

Tobacco and vaping prevention taught to Bingham County elementary youth

AT A GLANCE

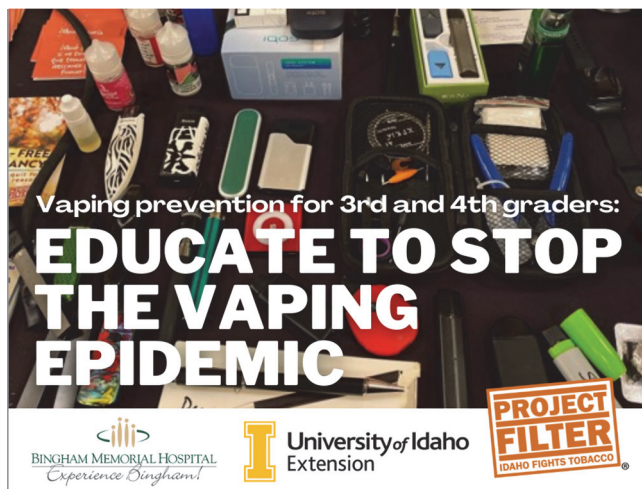
Educators collaborated to teach an interactive tobacco and vaping prevention education to 700 elementary youth in Bingham County.

The Situation

Preventing youth from using tobacco and vaping is far more effective than helping them quit. In 2019, 21.5% of Idaho's high school students used vape products at least once in 30 days. The national rate was 32.7%. As vaping becomes more and more accessible to younger children, the first step of prevention is awareness. Project Filter's mission by intervening early to "improve quality of life for people in Idaho by eliminating risks associated with tobacco use and exposure" includes many statewide programs for adults, teens and youth. Our group of educators desired to target Bingham County youth in elementary schools to provide in-person prevention lessons utilizing engaging methods.

Our Response

Bingham Healthcare employees Randy Powell, grant director and Katie McDonald, community education coordinator and Julie Buck, UI Extension family and consumer sciences educator, collaborated to offer tobacco and vaping prevention education to Bingham County third- and fourth-grade elementary students in 2022. The grant was awarded by Project Filter at the Division of Public Health, Idaho Department of Health and Welfare.



Social media to promote prevention of tobacco and vaping use in Bingham County schools. Image credit Project Filter.

To facilitate effective educational sessions, the short 25-minute science-based lessons used the 4-H learning model of "Know, Do, Apply" and included engaging students to move, role-play and participate in experiments to illustrate the hazards of smoking and vaping without raising curiosity. "Know" included the dangers of smoking, what nicotine is and how it effects the brain and body and what is vaping and the chemicals in the device. "Do" involved running or jumping jacks and then blowing through a straw to simulate difficulty breathing caused by vaping or smoking. "Apply" suggested youth choose one action to take in the coming week, such as talk with a family member about what they learned, choose to be physically active, play a game learned today or create their own idea, and then complete the survey. The lessons included display

cases representing substances included in cigarettes and vaping pens which posed serious health risks.

Youth were given folders with a 4-H flyer, an activity book, crayons, bracelet and bookmarks. The Institutional Review Board of the University of Idaho deemed all study documents as exempt.

Four social media images were created by Project Filter and were posted on University of Idaho Extension Bingham County Facebook page on a rotating basis. “Vape Free” banners including the schools’ logo were presented to each of the nine participating schools.

To best meet the needs of the schools, we coordinated with districts, principals and teachers to plan the dates and times of our activities to best meet their needs. We followed the COVID-19 guidelines of each school and district and educated 700 youth.

Program Outcomes

School distribution is shown in Table 1. Surveys were analyzed using data from one of the educators who visited two schools. After the 25-minute lesson, most of the youth expressed a high or very high knowledge of the four concepts listed in Table 2.

Table 1. Distribution of grade school youth

School District	Third Grade	Fourth Grade	Total n=700
Snake River #52	106	122	228
Blackfoot #55	136	112	248
Firth #59	57	69	126
Aberdeen #58	21	33	54
Blackfoot Charter School	0	44	44

Youth were cautious at first to meet new educators in their schools but quickly warmed up to the engaging lesson and activities. New relationships were made with school district leaders, principals and teachers in

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Julie Buck, Extension Educator • University of Idaho Extension, Bingham County • 208-785-8060 • jhbuck@uidaho.edu

Randy Powell, Grants Manager • Bingham Healthcare, Blackfoot • 208-782-2924 • rpowell@binghammemorial.org

Katie McDonald, Community Education Coordinator • Bingham Healthcare, Blackfoot • 208-785-3919 • kahansen@binghammemorial.org

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schools which were not associated with either Bingham Healthcare or University of Idaho Extension.

Table 2. Sample of two school surveys N=123

Questions What is your knowledge about the following?	Response High or very high N (%)
Aerosol in vaping fluid	67 (56%)
Health risk from vaping	88 (73%)
How to protect yourself from the vaping aerosols	82 (69%)
Effect of second and third hand smoke	72 (60%)
Effect of vaping aerosols to your body	79 (65%)

Blackfoot Parks and Recreation and Blackfoot High School received “Say No to Vaping” banners to be permanently hung on fences at sporting events. All remaining crayons and folders were donated to the Discovery Foster Center in Blackfoot for their foster child back-to-school backpacks.

The Future

Display cases will remain with Bingham Healthcare and University of Idaho Extension educators in Bingham County for future tobacco and vaping education outreach.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

Bingham Healthcare and University of Idaho Extension, Bingham County cooperated to provide tobacco and vaping prevention classes in elementary schools. The grant was funded by Project Filter.