

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2013 NC Cooperative Extension Guilford County

Young Mother Learns to Cook Meals at Home and Save Money

Americans spend approximately 42% of their food budget on food away from home.¹ Research suggests meals away from home tend to be less nutritious than food prepared at home.² Often people choose meals away from home because they lack the necessary skills to prepare recipes. Cooperative Extension's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) teaches participants the skills they need to plan, shop, cook and eat more meals at home.

During a recent series of EFNEP lessons, the program assistant taught a group of new, young mothers how to make healthy choices for their families. The program assistant taught the group how to plan a menu for a week of meals, create a shopping list, and prepare the recipes. Many participants shared they had not done so before, and often relied on convenience foods and fast food for meals. One participant, who was pregnant and had a toddler, stated she ate fast food because she felt that was what she could afford, and she thought it was a healthy option because it had lettuce and tomato. During the series, she shared that she started planning her meals and making a shopping list. She stated that she learned how to shop and now uses unit pricing to find the best deal on items. The participant now sees that it can be less expensive to feed her family by cooking healthy meals at home. Also she feels more confident to cook for her family.

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.

Young Mother Becomes Counselor, Helps Other Young Mothers Succeed, Too



Adequate nutrition for teenage mothers is vital. Cooperative Extension's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in Guilford County helps young women acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and changed behavior necessary for nutritionally sound diets which will contribute to giving birth to a healthy baby.

During a recent lesson at a group home, the Pregnant/Parenting Teens program assistant in Guilford County reconnected with a participant she taught in 2005. At that time, the participant was an 18 year-old pregnant woman who wanted to learn how to care for herself and her new baby. The program assistant talked with her about the importance of making healthy choices by choosing fruits and vegetables as part of meals and snacks. Also, the program assistant taught her how to prepare healthy, inexpensive recipes at home and the importance of limiting unhealthy fast food items.

Recently, the participant shared that, following the series of EFNEP lessons, she enrolled and graduated from college and became an On-Site Counselor for the group home where she had been a participant. She shared that she continues to make the EFNEP recipes at home with her son and teaches him about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables.

The participant stated, "I am very thankful for the information I learned from EFNEP because I know I needed to eat better." EFNEP not only provided her with nutrition education that resulted in a healthier lifestyle for both herself and her young son, the program gave her the confidence to pursue her dreams. The participant knows she is a role model to the other young women and teenagers at the group home. Recently, the participant began studying to become a nurse.

This is a great example of how EFNEP has helped a young mother learn the necessary skills to make healthy choices for herself and her young son. With the knowledge and support EFNEP provides, we are able to educate and encourage communities to live healthier lives.

1. Todd, Jessica E., Lisa Mancino, and Biing-Hwan Lin. The Impact of Food Away From Home on Adult Diet Quality, ERR-90, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, February 2010.

2. Ibid.

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