

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2013 NC Cooperative Extension Duplin County



Children Share Healthy Options with Parents

According to the Duplin County Health Department's 2011 State of the County Health Report, 26.5% of children ages 5-11 are considered obese.¹ In an effort to address this problem, the Duplin County 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) partnered with a local elementary school to deliver nutrition education to its 5th grade students.

EFNEP offers a series of nutrition education classes to help youth learn the importance of healthy choices and how to use USDA's *MyPlate* as a tool for healthy eating. Prior to the EFNEP series, the teachers shared that students who brought lunch rarely had healthy choices like fruits, vegetables, or whole grain snacks. Teachers also shared that the students who ate at school would not eat the fruits or vegetables provided as a part of school lunch.

Through EFNEP's interactive lessons, the students learned how making healthy eating choices. The food tasting activities gave students an opportunity to taste fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods they had never tried before. After having an opportunity to try the foods in class, many of the students shared that they enjoyed the fruits, vegetables and other healthy foods they were able to try. The EFNEP program assistant encouraged the students to take the recipes home to share with their families.

By the end of the program, the students showed a more positive attitude about healthy eating. Teachers observed that more students were bringing snacks made from EFNEP recipes to school. This is an indication that parents have been responsive to the recipes their children brought home.

As a result of 4-H EFNEP, these students are now enjoying the benefits of eating healthier snacks and meals that follow the recommendations of *MyPlate*. They are consuming more fruits and vegetables. By adopting healthier choices, these students are taking steps to reduce their risk for overweight and obesity and the related chronic diseases.

Diabetic Teen Learns to Manage Disease through Healthy Choices

Children who are overweight, have a poor diet and are inactive have a higher risk of developing diabetes and other chronic diseases.² As overweight and obesity has become an increasing health problem among young children, Type II Diabetes, a disease once only associated with older, overweight adults, has also increased in this same population. Children with diabetes often struggle to control the disease and need a better than average knowledge of how to make healthy choices.

A student at a Duplin County high school was diagnosed with Type II Diabetes. At the time of her diagnosis, her diet consisted mostly of foods high in refined carbohydrates and fats. Although her doctor gave her advice on ways to control her diabetes, she continued to struggle with her food choices. The 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP) program assistant was called to help the teen. The teen participant shared that healthy foods just didn't taste good to her.

Through a series of nutrition education classes, the 4-H EFNEP program assistant taught the teen simple ways to improve her dietary intake. By using USDA's *MyPlate* as a guide, the student learned to incorporate fruits and vegetables at every meal. She also learned to read food labels in order to identify whole grain products, foods low in fat and low-sugar foods. Through the interactive food demonstrations and activities, the student learned simple, tasty recipes that she could prepare at home.

As a result of EFNEP, the student is now able to select foods that help her control her diabetes. She is drinking more water and eating foods high in fiber and nutrients, but low in refined or simple carbohydrates and fats. She also found ways to be more active throughout the day. By applying the knowledge and skills she learned while enrolled in EFNEP, she has improved her health. She has learned skills to manage her diabetes and feels happier and more confident than ever before.

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. Duplin County Health Department Report found at: <http://www.duplincountync.com/pdfs/state%20of%20the%20county%202011.pdf>

2. <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/diabetesinchildrenandteens.html>

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