

# EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

## 2015 NC Cooperative Extension Guilford County



### Students Learn the Science Behind Hand Washing Recommendations

Hand washing is a low cost, simple way of reducing the incidence of food-borne diseases. The Center for Disease Control states that hand washing reduces the number of people getting sick with diarrhea and respiratory illness like a cold.<sup>1</sup> This is especially important when trying to reduce the frequency of school absences among children and teens. To help children and teens improve their hand washing techniques, Guilford County Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) partnered with Guilford County Public Schools to teach students how to handle and prepare food safely.

In order to enhance learning outcomes, the EFNEP Program Assistant (PA) did an experiment to demonstrate the effects of touching food without proper hand washing. Without washing their hands, students rubbed apple slices and placed them in a sturdy plastic bag. For the control, students used gloves to place another set of apple slices in another plastic bag. After several days, students observed that the contaminated apple slices had bacterial growth. The other apples that were handled with gloves showed little growth. The students were surprised at the difference.

One student candidly expressed to the EFNEP PA that he and his family experienced frequent mild onset of stomach problems. He shared that although he washed his hands, he didn't always use soap. After seeing the results of the experiment, he took a picture of the results to share with his family. The student informed the EFNEP PA that he and his family now wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. He also shared that as a family, they experience fewer stomach problems since changing their hand washing practices.

1 <http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/why-handwashing.html>

2 <http://www.webmd.com/diabetes/diabetic-food-list-best-worst-foods>

### EFNEP Leads to Changes in Housing Program Menu

Room at the Inn is a unique program helping homeless, single, pregnant women by providing shelter, food, clothing and counseling in a safe and structured environment. The Guilford County Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) partnered with Room at the Inn to teach young pregnant moms to make healthy food choices in order to have a healthy pregnancy.

Prior to EFNEP, the cook at the Room at the Inn would prepare high calorie, high fat, and high sodium foods using canned and pre-made foods. Vegetables, mostly canned and high in sodium, were often cooked in butter while meats were fried. Some of the pregnant moms were diagnosed with gestational diabetes. They had no choice but to eat the meals prepared that were not prepared in a healthy way for their condition.<sup>2</sup>

The EFNEP Program Assistant (PA) taught the teens to use MyPlate as a guide when making food choices. She also taught them to read and understand the food label. The participants prepared EFNEP's stir fry using fresh vegetables. They learned to replace salt with herbs and spices.

One of the pregnant teens who completed EFNEP is now employed with the Room at the Inn. Using her knowledge and skills, she has helped to change the menu so meals reflect MyPlate. She used some of the EFNEP recipes in the menu. Meals served for the pregnant teens now include more fruits and vegetables and whole grains. A normal meal used to consist of pizza and fried chicken, but now meals are prepared in a healthier way such as baked or sautéed.

*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.*

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