

Banking on Strong Bones in the Napoleon School

The Situation

Calcium is the nutrient most likely lacking in the American Diet.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 70 percent of pre-teen girls and 60 percent of preteen boys do not meet daily calcium recommendations (1,300 milligrams per day for 9-18-year-olds).

Nutrition expert report this calcium shortage places the current generation at greater risk for osteoporosis, a condition known as “pediatric disease with geriatric consequences.”

Extension response

The Banking on Strong Bones project in the Napoleon school addressed the “calcium crisis” among youth and reached fourth-graders with an NDSU-developed, pilot-tested curriculum delivered over five weeks in Mr. Lehr’s classroom.

Based on MyPyramid recommendations, the five week effort included classroom nutrition lessons with participation incentives, educational materials, supplementary activities and taste testing activities. Families received weekly newsletters designed to improve knowledge of nutrition and physical activity.

Students and parents were given pre and post surveys to access impact.

Impacts

Each Tuesday from January 19 through February 16, 2010, fourth grade students at the Napoleon school and their parents participated in the nutrition education program and completed surveys. They improved their knowledge scores, and they have made significant nutrition and physical activity changes to improve their health.

On the post-survey, 84.6 percent of participating children reported drinking three or more glasses of milk the previous day, compared with 50 percent on the pre-survey. On the post-survey, 92.3 percent indicated that the “dairy group” is represented in blue on the MyPyramid, compared to 42.9 on the pre-survey.

On the post-survey, 100 percent of participating children reported that they do not drink soda pop every day while in the pre-survey, 7.1 percent indicated that they drank soda pop every day.

On the post-survey, 76.9 percent of participating children indicated that they would choose milk instead of soda pop, compared with 28.6 percent on the pre-survey.

In a survey with parents, 77.8 percent of parents reported positive changes in their child’s eating habits as a result of this program.

Feedback

The fourth grade teacher, Mr. Lehr, indicated that the students made better choices for snacks and in the lunch line as a result of the Banking on Strong Bones curriculum.

Several parents sought me out to thank me for offering the class to their children because of its positive results.

Contact

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