

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When the U.S. government released significant changes to dietary guidelines in 2005, EFNEP curricula became immediately outdated.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 20 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.



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 2009:

- Number of families served: 1,071
- Number of family members reached: 3,132
- Reported average monthly food savings: \$83
- States using *Eating Smart • Being Active*: 33

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According to the most recent Colorado EFNEP evaluation data obtained from *Eating Smart • Being Active* participants, 92 percent say they have made a positive change in one or more food groups, including increasing fiber intake by an average of 13 percent. They also increased their physical activity by 25 percent. With an increased awareness of food safety, 67 percent of participants improved one or more ways they store or prepare food. Participants also report saving an average \$83 per month on their food bill while 77 percent claimed improvement in one or more food management practices including meal planning and shopping skills. As a result of these improvements, 34 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
Eagle
El Paso
Pueblo
Teller
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.

“My family is from Argentina and we eat “the meat way” there, so I’m so glad I took the nutrition classes because I learned a lot of tips that I can use to improve my family’s eating. I now check labels and understand what they are for and how to use the information for my diet. I’m sure my family is going to eat healthy now.”

– 2009 EFNEP participant
El Paso County

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