

# EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

## 2015 NC Cooperative Extension Surry County

### EFNEP Helps Participant Get Healthy Prior to Surgery

In Surry County, a woman contemplating gallbladder surgery was asked by her doctor to improve her diet. That sounded like a simple request, but having never been introduced to basic nutrition, it proved to be quite a challenge. She tried for almost 4 months, but continually fell back into her bad eating habits. She skipped breakfast, ate very few fruits and vegetables, and consumed at least one meal from a fast food restaurant every day.

Eventually, her Surry County Community College GED teacher told her about the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). While participating in EFNEP, she learned how to create a balanced meal by following MyPlate recommendations. She learned that each of the 6 basic nutrients play an intricate role in maintaining a healthy body, and then learned how to identify foods containing those nutrients by competently reading the Nutrition Facts Label found on food products before purchasing. Before long, she was choosing nutrient dense foods at the grocery store and bypassing those foods that contained high amounts of solid fat, sodium, and added sugars. One of the greatest benefits of EFNEP was that it also taught her how to make simple dishes using low-fat cooking techniques that could easily be duplicated at home. Foods prepared using low-fat cooking methods could replace those greasy, high-fat foods she had been eating at fast food restaurants.

By conscientiously putting into practice everything learned in EFNEP, the woman's health quickly improved. Her doctor happily approved and performed the needed gallbladder surgery. She rapidly recovered and returned to class. At graduation she stated, "I was able to have my surgery and recover quickly thanks to EFNEP. I do not think I could have learned to eat healthy on my own."

*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.*

### Young Mother Loses More Than 20 Pounds Following EFNEP

According to Eat Smart, Move More North Carolina, two-thirds (65.7%) of the adults living in the state are overweight or obese. Excess weight due to the over-consumption of calories is a major risk factor leading to chronic health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and stroke. Reducing one's weight through physical activity and portion control can reduce the risk of suffering from a chronic illness later in life.

In Surry County, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) has partnered with the Women, Infants, and Children program (WIC) in an effort to make their shared clients more cognizant of the fact their weight and health can be adversely affected by eating large portions and being inactive.

Throughout their participation in EFNEP, WIC clients are taught the importance of eating *servings* rather than *portions* helpings. Following MyPlate's *servings* recommendations can help control their calorie intake and weight.

To help participants find physical activities that best fit their families' interests and schedules, EFNEP teaches that the three types of physical activities—aerobic, muscle-building/bone-strengthening, or those aiding flexibility—play different roles in improving the body's health. From choosing to take the stairs instead of the elevator to playing outdoor games with the kids, EFNEP shares a myriad of ways a family can become more physically active.

After completing a series of six lessons, one WIC client told the class that she had been able to lose over 20 pounds by simply watching portion sizes and increasing her physical activity! She shared that following EFNEP, she is now walking daily and participating in a Zumba class twice a week. As a wife and mother, she no longer feared a future filled with health concerns resulting from her weight.

#### References:

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/physical-activity/why.html>

<http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/ObesityinNC/ObesityinNC.html>



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