eating twice to save time	2.71	3.0
Using a meal planner	2.0	2.83
Making a shopping list before going to the store	2.67	3.0

Post responses were higher than pre responses for most questions indicating that participants increased knowledge and confidence in the subjects taught after taking the classes.

### The Future

University of Idaho Extension educators may teach future classes using the American Heart Association Healthy for Life® lessons which are free and available to anyone who wants to become a facilitator. Visit <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/company-collaboration/healthy-for-life>.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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2-23-jbuck-healthy-life • 2/23