

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2012 NC Cooperative Extension Sampson County



Small Changes Make a Big Impact

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) teaches participants in Sampson County to move more and eat smart in order to prevent risk factors for heart disease. One Sampson County EFNEP participant made small changes that had a huge impact on her life. When this individual enrolled in the program, she was overweight and had poor self-esteem. The move more breaks during the lessons showed her simple ways to increase her daily physical activity. In addition, she learned to make healthier drink choices, thereby reducing her total sugar intake. She also learned to increase her fruit and vegetable intake by making them half her plate. As a result of these simple changes, she has lost a total of 22 pounds since the beginning of the program. EFNEP not only helped her to lose weight but also improved her self-esteem.

EFNEP Uses Real Life Examples

Changing behavior can be very challenging for anyone because diet and lifestyle is greatly influenced by a person's culture, physical environment, and social networks; these challenges are often compounded for limited resource families because of constrained budgets. The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (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. This program improves the lives of each one of these families through the positive changes they have made to reducing their risk of obesity related illnesses and supporting healthy lifestyles.

One reason why EFNEP participants are successful at changing lifestyle habits is because EFNEP uses real life situations to reinforce the skills learned in class. This is because people are more likely to adopt a new practice when they are able to translate class lessons to their own environment. Through collaborative efforts with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, EFNEP participants have the opportunity to tour a grocery store as a part of a series of classes where participants learned how to feed their families healthier foods on a limited budget.

Participants used the tour to practice using the skills they learned in class, such as comparing nutrition labels and practicing unit pricing on many different healthy foods. All the participants practiced finding foods low in fat, sodium, and high in nutrition. Participants were challenged to shop for nutritious foods from each food group to take home and prepare for their families. Each participant purchased a whole grain product, vegetable, fruit, low fat dairy item and a lean protein using skills gained in EFNEP for under \$10. As a result of the tour, participants said they had become more confident in their ability to shop for healthier foods, and the experience connected the lessons learned in class to their real life shopping needs. Each participant expressed greater confidence in their ability to feed their families healthy foods on limited incomes.

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EFNEP
EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION
EDUCATION PROGRAM

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