

# EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

## 2012 NC Cooperative Extension Edgecombe County

### Woman Avoids Prescription Blood Pressure Medicine By Reducing Her Salt Intake

Heart disease is the number one health related illness in Edgecombe County.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the rate is 1.3 times higher in Edgecombe than the statewide rate for heart disease.<sup>2</sup> 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, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) recently worked with a group of women 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, but she was most proud of her reduction of 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, saving herself unnecessary health care costs. 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.

### Young Moms Learn the Importance of Physical Activity

During pregnancy, it is important for the health of the mother and her child to have a healthy diet and to exercise. For this reason, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) worked with a group of pregnant and parenting teens in Edgecombe County. One area they worked on was increasing their physical activity. During the Choosing to Move More lesson, all of the teens told their instructor that they did not have time to exercise. To prove to the young women that they could implement exercise into their busy schedules, the instructor gave them simple ways of adding exercise to their day. One way she told them was to get up and move during commercial breaks when they were watching TV. This was quite a chuckle to most the girls. At the next meeting one teen shared with her group that she started exercising during commercial breaks. She also proceeded to tell the group that her family noticed what she was doing and everyone started exercising during commercials. Now the entire family walks every afternoon. Several weeks later the teen told the group that her family was still exercising every afternoon and that at her last doctors appointment she had a great blood pressure reading. Prior to taking the Choosing to Move More Class through EFNEP, the teen was on the verge of being put on high blood pressure medicine. As a result of increasing her exercise she no longer has high blood pressure.



*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](http://www.edgecombecountync.gov/client_resources/health/2011%20sotc%20report.pdf)

2. Ibid.

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