

Making a Difference

2019 Lubbock County Better Living for Texans

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Relevance

More than 3.7 million individuals receive benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), historically known as food stamps. In Lubbock County, an estimated 34,653 individuals receive SNAP benefits and 22% of children live in poverty. Studies have shown individuals who live in poverty (including SNAP recipients) have dietary intakes that are not in agreement with current recommendations (i.e. Dietary Guidelines or MyPlate). This audience, like many, may not recognize their risk for foodborne illness. Having enough food to eat is also a challenge; an estimated 1 in 6 households in Texas experience food insecurity.

Response – Better Living for Texans (BLT)

The BLT Program is a cooperative endeavor among Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), and the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) of USDA. A component of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), BLT offers food and nutrition education to SNAP recipients, applicants, and other low-income audiences to help improve their ability to plan and prepare nutritious meals, stretch food dollars, and prepare and store food safely. BLT can also incorporate gardening and the *Walk Across Texas* program to promote physical activity and improve access to vegetables and fruits. During the 2018 – 2019 BLT year, 126 Lubbock County adults completed the BLT **A Fresh Start to a Healthier You!** series. This program focuses on improving vegetable and fruit intake, meal planning, increasing physical activity, and adopting selected behaviors that can reduce the risk of foodborne illness. Of those participants, 12 were at all sessions and 113 were at several sessions which allows us to assess the extent that targeted behaviors were adopted. This report reflects the 12 participants who completed all surveys, and the 113 who completed pre-, post or follow-up surveys measuring intent to change behavior. Contacts were made in programs at Lubbock ISD, senior citizens centers, Summer Youth Food Service programs, South Plains Area Agency on Aging, Catholic Family Services, Managed Care for Addictive Disorders Women's Walker and men's Mash units, Foster Grandparents Volunteers, and others. Collaborations in addition to the previous program locations include Texas Tech University Dietetic Interns, Building Strong Families Conference and its participating agencies. **Step Up to Scale Down** is a 12-lesson weight loss series. It was taught in 8 weeks Jan. 10-Feb. 28 to 8 participants due to some lessons only having weigh-in as the lesson. As a follow-up to Maintain No Gain taught during the holidays, this was a way to jump-start start New Year's Resolutions. **Be Well, Live Well** is a senior citizens 5 lesson nutrition and exercise series taught from June 6-June 27 to 7 participants. The goal is to increase F&V consumption, food safety and exercise in order to help seniors Be Well & Live Well (and live independently). **Senior Citizens Centers and Other Group Programs** – are provided by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Lubbock County to satisfy the USDA and South Plains Association of Governments Area Agency on Aging requirements of a monthly nutrition program for each senior center. Older persons are at a higher risk for developing diabetes, heart disease, and other chronic illnesses as well as food borne illness. One "In The Know About Nutrition" topic per month was taught at 6 BLT senior centers. The 8 Texas Tech Dietetic Interns each wrote from one to three of these nutrition presentations during their community nutrition rotation in the Lubbock County Extension Office in 2019. This will continue with the interns in the 2020 internship class. The SPAG AAoA senior center bookkeepers and directors also receive the sr. center programs (3 per quarter) so that the centers in counties without agents would have an approved nutrition program to present. Some of these centers also provide home delivered meals and the nutrition program is also delivered by volunteers along with the meals.


