

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

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Serving Cumberland, Durham, Harnett, Orange and Wake counties

Youth Learn To Choose Heart Healthy Foods

Research suggests that children whose parents are overweight or obese are at higher risk of becoming obese themselves.¹ Obesity increases the risk for health problems, including high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease and stroke.²

As part of a local summer camp for youth, the 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) program assistant offered a series of interactive nutrition education lessons. During one lesson, the youth learned about the importance of eating healthy foods to maintain a healthy heart and a healthy weight. When asked if they knew anyone who had heart disease, over 50% of the students raised their hands. The program assistant talked with them about how fatty foods, like fried foods, may lead to heart disease. The youth compared nutrition information between fried foods and healthier options prepared using little or no added fat. They learned the difference in calories and dietary fat. As part of the lesson, youth were able to try low-fat options for meals and snacks. They discovered they like the healthier choice. They also learned to use the recommendations of USDA's MyPlate as a guide for healthy eating. After the lesson, all of the youth stated they would choose healthier options more frequently. Also, 100% of the participants stated that they would talk with their families about choosing healthier foods such as fruits and vegetables.

By increasing their knowledge of healthy eating, these youth have taken the first step to reduce their risk of overweight and obesity and the chronic diseases associated with these conditions.

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.

Participant Learns Skills To Help Manage Chronic Disease

Approximately 65% of adults in North Carolina are overweight or obese.³ Being obese or overweight is a major factor in increasing one's risk for chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease. The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) helps participants learn skills and strategies to feed their family nutritious meals on a limited budget and improve their overall health. The skills learned also help families learn how to change behaviors that place them at risk for overweight and the diseases associated with being overweight like heart disease and diabetes.

After gaining weight and being diagnosed with hypothyroidism, one participant enrolled in EFNEP classes to learn strategies to help her manage the disease and lose weight. As part of the series of lessons, the EFNEP Program Assistant taught her how to prepare healthy, quick recipes and talked with her about eating the correct serving sizes of foods. After learning about the importance of regular physical activity, the participant began walking for an hour a day. She stated, "I know that even with thyroid disease, I can still manage my weight." She shared that the EFNEP classes gave her the skills to manage this disease to the best of her ability without years of counseling and medication.



1. <http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/encyclopedia/content.aspx?ContentTypeID=1&ContentID=713>
2. http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/WeightManagement/Obesity/Obesity-Information_UCM_307908_Article.jsp
3. <http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/Data/Texts/Quick%20Facts.pdf>

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