

# EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

## 2015 NC Cooperative Extension Craven and Pamlico Counties



### Students Learn Importance of Hand Washing

Hand washing with soap removes germs from hands. When germs get onto hands and are not washed off, they can be passed from person to person and make people sick. Soap and water are more effective than hand sanitizers at removing or inactivating certain kinds of germs.<sup>1</sup> However, hand sanitizer is often used in schools and classroom settings as a time-saving method of reducing germs before eating.

After a recent series of 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) lessons in Craven County, the teacher made the decision to have the students wash their hands rather than use hand sanitizer. The 4-H EFNEP Program Assistant taught this class about the importance of hand washing with an activity that demonstrated how germs can remain on hands after improper hand washing and hand sanitizer use.

When the students saw this, they began asking their teacher to be able to wash their hands. Although hand washing requires a trip down the hall to the bathrooms, the teacher said she “realized the importance of hand washing” and encourages her students to do so.

### Students Become More Active with EFNEP

One Craven County teacher was concerned about the high number of overweight students in her class. The teacher wanted to get her students to be more active but was not sure how she could do so since she had limited classroom space and also a limited amount of time she could dedicate to physical activity.

The 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) had been presented to the teacher as a program that could help her students learn healthier diet and physical activity behaviors. She called upon the 4-H EFNEP Program Assistant to provide a series of nutrition and healthy living lessons to the students. Each lesson included basic nutrition based on USDA’s MyPlate recommendations, a healthy snack, and a short physical activity. After seeing the enthusiasm from the students during the physical activity segment of the lesson, the teacher requested resources to continue using the activities every day.

As a result of the partnership, the teacher now uses the resources to incorporate short bursts of physical activities, called “Brain Breaks”, as part of the classroom routine. Now the students look forward to their breaks to do different physical activity games. Additionally, the students have expanded upon the short breaks and created new games that all the students can do outside together as part of recess. As a result of EFNEP, these students are being more active each day. This change, if continued, will help them to manage their weight for life.

### Students Report Choosing More Fruits and Vegetables Following EFNEP

Teachers in the fourth grade at a local Pamlico County school wanted to teach their students the importance of consuming fruits and vegetables. To provide a needed introduction to fruits and vegetables, 4-H EFNEP conducted a series of lessons in which MyPlate concepts were taught. A heavy emphasis was put on the benefits of eating foods from the fruit and vegetable groups.

The students learned that a major nutrient found in fruits and vegetables is carbohydrates. Carbohydrates provided their bodies with the energy needed to think, play and grow. They also learned about the other nutrients found in fruits and vegetables—vitamins and minerals. These nutrients help their bodies use the energy provided by carbohydrates. They also help their cells grow and develop. Recognizing the importance of eating fruits and vegetables, the students shared ways to incorporate these food groups into their everyday meals. They also learned about how the different colors of fruits and vegetables provided different nutrients. To help the students remember, the 4-H EFNEP Program Assistant referred to this as “eating the rainbow.”

As a result of the program, the students were able to categorize fruits and vegetables into colors and state why eating “each color of the rainbow as often as possible” is more beneficial to their health than just choosing one or two colors. One student even revisited the subject in a thank you letter to the Program Assistant stating that, “even though green vegetables are not the best to taste, they are still important to eat because they give us different vitamins and minerals than some of the other colors.”

As a result of the recent 4-H EFNEP program, students report that they “are now open to choosing more fruits and vegetables at lunch time.”

*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.cdc.gov/handwashing/show-me-the-science-hand-sanitizer.html>

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