

# EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

## 2013 NC Cooperative Extension Northampton County

### Family Increases Fruits and Vegetables Consumed During Meal Together

Research suggests eating family meals together regularly can increase children's fruit and vegetable intake and help them achieve the recommendations outlined in the current Dietary Guidelines.<sup>1</sup> The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in Northampton County teaches strategies to help families prepare and eat more meals at home. EFNEP's recipes are high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and are low in calories, fat, and sodium. Each of the recipes shared during the hands-on lesson series is designed to promote good health.

During a recent lesson, one participant shared that she has started preparing more meals at home with her family after learning quick, healthy recipes during class. She said that she feels more confident in introducing new foods during dinner. Also she has found that during the meals, she has more time to talk with her children about their day, and often they talk about what the children are learning in school. The participant noticed that when they eat meals together, everyone tends to eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, especially since she began serving them more frequently.

The participant stated that she knows she is a role model for her children's eating. She is happy that her family has decided to eat together since the time spent together has improved their relationship and their health.

*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. Christian, M., Evans, C., Hancock, N., Nykjaer, C., & Cade, J. (2012). Family meals can help children reach their 5 a day: A cross-sectional survey of children's dietary intake from London primary schools. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 67, 332-338.

### Couple Prepares More Meals at Home and Lose Over 100 Pounds Together

In Northampton County, 34 percent of adults are obese.<sup>2</sup> Obesity is a major factor in increasing one's risk for chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease.

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) helps participants learn skills and strategies to feed their family nutritious meals on a limited budget and improve their overall health. The skills learned also help families learn how to change behaviors that place them at risk for overweight and the diseases associated with being overweight like heart disease and diabetes.

During a recent lesson, one participant shared that she and her husband had been diagnosed as obese, and she was additionally diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. Both were eager to follow their doctor's recommendation to move to a healthier weight and sought assistance from the EFNEP program assistant in Northampton County. As part of a participant group, this individual participated series of nutrition education lessons. During the series, the participant learned how to plan, shop, and fix more meals at home. Learning new preparation skills and strategies for incorporating physical activity were a part of every lesson and participants were challenged to repeat the activities at home following each lesson.

Recently, the participant shared that she and her husband have been putting into practice the skills they learned in EFNEP. They now cook more meals, including the EFNEP recipes, and get regular physical activity. The participant stated that over the course of six months, she has lost more than 40 pounds and her husband has lost about 60 pounds. She said they are still working toward their ideal weight, but "this class helped me change the way we eat. Thanks to EFNEP for inspiring us to make a lifestyle change."

2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: National Diabetes Surveillance System. Available online at: <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/DDTSTRS/default.aspx>. Retrieved 11/22/2013.



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