

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2013 NC Cooperative Extension Congressional District 13

Serving Durham, Edgecombe, Franklin, Nash, Vance, Wake and Wayne counties



Participant Makes Healthy Choices, Loses 15 Pounds

During a recent series of Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) lessons, participants learned how to make healthy choices and increase their physical activity.

One participant stated, that prior to the EFNEP lessons, she rarely planned her meals and hardly ever looked at the nutrition facts label before purchasing foods. She also reported that she engaged in less than 30 minutes a day of physical activity.

After the series of lessons, the participant shared that she now keeps her refrigerator stocked with fruits and vegetables from her weekly trip to the farmers' market and uses local fruit she purchases to make yogurt parfaits. She now prepares more meals at home, using lower-fat preparation methods, instead of frying, and drinks water instead of soda.

The EFNEP program assistant learned of the participant's interest in gardening and connected her to the Durham County Cooperative Extension Horticulture Agent. After attending a workshop with the agent, she started her own container garden. She grows fresh herbs, such as mint, oregano, basil, and thyme to season her meals and has reduced her consumption of sodium. She has increased her physical activity to meet the recommended amount of 30 minutes most days of the week and has lost a total 15 pounds.

Additionally, the participant, who works as a teacher's assistant, has shared what she has learned through EFNEP with the students of the kindergarten class with whom she works. She makes fruit smoothies with them. The class has adopted a classroom policy to not bring soft drinks into the classroom. She has provided each student with a water bottle and encourages the students to drink water throughout the school day.

This participant credits her personal ability to meet her health goals to what she learned through EFNEP. She also states she is so happy she has been able to share what she learned with the children in her care.

EFNEP Helps Participant Learn To Reduce Sodium

A Wayne County EFNEP participant shared that he has a family history of hypertension and knew he was at risk for developing the disease. However, he didn't know how to lower his sodium intake other than to remove the saltshaker from the table. He admitted that he rarely cooked and preferred to buy canned and frozen, ready-made meals. Moreover, he never looked at the nutrition label while shopping for groceries. He would buy foods without considering its nutritional value.

While in EFNEP, the participant learned that pre-made processed foods were higher in sodium compared to fresh and/or homemade. After learning to read the nutrition facts label he was able to determine which foods were high in sodium and avoid these choices. In addition, the food demonstrations allowed him to try recipes that were made with little to no sodium.

The information and skills the participant learned in EFNEP has helped him become more aware of his diet and health. He now reads the nutrition label before deciding what foods to buy. He has started to cook more foods at home using the EFNEP cookbook. As a result, his diet is now lower in sodium, fat and calories. Although hypertension is part of this participant's family health history, by applying the knowledge and skills he has learned in EFNEP, he is taking steps to reduce his personal risk of developing the disease.

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.

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