

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2012 NC Cooperative Extension Congressional District 4

Serving Durham, Orange and Wake counties

Mother Improves Family's Financial Security by Healthy Budgeting

Limited resource families often have a difficult time gaining access to information on nutrition and health related data. In Orange County, 16.3% of people live below the poverty line, which is significantly higher than the state average of 15.5%. This is a major concern because poverty is strongly associated with a wide range of health problems, including chronic disease. Research shows that the highest rates of obesity occur among population groups with the highest poverty rates.¹ This is partly influenced by the fact that the lowest cost food options are usually composed of unhealthy calories, including refined grains, added sugars and fats. Poverty is associated with low fruit and vegetable consumption and lower-quality diets.

In order to address these concerns, the Orange Cooperative Extension, in partnership with the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), presented a free Summer Program for parents and kids on nutrition. In the program, participants learned how to save money through budgeting, eat healthier and spend time in physical activity. Each parent created one-recipe meal with a ten dollar cost, and they shared the recipes with each other and received a \$10.00 gift from Food Lion to buy the meal.

One family of four, two parents and two children, was spending one hundred eighty dollars in food per week. From the lessons she learned from EFNEP, the mother prepared one budget spending only ninety per week, adding WIC vouchers. She now feels very happy and more financially secure to see she can save three hundred sixty dollars per month. For this family, EFNEP made the seemingly impossible possible task of buying and preparing healthy meals on a limited budget.

EFNEP supports families who struggle overcoming the barriers to living a healthy lifestyle through education, budgeting, community support, and creative ways to prepare and cook healthy foods. With EFNEP, many families impacted by the program have made the necessary changes in their lifestyles to decrease their risk of chronic disease and improve their family's overall health and wellbeing.

Woman Loses Thirty Pounds and Improves Her Health

Changing behavior can be very challenging for anyone because diet and lifestyle are greatly influenced by a person's culture, physical environment, and social networks; these challenges are often compounded for limited resource families because of constrained budgets. For this reason, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) helps address the challenges limited resource families face when they try to introduce healthy lifestyle changes. This is achieved through nutrition education, cooking classes, exercise strategies, and shopping on a limited budget. This program improves the lives of each one of these families with the positive changes they have made by reducing their risk of obesity related illnesses and supporting healthy lifestyles.

Before attending an EFNEP class, one participant shared she was not eating the right types of foods. She and her family ate mostly junk food and fried foods. They did not eat fruits and vegetables a lot because she prepared foods like her parents did, and that was the only way that she knew how to cook. After three months in the EFNEP program, she has started preparing healthier meals for her family. She is now serving foods from all of the food groups, and more importantly, she has stopped frying meats every day. This participant has also started exercising each day for 30 minutes with other group members. Each week they weigh in and she is proud to share that she has lost 30 pounds since the beginning of the program. She now knows that if she eats right, exercises, and drink plenty of water, she can improve her health, lose weight, and decrease her risk of chronic disease. This participant is very proud of her new success, and she stated that she enjoys the EFNEP classes because the lessons give her the skills on what to do to be healthy and how to teach her children how to eat healthy as well.



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. Drewnowski A, Specter SE. (2004) Poverty and obesity: The role of energy density and energy costs. American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 79(1): 6-16.

