



## Human Health, Nutrition

### UI Extension educators help seniors demystify prescription drug cards

A Medicare-approved prescription drug discount card can save Idahoans who are eligible for Medicare from 17 to 40 percent on the cost of their prescription drugs. But the numbers of available cards are many, and seniors must pick just one. To help them compare savings offered by about 50 different cards, UI Extension Family and Consumer Sciences educators have teamed with the Senior Health Insurance Advisor program and Area Offices on Aging.

"Prescription drugs are one of the greatest expenses many seniors have," says Marilyn Bischoff, UI Extension family economics specialist and leader of an extension initiative on financial security in later life. "The prescription drug cards can help seniors reduce their out-of-pocket costs for this huge expense, but there's been a lot of confusion and a lot of misinformation about them."

UI Extension received a one-year, \$50,000 grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to teach eligible Idahoans how to reap these savings. Project coordinator Becky Dahl says workshops and mass-media awareness campaigns have been scheduled in more than a dozen counties, in sites ranging from local pharmacies to senior citizen centers.

At each workshop, participants enter their current prescription-drug regimen into a computer program that ranks cards on potential savings for each individual. "They are amazed at the simplicity of getting the information, amazed at how much the savings will be, and really amazed that it personalizes the information down to the savings at drug-stores A, B, and C in their community," Dahl says.

Contact Bischoff at [mbischof@uidaho.edu](mailto:mbischof@uidaho.edu).

### Nutrition program helps seniors stay healthy

In Kootenai County alone, a combination of beautiful scenery enticing retirees and an aging population boosted senior numbers by nearly 43 percent during the 1990s. A survey showed that half of the 750 North Idaho seniors who received support from Aging and Adult Services, a non-profit agency, were at high nutritional risk, increasing their need for medical attention and health care costs.

The University of Idaho Extension Nutrition Program pursued a unique partnership

with Aging and Adult Services to help improve seniors' nutrition through lessons during home visits.

Since it began in 2002, UI Extension nutrition advisors have taught 152 seniors healthier eating habits through 1,225 home-based lessons. The program won a National Healthcare and Aging Award from the American Society on Aging in San Francisco last summer.

Contact is Kali Gardiner at [kalig@uidaho.edu](mailto:kalig@uidaho.edu).

## DID YOU KNOW?

**11.4** PERCENT of Idaho's population in 2003 was 65 or older, compared to 10 percent in 1980.

\*Source: Northwest Area Foundation Indicator Website

### Online food science course examines whys of food processing

An online food science certificate program offered by the University of Idaho serves up a four-course overview of the industry.

Jeff Culbertson, the UI professor who developed the course, said 27 UI students enrolled in the class, Introduction to Food Processing, this spring. Another dozen professionals across five time zones and in businesses ranging from distilled spirits to dairy, and sports nutrition products to vegetable processing attend class through the Internet.

Its popularity from the East Coast to Hawaii provides a rewarding mix of education and experience. Since the coursework is Internet-based, students study when they can. A weekly online chatroom is required and sometimes proves the most educational experience of all.

"Students benefit from the experience of professionals who might be using a process or equipment we're reading about. For professionals, they learn the whys behind the process," Culbertson said.

Contact Culbertson at [jeffc@uidaho.edu](mailto:jeffc@uidaho.edu).

