

Family Nutrition Program (FNP): Helping Families Make Healthy Choices

The situation

Research shows that limited income households have less nutritious diets than those who have greater financial resources. As a result, their health status may be compromised, which puts a further strain on the family budget with eventual consequences for the health care system and society as a whole.

Cost benefit studies have shown that for every dollar invested in nutrition education \$8.84 is saved in future interventions.

Extension response

The NDSU Extension Family Nutrition Program (FNP) teaches basic dietary quality, food safety and food resource management in 41 of the state's counties to citizens who are eligible for food assistance. The goal is to help them acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and changed behavior to maximize their resources and achieve nutritionally sound diets.

During program year 2008 the North Dakota FNP reached 29,498 citizens of all ages in face-to-face nutrition education sessions.

Impacts

FNP participants responded to surveys at the close of their participation to assess their new knowledge, skills and intentions. Approximately six weeks later they were surveyed again to assess the adoption of new practices. Participants indicated the following changes as a result of involvement with FNP:

- Increased consumption of fruits
- Increased consumption of vegetables
- Increased consumption of dark green or orange vegetables
- Increased consumption of dry edible beans
- Increased weekly time devoted to physical activity

- Increased incidence of meal planning
- Increased intention to consume recommended amounts from each food group
- Decreased consumption of foods high in fat and added sugars
- Increased consumption of low-fat or fat-free milk products

Feedback

From FNP participants:

"We haven't had a cold or the "flu" at our house this year. I think it's because of the food safety lessons I've learned from FNP. We are practicing what you taught us about hand washing, avoiding cross contamination, proper cooking temperatures and food storage. Thanks FNP."

"I did not realize that when a package says wheat bread, it might not be a whole-grain product. I have started to read the ingredients listing to see if it is actually a whole-grain item now that I know the health benefits."

"It's amazing to me that just making a few changes in the way that I shop can save money. The small changes I've made include looking at ads before I go to the store, checking unit pricing and carrying and sticking to a shopping list."

Contact

Desiree Tande
EFNEP/FNP Coordinator
Dept 7270, Box 6050, NDSU
701.231.6515
desiree.tande@ndsu.edu