

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2014 NC Cooperative Extension Durham County



Young Girl Realizes the Importance of Breakfast

Breakfast is widely acknowledged to be the most important meal of the day. There is evidence that breakfast positively affects learning in children in terms of behavior, cognition, and school performance.¹

During a recent series of lessons, the 4-H EFNEP Program Assistant taught a lesson that emphasized the importance of eating breakfast each morning. During the lesson the youth practiced making a one-week breakfast menu that included at least three of the five food groups found on MyPlate. During this activity, a participant shared that she did not eat breakfast because she felt that it took too much time to prepare and eat before school, but by the time she made it to class, she felt tired and sluggish.

The 4-H EFNEP Program Assistant shared with the group some ideas for quick, healthy breakfasts that they could help their parents make so that the students could have a quick, on-the-go meal before school.

Following the lesson the young girl who had shared that she never ate breakfast reported that she now realizes the importance of eating breakfast. She stated that, with her parents, she plans what she will eat for breakfast each week. In addition, she now wakes up 15 earlier minutes earlier each day in order to eat breakfast. Because of this change, she says she now has more energy and focus in school.

Better Choices Lead to Lower Blood Pressure and Savings on Food Costs

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends reducing daily sodium intake to 1500mg among persons who are 51 and older and those of any age who are African American, or have hypertension, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease.² One participant enrolled in the Durham County Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) fell into this category. She shared that she ate one hot dog from a local fast food restaurant every day and drank soda almost every day. She noticed her blood pressure was higher than normal.

While enrolled in EFNEP classes, this participant saw how much salt and fat were in popular fast foods and learned how to read the Nutrition Facts Label, paying close attention to sodium, fat, and sugar contained in foods she considered for purchase. The participant also practiced making a week-long menu by choosing foods that were low in fat, sodium, and sugars.

Upon completion of EFNEP, this participant has not ordered fast food as she did previously and has replaced regular soda with diet soda and water. She now pays close attention to the Nutrition Facts Label when grocery shopping and better monitors her sodium and sugar intake. Lastly, this participant has joined a weekly walking club with some of her fellow program participants. As a result, her blood pressure has decreased, and she reports that she is saving at least \$20 a week in food costs by eliminating fast foods.

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. Hoyland A, Dye L, Lawton CL. A systematic review of the effect of breakfast on the cognitive performance of children and adolescents. *Nutr Res Rev.* 2009 Dec; 22(2):220-43.

2. <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/dietaryguidelines.htm>.

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