

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2014 NC Cooperative Extension Wayne County



Families Increase Vegetable Consumption and Reduce Risk of Obesity

According to the Wayne County Community Health Assessment, the percentage of obese adults in Wayne County has increased from 31 percent in 2010 to 33 percent in 2012.¹ In an attempt to reduce this high obesity rate, the Wayne County Cooperative Extension Service, in partnership with organizations promoting local foods, offered a nine-week series of EFNEP classes to limited income families. EFNEP taught the families basic nutrition and cooking skills, and conducted food demonstrations that taught them how to prepare the fresh vegetables provided to them by the local food initiatives. At the end of the program, the families had learned to cook for their families a variety of vegetables, many of which they had not eaten or prepared before.

EFNEP requires participants be given a pre and post program survey that will assess behavior changes resulting from their participation in the program. A comparison of pre/post survey results confirmed that participants in this series had increased their vegetable consumption while taking part in EFNEP. If the participants practice what they learned in EFNEP, low-calorie vegetables will now replace higher calorie food choices in their daily menus and Wayne County will eventually see its obesity rate come down.

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.waynegov.com/cms/lib05/NC07000827/Centricity/Domain/33/WCCHA%202012%20Final%20Report.pdf>

Meal Planning Skills Learned Helps Families Control Costs and Increase Family Time

Research shows that planning meals can save the family both time and money.² In fact, planning meals saves a family more money than any other food budgeting skill. Less gas is spent on trips to the store, items purchased are those items needed, and leftovers are used up—not thrown away. Money saved allows a family to buy other necessities or pay other household bills. Meal planning also saves time and relieves stress. There's no worrying about what to have for dinner and preparing a simple meal at home can take about the same amount of time as picking up fast food from a drive thru.³

To help local Hispanic families learn how to save time and money through meal planning, the Wayne County Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) partnered with a local center for sustainable agriculture to offer a nine-week nutrition education series. Two of the lessons taught were "Plan, Know What's for Dinner" and "Fix it Fast, Eat at Home." These lessons introduced to the families the fundamentals of planning a meal and the importance of eating together at home as a family. Participants learned how to incorporate the meal planning process into their daily lives. Participants were encouraged to have all members of the family take part in creating the family meal plan and take an active role in the meal preparation process.

The effectiveness of the program was evaluated through pre/post surveys. Seventy-seven percent of the 15 participants stated they had increased their knowledge of meal planning. One participant stated she was confident that what she had learned from EFNEP about planning meals would save her time and the family money. By planning the family meals, she would have extra money that could be used to meet other family needs.

2. http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/food/nutrition/food_shop_prep/menu_planning/hgic4200.html

3. Ibid

Distributed in furtherance of the acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University commit themselves to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, or disability. In addition, the two Universities welcome all persons without regard to sexual orientation. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.



NC STATE UNIVERSITY

NORTH CAROLINA A&T
STATE UNIVERSITY



United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture