

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2012 NC Cooperative Extension Camden County

Participants Learn Basic Steps to Prevent Illness

Foodborne illnesses are almost 100 percent preventable, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 76 million foodborne illnesses occur in the US each year, including 325,000 hospitalizations and 5,000 deaths.¹ For this reason, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) of NC Cooperative Extension and Camden County collaborated with a local Head Start to provide workers and parents with a better understanding of meal planning and food safety.

During the EFNEP lessons, 15 participants and staff shared how they cooked and thawed their foods. In the Fix it Safe session, they observed the correct way to thaw their foods in the refrigerator and how to use a meat thermometer to make sure their meats were cooked at the correct temperatures. Before the food safety lesson, there were only 5 participants who owned a meat thermometer and only 2 of those who actually used them.

During a hands-on group activity, participants took turns practicing how to take the temperature of different meats. One participant shared that “it’s so easy, so I’ll start using mine more often now”

Sometimes it’s the little things, like learning how to use a meat thermometer, that teach us better ways to safely handle foods for our families. By the next session, 8 other participants had purchased and started using a meat thermometer.

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.

Children Learn the Importance of Healthy Living

The youth in Camden County, like most of the youth in our country, face the problems of childhood obesity, which can lead to other health concerns. These problems stem from a lack of adequate exercise, healthy eating, and basic nutrition education. To make sure our youth have the knowledge and skills needed to fight childhood obesity, the 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (4-H EFNEP) and the Grandy Primary After-School presented an after-school program to help combat these problems.

The 4-H EFNEP program helps youth explore ways to eat smart, move more, fight bacteria, and have fun. During the series of classes, 44 youth practiced how to choose foods for good health, the importance of physical activity, and how to keep foods safe. Pre and post evaluations showed an increase in knowledge and healthy behavior. Our goal is to continue the program with other groups.

The 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program also partnered with kindergarten classes in the Elizabeth City Pasquotank School system to help children make healthier food choices and increase their physical activity. The six class series emphasized eating more fruits and vegetables. The children were encouraged to eat healthy snacks at home and school, and to make fruits and vegetables part of their lunches. Parents and teachers have noticed that the children are asking for more fruits and vegetables for snacks and are willing to eat more during meals. They are even competing to see who brings the best lunches or snacks.

Many of the teachers have asked that the 4-H EFNEP curriculum be taught each year.



1. Mead PS, Slutsker L, Dietz V, McCaig LF, Bresee JS, Shapiro C, Griffin PM, Tauxe RV. Food-related illness and death in the United States. *Emerg Infect Dis.* 1999, 5:607-625. Distributed in furtherance of the acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University commit themselves to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, or disability. In addition, the two Universities welcome all persons without regard to sexual orientation. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.



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