

Impact

Sharing the difference CSU Extension makes in people's lives and their communities.

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)— Better living through nutrition education

EFNEP is a nutrition education program helping low-income Colorado families improve their food budget and nutrition.

Issue

Eating healthy on a limited budget can be challenging. Since 1969, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) has helped low-income families, adults and youth learn to eat healthier for less money. Funded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture and operated by Extension programs in all 50 states and U.S. Territories, EFNEP consistently improves the choices participants make regarding nutrition, budgeting, food preparation and physical activity. This happens through a series of free lessons taught by trained peer educators working at the county level. When the U.S. government released significant changes to dietary guidelines in 2005, EFNEP curricula became immediately outdated.

Extension's Response

To fill this gap, CSU Extension's EFNEP Coordinator, Susan Baker, partnered with the University of California Davis Extension (UCDE) to create a new EFNEP curriculum called *Eating Smart • Being Active*. With over 25 years experience directing EFNEP programs and writing curriculum, Baker's expertise in education helped strengthen the curriculum's nutrition-based lessons.

CSU Extension and UCDE designed *Eating Smart • Being Active* as a series of classes that teach low-income adults with children how to spend less on food, eat better and be active. Each class includes a physical activity, recipes, food preparation activity, and tips on food safety, shopping, and parenting. In eight weeks, participants learn how to increase physical activity, plan meals, read nutrition labels, shop smarter, and increase their vegetable, fruit and fiber intake. They also learn how to limit fat, sugar, and salt and choose lean sources of protein and low-fat calcium foods.

Eating Smart • Being Active was updated for the 2010 Dietary Guidelines and will be updated for the 2015 Dietary Guidelines set to be released at the end of 2015.



The Bottom Line

EFNEP is a cost-effective way to teach families, adults and youth the skills and resources they need to make choices that save money, increase self-sufficiency and improve their health.

By the Numbers

In 2014:

- Number of adult participants served: 843
- Number of family members reached: 3,388
- Number of youth participants served: 689
- Reported average monthly food savings per family: \$75
- 93% of participants improved nutrition related behaviors
- 52% of participants increased their level of physical activity
- 63% of participants improved food safety practices
- 91% of participants improved food resource management behaviors

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According to the most recent Colorado EFNEP evaluation data obtained from *Eating Smart • Being Active* participants, 93 percent say they have made positive changes related to nutrition behaviors, including planning meals, choosing healthy foods, preparing food without adding salt, reading nutrition labels and serving children breakfast. They also increased their physical activity by 52 percent.

With an increased awareness of food safety, 63 percent of participants improved one or more ways they store or prepare food. Participants also report saving an average \$75 per month on their food bill while 91 percent claimed improvement in one or more food management practices including meal planning and shopping skills. As a result of these improvements, 43 percent of the participants were less likely to run out of food by the end of the month.

County Partners

The following counties are currently participating in CSU Extension EFNEP programs.

Denver
Jefferson
Pueblo
Weld

Counties apply to the state EFNEP office for two years of funding and then offer EFNEP programs that meet the needs of their communities.

“The EFNEP classes helped me learn to prepare healthier meals for my family. I also learned how to shop, prepare, serve and eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains while saving money on food at the same time!”

– 2014 EFNEP participant
Weld County

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