

*Purdue Extension Marion County
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EFNEP: Helping Latinos Save Money and Eat Better

Issue:

According to the latest data, the population of Latinos in Marion County has grown approximately 300% in the last decade. The majorities of these new citizens are from Mexico and speak little, if no English.

Tasks as simple as shopping for food, preparing meals and obtaining prenatal care can seem monumental for these families, given the language barrier. Though these families are in Indianapolis to work, the jobs they find are low paying and these families are living at or below poverty levels.

Extension response :

Since 2000, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) has employed a paraprofessional who not only spoke Spanish, but understood the culture, as she was born and raised in Mexico and immigrated to the United States in 1997. An additional Spanish-speaking paraprofessional was hired in November 2004.

A total of 99 families (392 individuals) have received hands-on, personal nutrition education in Spanish. The lesson focused on basic nutrition, food safety, meal planning, and frugal shopping. Participants could also learn to cook, read labels, and how to deal with special concerns when feeding children of all ages.

Impact:

Additional lessons were offered to those who were pregnant.

- 98% of participants had a positive change in at least one nutrition practice (i.e., planning meals, reading labels, or feeding children breakfast).
- 99 % improved at least one food resource management practice (i.e., comparing food prices, using a grocery list, not running out of food).
- 77 % improved at least one food safety practice (i.e., properly thawing and storing foods, and using a meat thermometer to check for the doneness of meats).

For these families, this type of learning could not have occurred anywhere else.

- Additionally, these Spanish-speaking families are now saving \$44.10 per person per month on groceries.

Partners:

Wishard Health Services, Indiana Latino Institute, Marion County Health Department, Mom Project Healthy Families, WIC, Wishard Health Services

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