

# EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

## 2013 NC Cooperative Extension Durham County



### Youth Learn to Choose Heart Healthy Foods

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

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 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.

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](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/WeightManagement/Obesity/Obesity-Information_UCM_307908_Article.jsp)

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