

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2014 NC Cooperative Extension Sampson County



EFNEP Helps Participants Manage and Lose Weight

Through MyPlate, Americans can learn to make healthy food choices and incorporate physical activity into their daily routine.¹ Eating smart and moving more can help people better manage their weight.

Recently, residents of Sampson County requested North Carolina Cooperative Extension provide a program through which they could learn to better manage their weight. Cooperative Extension responded by partnering its Family and Consumer Science Agent with its Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). Together they delivered a 15-lesson series at a local wellness center serving low-income families that taught county participants how to follow MyPlate's basic nutrition and physical activity principles. They learned to plan their meals by following MyPlate's food group serving recommendations and how to choose the best buys (both nutritionally and economically) by comparing Nutrition Facts Labels and calculating unit pricing. They learned how to avoid high fat, sugar and sodium foods by fixing meals at home rather than eating out. They also prepared and tasted healthy dishes during each class so they could confidently prepare the same dish at home for their families.

Each lesson emphasized that by following MyPlate principles and practicing the healthy living skills taught by EFNEP people could better manage their weight.

Prior to the start of the program, the ten ladies set personal weight loss goals. Three participants were very surprised when they found themselves losing weight. As they continued to attend EFNEP's classes, they faithfully incorporated into their lives the principles taught. By the end of the fifteen-week series, the three ladies had lost a combined total of twelve pounds.

Families Use Food Label to Make Healthy Choices

Sampson County Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP) partnered with the English as a Second Language (ESL) program at a local community college to provide the students with basic nutrition education. Upon entering the program, many of the foreign-speaking participants were not skilled in reading the Nutrition Facts Label found on food products. Even the two staff members who served as interpreters for the class admitted that although they'd seen it on food packages, they, as well, did not understand how to read the Nutrition Facts Label.

After learning from EFNEP how to read the Nutrition Facts Label, two participants taught their children how to read the label. They shared with the EFNEP program assistant that now whenever they went grocery shopping, their children would compare the Nutrition Facts Labels before deciding which items to purchase. They conscientiously selected the food items with the most fiber, and less sodium, fat, and sugar.

Participants stated that by teaching them how to use the Nutrition Facts Label, EFNEP had not only helped them, but every member in their family make healthier food choices.

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. <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/weight-management-calories/weight-management/better-choices.html>

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