

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2013 NC Cooperative Extension Warren, Vance and Franklin Counties



Students Create Club to Promote Healthy Eating

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.¹ These snacks can contribute to the increasing prevalence of childhood obesity. Cooperative Extension's 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in Warren 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.

At a local elementary school, teachers noticed that their students were bringing unhealthy snacks, such as cookies and candy, to school. They sought the assistance of the 4-H EFNEP Program Assistant to talk with the 4th grade students about making healthy choices, especially when choosing snacks.

During the series of EFNEP lessons, the students learned how to make healthy choices from each of the food groups on *MyPlate* and ways to stay active throughout the day. As part of the first lesson, the students in the class decided to create a "Good Snacks Club" to encourage each other to choose healthy snacks.

With help from their teacher, the students created a chart to log their daily snacks and physical activity. Each day the students wrote down their snacks and activity on the chart. If a student reported an unhealthy snack, the class would discuss a healthier snack the student could choose instead. The teacher said that this activity served as a reminder for everyone in the class to make healthy choices and that the students encouraged each other, especially during lunch, to choose fruits and vegetables.

Through EFNEP, these students learned the importance of healthy snacks and physical activity and how to make healthier eating choices. They used what they learned and put it to practice each day. Not only did they make positive changes, they formed their own support group to help each other stay on track.

Mother Learns to Defrost Meats Safely, Reduces Family Illnesses

Each year \$6.9 billion in costs are associated with five bacterial pathogens. These costs are associated with medical expenses, lost productivity, and even death.² Approximately 48 million illnesses, 128,000 hospitalizations, and 3,000 deaths in this country each year can be traced to foodborne pathogens.³ Foodborne illnesses can be reduced by following safe food handling and cooking procedures.

During a series of lessons, the EFNEP program assistant in Warren County taught a group of participants about the importance of preparing foods safely. Participants learned how to follow the Fight BAC principles of "Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill" so that they could prepare more meals at home safely. Following the lesson, one participant shared that prior to the lesson she would defrost meat on the countertop. She shared that her family ended up at the hospital after one meal she prepared and said she now thought it most likely resulted from leaving the meat on the counter to thaw at an unsafe temperature.

The EFNEP program assistant reviewed safe methods for thawing meat and how planning meals can help provide time to thaw meats in the refrigerator. During a later lesson in the series, the participant shared that she has now learned to plan her meals so that she knows ahead of time to defrost a food item safely in the refrigerator. Also, the participant shared when she does need to defrost something for the same day, she follows the safe procedures she learned from the EFNEP program assistant. Because of what this mother learned through EFNEP, she now feels confident that the food she serves will be safe for her family to eat.

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

2. <http://www.fightbac.org/about-foodborne-illness/costs-to-society>

3. <http://www.fightbac.org/about-foodborne-illness>

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