

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2013 NC Cooperative Extension Orange County

Participant Learns Skills to Help Manage Chronic Disease

Approximately 65% of adults in North Carolina are overweight or obese.¹ Being obese or overweight 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.

After gaining weight and being diagnosed with hypothyroidism, one participant enrolled in EFNEP classes to learn strategies to help her manage the disease and lose weight. As part of the series of lessons, the EFNEP Program Assistant taught her how to prepare healthy, quick recipes and talked with her about eating the correct serving sizes of foods.

After learning about the importance of regular physical activity, the participant began walking for an hour a day. She stated, "I know that even with thyroid disease, I can still manage my weight." She shared that the EFNEP classes gave her the skills to manage this disease to the best of her ability without years of counseling and medication.

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.

Student Learns to Make Healthy Change to Favorite Snack

Children today snack an average of three times a day, and they are mostly consuming sugary beverages, cookies, cake, candy, salty snacks and other high-calorie junk food.² These snacks can contribute to the increasing prevalence of childhood obesity. Cooperative Extension's 4-H EFNEP in Orange County is working to reverse this unhealthy and dangerous trend in young people by providing them with the knowledge and skills to make healthy choices.

During a recent summer camp, a group of youth learned about the importance of making healthy choices by choosing foods from each of the food groups on *MyPlate* and learned about ways they can be active throughout the day. As part of one lesson, the program assistant shared a healthy version of popcorn. One participant shared that she "always ate popcorn with butter and salt" and didn't think she would eat it without either. The program assistant talked with the group about the importance of eating whole grain foods, like popcorn, but reminded them to choose healthy versions. The youth tried the air-popped popcorn with their choice of low-salt, low-fat seasonings such as garlic powder and dry ranch powder. Upon trying the popcorn, the participant exclaimed, "this is the best thing I ever tasted!" She shared that the popcorn tasted "great" and that she didn't want to eat her popcorn with butter and salt anymore because she liked the healthier version better.

This is a great example of how 4-H EFNEP helps youth make healthy choices when choosing foods especially snack foods.



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

2. Trends In Snacking Among U.S. Children. Carmen Piernas and Barry M. Popkin. Health Affairs, 29, no.3 (2010):398-404.

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