

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2015 NC Cooperative Extension Forsyth County

Check-up Reveals Participant's New Skills Help Manage Blood Pressure

According to the 2014 Forsyth County Community Health Assessment Report, heart disease and stroke are a few of the leading causes of death in the county¹. The Center for Disease Control states that one of the risk factors for heart disease and stroke is high blood pressure². The Forsyth County Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) partnered with Cancer Services Community Outreach Program to teach limited resource families to improve their diet and lifestyle.

A program participant expressed her concern that she may be at risk for developing heart disease due to her borderline high blood pressure diagnosis. A review of her food recall and a discussion with the EFNEP Program Associate revealed that the majority of the food this participant purchased was canned meats and frozen dinners, which are generally high in sodium³.

One of the lessons taught by the EFNEP Program Associate focused on understanding food labels. The participant learned how to read the numbers on the label to identify foods that are good sources of nutrients and are low in fat and sodium³. Additionally, the interactive food demonstrations during each lesson allowed participants to prepare healthy, low sodium recipes from the EFNEP cookbook.

As a result of EFNEP, this participant has begun to read food labels when deciding what to buy for her family. Most of the food she buys now is low in sodium and fat. When she does cook with canned vegetables, she buys low-sodium when possible and always rinses the vegetables to reduce the salt content even further. She has also begun to use herbs and spices instead of salt when preparing meals. During a recent check up, her doctor stated that she has successfully managed to bring her blood pressure back to normal.

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 https://www.forsyth.cc/PublicHealth/Documents/2014_CHA_REPORT.pdf

2 http://www.cdc.gov/HeartDisease/risk_factors.htm

3 <http://www.cdc.gov/salt/food.htm>

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United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture



Young Mom Chooses Breastfeeding After EFNEP Lesson

Research has shown that there is no better food than breast milk for a baby's first year of life. Breastfeeding provides many health, nutritional, economical and emotional benefits to mother and baby. Breastfeeding also has economic advantages: it's cheaper than buying formula and helps avoid medical bills later because it helps equip the baby to fight off disease and infection. 77.2% of NC babies have been breastfed (ever breastfed), but only 48.3% are still breastfeeding by 6 months of age. (CDC, 2014 Breastfeeding Report Card).

The Forsyth County Cooperative Extension Center has an EFNEP Nutrition Program Assistant dedicated to providing nutrition education to pregnant and parenting limited resource individuals/couples. The Nutrition Program Assistant uses the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) curriculum *Table for Two: Nutritious Journey for Baby and Me*. During the lessons she covers the importance of preparing healthy meals, food preparation skills, exercising before and after pregnancy and the importance of breastfeeding.

During the first session the Program Assistant asked the participants who planned to breastfeed after birth. One of the participants stated that she did not feel comfortable breastfeeding and she planned to bottle-feed her baby as soon as possible. During the six sessions the Program Assistant made sure she included information about the importance of breastfeeding, she provided the class information on how economical breastmilk was compared to formula, she showed a breastfeeding video that demonstrated different feeding positions and she provided the participants with all the health benefits of breastfeeding.

The participant stated at the end of the EFNEP classes that she did not know how beneficial breastfeeding could be for her and the baby. She told the Program Assistant that she really wanted to breastfeed and was more confident about doing it. She thanked the Program Assistant for changing her view on breastfeeding.