

# EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

## 2015 NC Cooperative Extension Orange County

### Youth Takes EFNEP Lesson Home and Changes Family Dinner

According to Eat Smart Move More NC, today's youth may be the first generation to live shorter, less healthier lives than their parents due to childhood obesity and the chronic diseases resulting from it. North Carolina has the 23rd highest childhood obesity rates in the nation and nearly 1 in 3 children, ages 10 to 17, are overweight or obese.<sup>1</sup>

In order to address the high rates of childhood obesity, Orange County Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) partnered with a Title I school to teach youth to make healthy food choices. One of the lesson activities involved identifying fruits and vegetables and placing them in the right food group. Some of the students had a difficult time identifying vegetables such as kale, eggplant, and zucchini. One student shared that she and her family rarely ate vegetables. The EFNEP Program Assistant taught students the importance of eating vegetables of all colors. The children put into practice what they learned by making a salad that included all the food groups.

At the end of the program, the student who rarely ate vegetables shared that her dad now prepares a salad as a side dish with their dinner.

*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.*

### Participant Learns Nutrition and Preparation Skills to Manage Blood Pressure

High blood pressure or hypertension, according to the American Heart Association, is the leading risk factor of women's death in the nation. It is referred to as the silent killer because symptoms often go unnoticed. It is estimated that by reducing sodium intake to 1500mg per day, overall blood pressure will decrease by 25.6 percent.<sup>2</sup> The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) aims to help participants improve their nutritional well-being and reduce their risk for developing chronic diseases like hypertension. Orange County EFNEP partnered with the Piedmont Health Clinic's Counseling Farm Migrant Program to help migrant families to improve their diet and reduce their risk of chronic disease.

One participant shared with the EFNEP Program Assistant (PA) that she was diagnosed with hypertension and she didn't know how to manage it. The participant stated that she prepared her meals mainly using canned foods. Her busy schedule prevented her from preparing home made meals. In addition to cooking with canned products, she used salt to season her food.

In order to help the participant and others in the program, the EFNEP PA taught a lesson on understanding the nutrition facts label and how to identify sodium in foods. She also demonstrated ways to prepare quick and easy meals that are seasoned with herbs and spices instead of salt.

As a result of EFNEP, the participant shared that she made major changes at home. She now reads the food label to ensure she is buying low to no sodium products. She plans ahead to make home cooked meals and uses more fresh and frozen vegetables instead of canned. During a recent visit to her doctor, she learned that her blood pressure has decreased to a manageable level.



1 <http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/Data/Texts/Quick%20Facts.pdf>

2 <http://sodiumbreakup.heart.org/sodium-411/sodium-and-your-health/>

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