

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2014 NC Cooperative Extension Harnett County

Local Partnership Helps Families Tackle Obesity

In October 2013, Premiere Pediatrics started a pediatric obesity program entitled "Kick Start Today." This program is conducted with children who have elevated Body Mass Indexes (BMIs). Specially-trained nurses and a case manager assist with patient/family education and goal setting after a physician visit. The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) has partnered with Kick Start Today to deliver a series of lessons to the children and parents/caregivers, separately. Kick Start refers parents and their children to EFNEP if the child has been diagnosed as overweight or obese.

The EFNEP Program Assistant working through NC State University teaches the adult participants and the 4-H EFNEP Program Assistant working through NC A & T State University teaches the children.

After a few lessons, one father shared that "he has become more aware of what his family puts into their bodies," and as a result of what he has learned, "they now try to eat healthy, good food." Recently, he stated that he believes his son has made some progress in his weight loss.

Before the EFNEP classes, the father said "the family was just going through the motions when it came to eating, never thinking about what they were doing. They were never consistent in reading labels and not very mindful about what they ate."

Because of what he learned in the class, the father now discusses portion sizes with his son and understands the difference between an adult-sized portion size (for him) and a child-sized portion size (for his son). The father said his son was upset with him at first because his son wanted a larger portion than he was allowing him to eat. However, because the father began talking with him about the appropriate portion size for him, the son became more understanding that his father was concerned for his health.

Now because of the EFNEP classes, they are making better food choices by reading labels together and paying attention to calories, sugar, and sodium. In addition, the father has shared the information he has learned with his son's mother, and he stated that the communication about food and nutrition in his family has improved greatly.



Another participating parent and child had problems with portion control, meal planning and physical activity. The Program Assistants provided lessons that would address the family's needs. The curriculum covered MyPlate, increasing fruits and vegetables, provided creative ways to increase physical activity and provided healthy recipes that the family prepared in class.

As a result of their experience with EFNEP, the family has started following the MyPlate guidelines to plan meals and healthy snacks, started using 1% milk, using portion control to avoid overeating and has increased physical activity. The family is excited about the health changes they are making and the child is gradually losing weight.

Participant Loses 24 Pounds After Making Small Changes

During a recent series of Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) lessons, participants learned strategies for making healthy food choices and ways to incorporate physical activity. One participant shared that she taught her husband what she had been learning from EFNEP since he was the one doing most of the cooking for the family. Additionally, she said that her family had made many changes to their behaviors. She said prior to EFNEP, her family did not pay attention to what they put on their plate and that they would add so much salt to their food that they could actually see it.

Since EFNEP, the participant shared that she has been inspired to prepare more meals from scratch and is even learning to make whole wheat pasta. The family is now following MyPlate recommendations and trying to meet their daily fruit and vegetable intakes. In addition, the couple's children now help prepare the recipes. Recently too, the participant says she has lost 24 pounds because of the changes she has made.

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.

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