

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2013 NC Cooperative Extension Ashe County

Food Safety Learned through EFNEP Paid Forward

Approximately 48 million illnesses, 128,000 hospitalizations, and 3,000 deaths in this country each year can be traced to foodborne pathogens.¹ According to the Federal Food Safety Department, foods that are not stored and refrigerated within two hours of being prepared could already be contaminated with food borne illness bacteria.² Foodborne illnesses can be reduced by following safe food handling and cooking procedures.

During a recent Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) series, participants learned about the importance of handling, preparing, cooking and storing foods safely at home. Through hands-on application, the participants learned the importance of storing and cooking foods to the correct temperature; the importance of clean, sanitary handling practices such as frequent hand washing and the need to keep foods separate to avoid cross-contamination.

Funding from a local grant allowed participants to receive tools, such as cutting boards, a knife, insulated storage bags, and cold packs, to help them prepare more meals safely at home and to transport foods from site of purchase safely to their home. During one of the classes, the program assistant demonstrated cutting an onion as an example while explaining how cross contamination can happen from food to food, hands to food or surface to food. She also demonstrated how to avoid personal injury by using proper cutting techniques. For many, this was the first time they learned how to do so.

Following this class, the EFNEP program assistant challenged the participants to pay the food safety information forward and teach at least two people the skills they learned during the lesson. The participants were pleased to share that some showed their families and some even shared their knowledge at local community events. The program assistant has calculated that based on the feedback from this group of participants, over 100 additional people have learned the same skills covered during the class as a result of the challenge. By paying it forward, these participants used the new knowledge and skills they learned through EFNEP to not only keep their own food safe to eat, but to help others keep food safe for their families as well.

1. <http://www.fightbac.org/about-foodborne-illness>

2. <http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/basics/chill/index.html>

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.³ Approximately 67 percent of North Carolina children and youth ages 1-17 consume one or more sugar sweetened beverages on a typical day.⁴ Consuming these beverages increases the intake of calories—a factor linked to overweight and obesity among youth.⁵

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 simple change 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.

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.

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

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

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



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