

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2012 NC Cooperative Extension Hertford County

Participants Learn to Cook More at Home

Many people have a difficult time implementing healthy foods into their diets, even though it is essential to good health. At the Solid Foundation's Adult day treatment center in Ahoskie, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP) partnered with the Hertford County Cooperative Extension to teach disabled parents and teens about the importance of healthy foods and creative ways to prepare fruits and vegetables. For nine weeks participants observed cooking demonstrations and tasted a variety of healthy foods to better understand how to prepare quick and healthy meals.

Before participating in EFNEP, the majority of the group members ate fast food every day. But after learning the importance of eating healthy and specific ways to prepare healthy meals, the participants are now eating less fast food and cooking more in their own homes. In addition, participants also learned how to prepare meals without salt, yet still tasted great.

EFNEP supports individuals 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, participants have made the necessary changes in their lifestyles to decrease their risk of chronic disease and improve their overall health and wellbeing.

Students Take Steps to Improve Their Health

In Hertford County, the number of overweight and obese children has grown in recent years. This problem has serious consequences; children and youth who are overweight or obese have an increased risk of chronic diseases. Without proper interventions in our community to reverse this unhealthy and dangerous trend in young people, then the youth of Hertford County risk not living long, healthy and productive lives.

In order to combat this problem, EFNEP, in partnership with Hertford County's Middle School, taught students who were at risk for obesity health and nutrition lessons. For six weeks, the students learned about the different food groups and the importance of physical activity. They were also given ideal meals for breakfast, lunch, snack and dinner. Students also participated in aerobic, flexibility, and strengthening exercises. Through the help of EFNEP, these students are taking the important steps towards improving their health, ensuring they will be strong and healthy as they grow into adulthood.



Participants Share Barriers to Physical Activity and Create Solutions Together

Physical activity provides many health benefits, including lowered blood pressure, decreased cholesterol levels, and a reduced risk of obesity related diseases.

Because of the importance of including physical activity in people's daily lives, EFNEP partnered with CADA, Ahoskie First Baptist-Women Job Corp, and Healthy Grandparents in order to increase physical activity and improve their overall health. The participants learned the benefits of being physically active, how much time should be devoted to physical activity, and how to incorporate physical activity into their daily routines.

The EFNEP program assistant from the Hertford County Cooperative Extension also explained the importance of combining physical activity with a nutrition diet, and demonstrated healthy recipes that are low in calories and sodium. Along with eating healthy, EFNEP participants also do 15-30 minutes of stretching and cardio activities during their lesson.

One of the barriers to increased physical activity the participants quickly identified was having the time to do physical activities. Participants learned how to overcome barriers by replacing or finding other ways to add physical activity in their lives daily.

Participant from CADA parenting group shared information about the following barriers and came up with possible solutions:

1. Barrier: I don't have time to work out daily.

Solution: Look at what you already do during the day. Can you add an activity or make a physical activity with what you already are doing at home or work.

Try: Knee bends for 10 minutes at work on break or extra walk around the grocery store or mall while you are shopping.

2. Barrier: I don't have money to join a gym

Solution: You don't have to have money to do things that are free. Walking is free and can be done with your family as a family activity. Walking is also the most easiest and efficient way to exercise. Walking also allows you to build up your tolerance level as you begin to increase your future physical activities.

3. Barrier: I have never been physically active, what if I don't see results, and I don't have anyone to workout with.

Solution: If you have never been physically active there is never a wrong day to start making positive changes to your health. You will not see results immediately but you may feel better and sleep better at night. Setting small goals will help you see results. Set small goals that you know you can accomplish. If you don't have a workout partner take a family member. Always choose people that are positive about their physical health, as they will influence you for the better.

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