

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2013 NC Cooperative Extension Wayne County



Participant Learns to Reduce Sodium

A Wayne County EFNEP participant shared that he has a family history of hypertension and knew he was at risk for developing the disease. However, he didn't know how to lower his sodium intake other than to remove the saltshaker from the table. He admitted that he rarely cooked and preferred to buy canned and frozen, ready-made meals. Moreover, he never looked at the nutrition label while shopping for groceries. He would buy foods without considering its nutritional value.

While in EFNEP, the participant learned that pre-made processed foods were higher in sodium compared to fresh and/or homemade. After learning to read the nutrition facts label he was able to determine which foods were high in sodium and avoid these choices. In addition, the food demonstrations allowed him to try recipes that were made with little to no sodium.

The information and skills the participant learned in EFNEP has helped him become more aware of his diet and health. He now reads the nutrition label before deciding what foods to buy. He has started to cook more foods at home using the EFNEP cookbook. As a result, his diet is now lower in sodium, fat and calories. Although hypertension is part of this participant's family health history, by applying the knowledge and skills he has learned in EFNEP, he is taking steps to reduce his personal risk of developing the disease.

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.

Big Changes Lead to Better Health and 15-Pound Weight Loss

According to the Centers for Disease Control, sedentary lifestyles and obesity can lead to some of the leading illnesses in the United States like heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure.¹ Cooperative Extension's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) addresses this issue by teaching families the knowledge and skills they need to make healthy eating choices and include daily physical activity.

One EFNEP participant shared how the series of EFNEP classes she attended has helped her think about her life and the choices she makes when it comes to healthy living. Prior to enrolling in the program, she was overweight and made no conscious effort to become healthy. She overate and lived a sedentary lifestyle. She even admitted that her doctor had requested she lose weight and to help lower her blood pressure.

While enrolled in EFNEP she learned the benefits of a healthy diet and daily activity. She started making small changes by planning her meals in advance with a priority of including fruits and/or vegetables at every meal. Instead of frying foods, she is now baking them and she is practicing portion control, all skills she learned through the hands-on classes offered by EFNEP. In addition, she has found ways to increase her daily physical activity. With every week's lesson, she applied what she learned and implemented new changes for good health. She enrolled in a fitness class and plays tennis regularly.

Since applying the knowledge and skills she learned in EFNEP, the participant sees a difference in her health and weight. She has more energy and feels better throughout the day. When the program ended, this participant was happy to report to the group her blood pressure was down and she had successfully lost 15 pounds.

1. <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/physactivity.htm>

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