

Idaho Falls police department learns about fueling for success is key to optimal health

AT A GLANCE

Law enforcement officers are involved in a high-stress profession with demanding schedules. Tools to maximize nutrient intake, proper exercise and adequate sleep can be key in optimizing health.

The Situation

Professional challenges and concerns for public safety can increase the challenge for law enforcement officers to optimize personal health. With the extra demands that stress and erratic sleep schedules place on the body, officers can benefit from practical tools to help them select nutrient-dense foods and to make physical activity and quality sleep a priority.

Our Response

The family and consumer sciences associate Extension educator presented eight two-hour sessions to the Idaho Falls Police Department on “Performance Nutrition: Fueling for Success.” Recommended ranges for carbohydrate, protein and fat intake were reviewed for various activity levels and body weight ranges. Emphasis was placed on nutrient-rich foods from each food group, with modification for food preferences and intolerances. The USDA MyPlate model was referenced for balanced meal planning, including on-the-go meals and snacks.

In addition to appropriate nutrient intake, the needs for regular physical activity and adequate sleep to fuel the body were also discussed. Research-based



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guidelines were provided for physical activity and improving quantity and quality of sleep.

Program Outcomes

Of 75 post-presentation surveys completed, 88% of participants expressed plans to implement changes in health habits and/or new health information they had learned. Intended nutrition modifications included portion control, adequate hydration, balance of carbohydrate, protein and fat consumption, and awareness of caloric intake. A large number of the participants were previously unaware of appropriate hydration guidelines, as well as the role of complex carbohydrates in a balanced diet. Modifications in sleep habits were also a target of change for many participants.

The Future

Balanced nutrient intake, regular physical activity and adequate sleep work together in fueling bodies and minds for success. The Extension educator will seek further opportunity to provide “Performance Nutrition: Fueling for Success” to community members, equipping individuals with tools to maximize their pursuit of optimal health.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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