

Ward County Children Are On the Move to Better Health

The Situation

Childhood obesity has more than tripled in the past 30 years. Some researchers consider children to be “overfed” but “undernourished.” Obese children are at higher risk for cardiovascular disease, with 70 percent showing at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Obesity also increases the risk for diabetes, stroke, cancer and osteoarthritis.

Extension Response

On the Move to Better Health is a five-week school-based curriculum for fifth-graders. It is based on MyPlate, the current icon for good nutrition. The curriculum aims to increase fruits, vegetables and calcium-rich foods in the diets of children and improve fitness habits. Parents receive newsletters and participate in goal setting and other family-based activities.

Impacts

From 2007 to 2016, 19,172 ND children and their families participated in On the Move to Better Health. Post-surveys with 210 children in Ward County in 2015-16 showed the following as a result of the program:



40% consumed more dairy



57% drank less pop



47% chose healthier snacks



57% increased daily physical activity



46% ate more fruits and vegetables

Surveys with 1,053 parents in 2015-16 showed the following:

- 81 percent of parents/caregivers read the newsletter and 37 percent set a weekly goal
- 35 percent increased their fruit consumption and 31 percent increased their vegetable consumption
- 13 percent increased whole-grain intake
- 18 percent increased their dairy consumption

Feedback

Ward County children said:

- I like how it produced more healthy habits for me and I was more educated about the stuff I eat
- It gave me a bigger view of what I should and should not eat; I should drink more water, etc.
- I like it because we eat a lot more fruit and vegetables
- I like how we learned about different words that we don't know and then we learned about that word

Public Value Statement

Improving health behaviors can increase quality of life and save millions of dollars in collective health-care costs for North Dakotans throughout their lifetime.

County Impact

During the school year 2015-16, 210 children and their families participated in On the Move to Better Health in Ward County.

County Contact

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