

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2012 NC Cooperative Extension Lee County



Family Changes Their Diet for Better Health

In Lee County, cancer, heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes are among the leading causes of preventable death and disability; these diseases often stem from underlying risky health behaviors such as physical inactivity and poor diet. By addressing these preventable, underlying health risk factors, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) provides a cost effective education system for families who want to change their lifestyle choices, but need some initial support and training.¹ Most people know that eating vegetables is a smart and healthy choice and can reduce the risk of chronic disease, but families with limited resources are less likely to implement healthy vegetables in to their and their children's diets.² EFNEP works to bridge the gap between knowledge and action.

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.

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.

In Lee County, one participant says that, after attending EFNEP's Families Eating Smart and Moving More, she is eating differently, has more energy and no longer feels weak. Her family has significantly reduced eating meals at unhealthy restaurants, and as a result they are cooking healthy meals at home and saving money. Before participating in EFNEP, this participant shared that she would often skip breakfast but now understands the importance of eating something healthy every morning. Now she will grab a piece of fruit or wheat toast as she leaves the house. Before EFNEP, potatoes, rice and refined pasta were dinner staples. Now she is preparing more vegetables and whole grains. In addition, she is involving her son in the kitchen so he can learn healthy habits as well.

1. Hastings J et al (2010) Prevention for the health of North Carolina. NC Med J, 71(1): 30-47.
2. Blisard N, Stewart H, Joliffe D. 2004. Low-income households' expenditures on fruits and vegetables. Agric. Econ. Rep. 833. Washington, DC: USDA; Leibtag ES, Kaufman PR. 2003. Exploring food purchase behavior of low-income households: How do they economize? Current Issues in Economics of Food Markets, United States Department of Agriculture, 747-07.

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