Results

A Fresh Start to a Healthier You: Participants were: female (45.5%) vs male (54.5%) and from a variety of racial/ethnic backgrounds (47.5% Hispanic or Latino, 52.5% Non-Hispanic; 83.3% White; 8.3% Black). The average household size was 2.69 and the mean age was 35.53. Approximately 73.8% (n=31) of 126 participants received SNAP benefits. More than 16.7% (n=7) had received food from a food pantry/bank within the previous 30 days. Additionally, 16.7% participated in free or reduced school meals; and 16.7% qualified for WIC. **Meal Planning and Food Resource Management – Adoption of behavior-**Upon entry into the BLT program, participants were planning their meals (65.6%), shopping for food with a list (72%) and comparing prices (81.4%) “always” “most” or “sometimes”. After the program ended, the percentage of participants increased who reported intent to practice planning meals (72.6%), using a list (84.8%), but decreased in comparing prices (72.6%) “always”, or “most of the time”. **Food Safety-Adoption of behavior-**At the beginning, a majority washed hands before preparing meals (n=100; 93%) and washed fruits & veggies before eating or preparing them (n=102; 93.1%) “always” or “most of the time”. After the program, more reported washing hands before preparing meals “always” or “most of the time” (97.8%; n=91) and washing fruits & veggies before eating or preparing them (93.1%; n=80). While there was an increase, more need to be aware of the dangers of inadequate hand washing and washing of produce in light of numerous recalls in 2018-19. **Other Findings:** In the beginning, 74.5% (n=102) indicated that they are physically active at least 30 minutes five days a week “all”, “most”, or “some” of the time. After the program, this number increased to 80.3% (n=91). Before classes, 69% ate fruit 1 or more times a day; 88.1% ate ½ or more cups of fruit; 79.4% ate vegetables 1 or more times per day; 85.1% ate over ½ cups and 33.3% reported ½ or more of their plates were F&V. Afterwards, 56% ate fruit 1 or more times per day but 91.3% ate over ½ cups per day; 72.1% ate vegetables 1 or more times per day, 91.3% ate ½ cups or more and 31.3% reported ½ or more of their plate was F&V. Program satisfaction was rated either “good”, “very good”, or “excellent” by 99.1% (n=110) of participants, while 93% (n=115) were “very likely” or “likely” to recommend BLT programs to others and 82.8% (n=116) were “very likely” or “likely” to attend another BLT program. **Step Up to Scale Down:** 87.5% of 8 participants were over age 65; 100% were female; 75% Hispanic; 12.5% African American; 12.5% white; all reported fair to good health in the beginning, but 12.5% reported very good & improved at the end. Only 1 reported worse health. 87.5% participated in moderate exercise at first, but 62.5% did at the end due to 2 stopping and 1 starting exercising. 87.5% of participants averaged exercising 3 or more times per week at the beginning and 62.5% at the end with 75% exercising 60 minutes each time. 87% said their portions of F&V either increased or did not change; 12.5% ate fruit more often at the end, while 37.5% indicated eating vegetables more often, 50% drank less regular sodas; 62.5% drank less sweet tea or fruit drinks; 12.5% ate breakfast more often; 37.5% watched less television and videos; 25% had tried to lose weight in the last year and 50% reported weight loss at the end. 50% reported poor physical and/or mental health before but 37.5% reported this after classes; 37.5% used restaurant calorie information more often; 12.5% planned meals more often, and 37.5% drank more water after classes. **Be Well, Live Well:** 43% indicated good health before and after class while 29% said their diet was good before and after classes. 100% exercised 3 or more days per week before and after classes. 58% ate fruit and 85% ate vegetables 1 or more times a day. Before classes, 57% sometimes thawed food on the counter, 71% threw food out nearing the use by/sell by date, 71% always or sometimes planned meals, & 100% always or sometimes read nutrition facts labels. After classes, 71% never thawed food on the counter, 86% threw food out nearing use by dates, 85% planned meals, & 71% read nutrition facts labels. 71% were female; 14% Black; 71% Hispanic; 29% had a GED, high school diploma while 57% had less than high school education. **Senior Citizens Centers and Other Nutrition Programs:** Six BLT senior citizens centers received a monthly nutrition program. Topics for 2016 included in the “In The Know About Nutrition” series were: “Keeping Your Mind & Body Going in the Cold Winter Months”, “Be Well, Live Well, Live Independent Nutrition”, “Be Well, Live Well: Be Able—Read The Label”, “Find the Perfect Date: Use the Food Dating System”, “Live Well, Be Well: Be Creative”, “Importance of Calcium & Vit. D”, “Ice Cream Facts”, “Omega 3 Fatty Acids”, “Making the Most of Your Microwave”, “Collagen Supplements”, “Elevated Triglycerides”, and “Bananas”. There were about 1639 participants (including 600 home delivered meal participants) receiving

the handout and program from the Lubbock CEA-FCS, BLT-EA or volunteers for the home delivered meal program at Slaton Sr. Center. Because the Sr. Center directors and bookkeepers come to Lubbock for a SPAG AAoA quarterly training from the 20 surrounding counties of which several have no FCS Agent, a program highlighting the Lubbock County senior center lessons for the quarter is presented. These directors then have 3 nutrition programs to present to their clientele, fulfilling the program requirements of USDA and SPAG. This agent is also a member of the SPAG AAoA Community Advisory Council. Nutrition education was also provided at the and Summer Youth Food Service Camps and Jr. League Camp Healthy Kids (approx.290). The Lubbock CEA-FCH served as a preceptor to 8 TX Tech Dietetic Interns during their community nutrition rotation. Growing & Nourishing Healthy Communities and Learn, Grow, Eat, Go were conducted by the Horticulture Urban Youth Agents and reported in their annual reports.

VALUE

Better Living for Texans



These nutrition programs teach low-income audiences to prepare nutritious meals, stretch their food resources, improve their food-safety practices, and participate in regular physical activity. This not only improves the quality of life and reduces the risk of chronic disease for participants, but also lowers public health care costs.

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