

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2012 NC Cooperative Extension Congressional District 1

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Young Father Makes Healthy Changes and Loses 46 Pounds

In a recent EFNEP class for Head Start parents, one parent was successful in actively improving his family's nutrition and their level of physical activity. He is a young father with a pre-kindergarten child and 2 school age children. He described his family's usual food choices as "drive-thru dining." In the small rural town they lived in, there were 5 fast food restaurants within 2 blocks of their home. He readily admitted that he never read the nutritional labels when buying groceries and usually bought a lot of junk food. While in the EFNEP classes, the father quickly learned how to read labels to make healthier food choices for his family and began to implement making more meals at home instead of eating fast food several times a week. He stopped buying sodas. He introduced more fruits and veggies to his children's meals and was very surprised that his kids liked them! Several times a week he and his family would cut the TV off and take a brisk walk around his neighborhood. Near the end of the EFNEP classes he had lost 21 pounds and his wife had lost 12 pounds. After successfully completing the EFNEP classes, he stayed in touch and to date he has lost 46 pounds! He continues to prepare healthy EFNEP recipes for his family at home. He has also been named Father of the Year at his child's Head Start. He participated in the Head Start's family fun day by organizing and working at a booth where volunteers made and served healthy fruit smoothies and fruit parfaits to the participants. He took the time to talk with other parents at the family fun day about how he was able improve his families health by using the tools he learned in the EFNEP classes. He has become an advocate in his community for healthy lifestyles and has made himself available to participate in future EFNEP classes as a volunteer.

Woman Avoids Prescription Blood Pressure Medicine by Reducing Her Salt Intake

Heart disease is the number one health related illness in Edgecombe County.¹ In fact, the rate is 1.3 times higher in Edgecombe than the statewide rate for heart disease.² This alarmingly high rate can be partly attributed to diets high in sodium and fat, and inadequate physical activity.

In order to help reverse the high numbers of heart disease in Edgecombe County, EFNEP recently worked with a women's group who were concerned about their children's diets. One woman shared that EFNEP opened her eyes about healthy eating in so many ways. Her most enlightening report was the lesson that focused on reading nutrition labels. She shared that she is now able to find ways to prepare healthy meals for her family, and she was especially proud of reducing salt in her cooking. Because of reading labels and not cooking with salt, she was able to lower her blood pressure and did not have to go on blood pressure medicine. She says had it not been for her lesson on label reading, she would never have been aware of all the hidden sodium in food.

This woman's story is a great example of how simple changes can make a dramatic impact on health and wellbeing, even on a limited budget. With the knowledge and support EFNEP provides, we are able to educate and encourage communities to live healthier lives.

EFNEP helps address the challenges limited resource families face when introducing healthy changes through nutrition education, cooking classes, exercise strategies, and shopping on a limited budget.

1. Edgecombe County Health Department, 2011 Edgecombe County State of the County Health Report. http://www.edgecombecountync.gov/client_resources/health/2011%20sotc%20report.pdf

2. Ibid.

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