

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2012 NC Cooperative Extension Pitt County

Youth Learn New Kitchen Skills for Healthy Lifestyle

When connected with a nutritious diet, physical activity an important component in combatting obesity. Yet the number of overweight and obese children has steadily grown in recent years. In fact, compared to other states, North Carolina ranks 41st in obesity prevalence, and fewer people are physically active (44.0% versus 49.5% nationally). What is even more concerning is that more than 3 out of 10 children between the ages of 2-18 in North Carolina are overweight or obese, which places them at increased risk for developing diseases such as type 2 diabetes or hypertension and making them more likely to face social discrimination and have low self-esteem.¹ According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 72.7% of adults in Pitt County are overweight or obese, and more than one in three children are overweight or obese.² These alarming statistics reveal that obesity is a serious problem in Pitt County.

In the 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), youth learn how to prepare healthy, low-cost meals, and understand the importance of daily physical activity. This allows the youth to learn new skills in the kitchen setting and provides recipes for low cost, nutritious meals and snack ideas. Upon completing the lessons, youth improved their ability to select low cost, nutritious foods; they were also encouraged to share the information they learned with friends and family.

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, 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.

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Overweight and obesity. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/consequences.html>.

2. CDC, Putting Prevention to Work, County Profile: Pitt County, North Carolina http://www.cdc.gov/CommunitiesPuttingPreventiontoWork/communities/profiles/obesity-nc_pitt-county.htm

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Participant Improves Her Health and Encourages Coworkers

Cancer, heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes are among the leading causes of preventable death and disability in NC. These health conditions often stem from underlying health risk behaviors such as physical inactivity and poor diet. Not only does this affect people's health and wellbeing, but can also limit people from being successful in the workforce.

For this reason, STRIVE, an organization dedicated to training unemployed adults how to find and retain jobs, has partnered with the EFNEP to improve student's overall health and wellbeing in Pitt County. Participants learn the importance of planning meals, using a budget, making healthy food choices, food safety, and physical activity.

After completing the EFNEP lessons, one participant shared how the lessons she learned improved her health and helped her perform as an employee. She stated that EFNEP has changed her outlook on her eating habits and why it is important to make better choices. Now twenty pounds lighter, she credits EFNEP for her weight loss and her lifestyle change. Looking good was not her concern, but feeling good and being productive was her priority.

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.



EFNEP
EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION
EDUCATION PROGRAM

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