

McHenry County Youth are On the Move to Better Health

The Situation

Childhood obesity has more than tripled in the past 30 years. North Dakota has the 11th highest rate of obesity in high school children in the nation. Some researchers consider children to be “overfed” but “undernourished.” Obese children are at higher risk for cardiovascular disease. Obesity also increases the risk for diabetes, stroke, cancer and osteoarthritis.

The increased prevalence of obesity and the risk associated with chronic disease is estimated to increase health care costs by \$200 million a year in North Dakota.

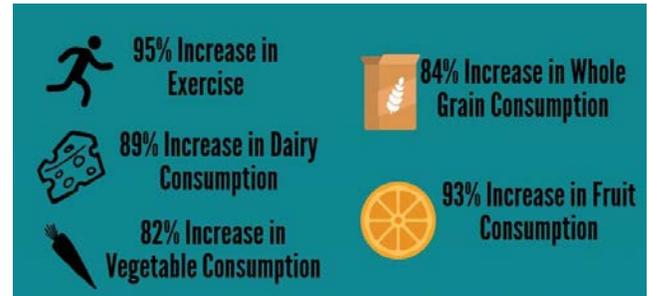
Extension Response

On the Move to Better Health Jr is a five lesson school based curriculums geared for second-graders. It is based on MyPlate, the current icon for good nutrition. The curriculum aims to increase the consumption of fruits, vegetables, protein, grains and dairy in the diets of children as well as improve fitness habits. Each lesson includes an activity and a book read to them with a nutritional message. Participants tracked their intake of food groups on weekly charts. Parents receive newsletters and participate in goal setting and other family-based activities. A total of 66 youth in McHenry were educated with this program.

Impacts

As a result of the five weekly lessons, students knew the five food groups, the importance of physical activity, were able to choose healthy snack options and implemented a healthy snack policy.

Survey results indicated that participating students improved their knowledge and made significant nutrition and physical activity changes to improve their health.



Feedback

Parent Comments:

“The lessons you provided my child helped to reinforce the importance of balanced meals, healthy snacks and daily exercise.”

“Very informational.”

“She really liked learning what was healthy for her.”

“My child was really excited about the nutrition class and shared what he learned with me!”

Public Value Statement

Encouraging healthy behaviors helps reduce health care costs by helping prevent chronic health conditions.

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