

Making a difference

Nourishing Boomers and Beyond in Cass County

The Situation

The 2013 census reported that approximately 14% of North Dakota's population is comprised of people 65 years of age or older. According to the U.S. Administration on Aging, the number of individuals in this age group is expected to more than double by 2030. Chronic diseases impact a higher proportion of older adults, often decreasing quality of life and increasing health-care costs. Unfortunately, the outcomes are even worse for low-income seniors. For instance, when seniors were asked about their health status in the 2014 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, 95% of individuals in the top income bracket reported being in "good" health compared to only 67% in the lowest income bracket. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stresses that preventive public health strategies can help reduce the burden of chronic diseases in this population.

Extension Response

The Nourishing Boomers and Beyond series includes face-to-face classes, handouts, recipes, tastings, and additional online resources that aim to improve seniors' knowledge and behaviors concerning chronic disease prevention. In Cass County, the program was offered monthly at two low-income housing sites. Over the course of a year, approximately 40 seniors learned about and practiced strategies to nourish and exercise the following body organs/systems: muscles, brain, bones/joints, skin, digestive system and eyes. In addition, participants were provided information about reducing stress, finding accurate nutrition and health information, and understand their medications.

Impacts

Approximately 30 individuals completed the participant survey for the "Nourish Your Heart" lesson. Of those who completed the survey, 100% learned something new from the lesson and 93% reported a plan to make lifestyle changes based on information that was presented. More specifically, 86% planned to read the "Nutrition Fact" label to learn more about saturated fat and sodium, and planned to choose products that are lower in sodium. 73% planned to avoid foods that contain trans fats, try a new heart-healthy food, and consume at least one serving of fatty fish per week. Finally, 84% were interested in learning more about how they could improve their heart health, 67% had shared information with family and friends, and 78% had tried recipes provided from one of the lessons.

Feedback

"I've learned a lot in each of the lessons."

"This program has helped me stay motivated to exercise every day."

"I love the recipes and the prizes. I have shared the information with my husband and kids."

Contact

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