

Food and Fun for Healthy Families



EXTENSION NUTRITION PROGRAMS for youth...

What programs are available?

Iowa State University Extension provides a series of six nutrition lessons to youth from low-income families through two programs: EFNEP, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, and FNP, the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program. Over 16,500 youth are reached each year through school enrichment, after school and summer programming. Both EFNEP and FNP are funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and are administered by Iowa State University Extension.

Why are nutrition programs needed?

The issue of overweight and obese children is a national concern. The number of overweight youth has increased significantly in the last few decades. In addition, research has shown the link between nutrition and children's cognitive development, performance, and ability to concentrate.

Extension nutrition programs help youth develop into healthy adults by making good choices related to diet and physical activity. Trained staff, supported by regional and state nutrition experts, provide up-to-date information and share it through hands-on learning activities.

How are youth affected?

Through ISU Extension nutrition programs, youth learn the importance of:

- smart choices from every food group,
- physical activity as part of daily life, and
- food safety as it relates to food handling.

Eating breakfast is supported and encouraged. Youth are given the opportunity to taste new foods.

Nutrition activities provide skill development in reading/language arts, math, and science plus nutrition and health. Reading/language arts skills are incorporated in 85 percent of the lessons, math skills in 60 percent and science skills in 25 percent.

Outcomes

Ongoing evaluation of the youth program indicates youth:

- have increased their knowledge of nutrition,
- have increased their knowledge and practice of food safety guidelines, and
- are more willing to try new foods.

What kids say about the program

- A youth participating in an after school nutrition program reminded her Grandmother to, *“Put back that candy, we shouldn’t eat a lot of it. We should eat more fruits and vegetables and exercise more.”* They went on a walk together after returning from the store.
- A note from one youth said: *“Thank you very much for coming to our class. I learned a lot about nutrition. I can’t believe there is so much sugar in some food. Now I eat healthier after school. I also learned to exercise every day.”*
- A fourth grader learned about grains during nutrition classes at his school. After grinding his teaspoon of wheat berries into flour during a hands-on activity, he ran to the teacher’s bulletin board and explained how the Midwest Plains states grew grain to feed the world, how it was planted and harvested, and how some bread is not 100 percent whole wheat.
- In a 6th grade class, students discussed food choices, what they needed more of, and set goals with specific plans to achieve their food goals. One young man worked with his family to have more dairy foods available at home so he could achieve his goal of meeting his milk food group needs each day. Another student didn’t have time for breakfast and breakfast foods weren’t available in the home. She came to school early to eat breakfast. She seemed to be doing better physically and her school work improved.
- A third grader shared he will have his mom help him make the smoothies tasted in class and that he needs to change some of his eating habits. Accustomed to eating junk foods for snacks, he now sees healthy snacks as an alternative.

What teachers say about the program

- *“The activities were fun, interesting, educational and at their level. I like how literature was integrated into the program.”* – a second grade teacher
- Students are bringing healthier snacks to school.
- *“The students remind me to let them wash their hands before lunch.”* – a third grade teacher
- More students are engaged in physical activity during recess.
- A principal reported, *“When you are here teaching nutrition, the kids want to come to school.”*

This material is funded by the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, USDA’s Food Stamp Program, and Iowa State University Extension. The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious food for a better diet. To find out more, contact your local Department of Human Services office or call toll-free 1-877-YES-FOOD.

... and justice for all

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