

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2013 NC Cooperative Extension Congressional District 5

Serving Ashe and Forsyth counties

Two Years Later, EFNEP Youth Still Choosing Healthier Drinks

Sugar-sweetened beverages are the largest source of added sugars in the diet of U.S. youth.¹ Approximately 67 percent of North Carolina children and youth ages 1-17 consume one or more sugar sweetened beverages on a typical day.² Consuming these beverages increases the intake of calories—a factor linked to overweight and obesity among youth.³

In 2011, the 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) program assistant in Ashe County first taught a participant when he was in second grade at a local elementary school. At the time, he shared he was “hooked on soft drinks” and that they were his preferred drink at home. As part of the series of 4-H EFNEP lessons, he and other students in his class learned about the importance of making healthy choices, including choosing low-fat milk and water. The students learned how to incorporate healthy drink choices so that they can get adequate amounts of important nutrients like calcium and vitamin D.

Two years have past since this participant completed the series of EFNEP classes. The participant is now a fourth grader. This year, the mother of this young boy contacted the EFNEP program assistant. She wanted to share with the program assistant the difference EFNEP has made in this young boy’s diet. She shared that following EFNEP, her son began choosing water over sugary beverages for his meals at home. She stated, “Not only did this begin after he took your classes in second grade, but he continues to make these good choices today.” This EFNEP lesson resulted in lasting behavior change that reduces this child’s risk of overweight and obesity. The mother credits EFNEP with helping her son make this change.

New Mom Cooks More Meals At Home, Saves Money

Providing school or community-based nutrition education for pregnant and parenting teens may be one way to help improve the dietary intake of the teen and her child. Intervention programs that focus on the environment, behavior, and personality of the teen will have a better chance of making a positive impact.

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) focuses on all of these components. A six week program in Forsyth county was conducted to reduce the amount of fast food consumed, increase the amount of meals prepared at home as well as improve food resource management, food safety, physical activity and increase consumption of fruits and vegetables.

During a lesson about making smart choices when eating out, participants compared the cost of eating out versus preparing meals at home. One participant shared that prior to the lesson she would eat out 2 to 3 times a day. After comparing the costs of fast food to cooking at home, she knew she would save more money if she ate more meals at home. Following the lessons, she began grocery shopping from a list so she could bring meals and snacks with her to work, instead of having to buy them. The participant shared that one strategy she learned from EFNEP was to make additional servings of dinner and bring them for lunch the following day.

Recently, she shared that she now spends less money on food and eats more fruits and vegetables. Not only has this young mom made changes in her own diet, but she has also made positive changes in her child’s diet by eating more meals together at home.



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.

1. <http://www.cdc.gov/features/healthybeverages/index.html#References>

2. <http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/Data/Texts/Quick%20Facts.pdf>

3. <http://www.cdc.gov/features/healthybeverages/index.html#References>

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