

## **The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP):**

**Issue:** According to the latest U.S. Census data<sup>1</sup>, 15.7% of Marion County's residents had incomes at or below the poverty level. Large portions of those living in poverty were single mothers with small children. Most of these families rely upon government assistance for food. For these families, nutrition education can help them make the most of their food dollars.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census

**Extension Response:** Eight trained paraprofessionals, who live in the neighborhoods in which they teach, go into the homes of the families of program families teaching up to 12 lessons on topics including: basic nutrition, food safety, and meal planning, feeding children and cooking skills as part of the 40 year old nutrition education program, EFNEP. The lessons are taught in a variety of hands-on, interactive ways. Participants are not charged for the participating. Information on what participants eat (pre and post EFNEP instruction) is collected, as is, information regarding the participant's shopping, cooking and food safety habits. All data is analyzed using a computer program.

**Impact:** A total of 430 families ( 1500 individuals) were reached by EFNEP during FY 08.

- ✓ 89 % had a positive change in at least one or more nutrition practice (i.e. planning meals in advance, reading labels, for feeding their children breakfast).
- ✓ 81% showed improvements in their food resource management skills (i.e., not running out of food, shopping with a list, comparing prices when they shop).
- ✓ 54 % improved their food safety practices (i.e., properly thawing and handling of foods, using a meat thermometer to check for meat doneness, and properly washing their hands).

Additionally, 15.4 % improved how physically active they were.

EFNEP families also saved \$28.30 per person per month on their grocery bill or collectively \$42,450.00 .

The following chart shows the improvements EFNEP participants made in their daily diets. Though EFNEP graduates may not be eating the recommended amounts from each food group, they are eating as well ( an in many cases better) than the Average American.

	Recommended	EFNEP Graduate	Percent Change
Grains	6.0 ounces	5.0 ounces	20%
Vegetables	2 ½ cups	1.2 cups	25%
Fruits	2 cups	1 cup	40%
Dairy	3 cups	1.8 cups	28%
Protein	5 ounces	4.3 ounces	18.6%

**Partners:** WIC, Marion County Health Department, Indiana Women's Prison, Headstart, Evenstart (IPS), Healthy Families, First Steps, Fathers and Families Resource/Research Center, to name a few.

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