Promoting Nutritious Diets:
Cooperative Extension’s Role in Nutrition Education

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Why does Cooperative Extension have a role?

• A healthy population requires a healthful and varied diet along with physical activity to help people maintain a healthy body weight, enhance general wellbeing, avoid obesity, and reduce the risk for a number of diseases – heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and osteoporosis.

• People and communities want solutions!
Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program - EFNEP

- Since 1969, EFNEP operates through the 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions in every state, the District of Columbia, and in the six U.S. territories.
- Using a research-based, interactive approach, peer educators from the communities they support enrolled over ½ million limited-resource families and youth each year.
- More than 80 percent of EFNEP families report living at or below 100 percent of poverty, and nearly 70 percent indicate being of minority status.
- This is important because poor health disproportionately affects minority and limited-resource audiences.
EFNEP: Results

• Improved health and well-being of limited resource families and youth. Additionally, EFNEP leads to public savings.

• Research shows that better health is associated with reduced health care costs, less absenteeism from work, and less dependence on emergency food assistance.
How do American diets compare to recommended intake?

Usual intake as a percent of goal or limit

Eat more of these:
- Whole grains: 15%
- Vegetables: 42%
- Fruits: 52%
- Dairy: 44%
- Seafood: 61%
- Oils: 61%
- Fiber: 40%
- Potassium: 56%
- Vitamin D: 28%
- Calcium: 75%

Eat less of these:
- Calories from SoFAS*: 280%
- Refined grains: 200%
- Sodium: 149%
- Saturated fat: 110%
USDA Launches MyPlate June 2011

• A goal is to help clients recognize the importance of each food group and consume foods from each group.

• The percent of clients eating the recommended number of servings from MyPyramid was less than 1% at baseline.
EFNEP Improves Nutrition Practices

- 95% improved diet
- 50% more often thought about healthy food choices when making food decisions
- 64% more often used the Nutrition Facts label
- 38% reported their children more often ate breakfast
Saving Money on Food...

- EFNEP families decreased the amount of money spent on food by $21.55/month

- 76% of families are enrolled in a food assistance program, and an additional 5% enroll as a result of participation in EFNEP
How did they do it? Planning!

- Overall, 85% improved one or more of their food resource management practices
- 55% more often planned meals
- 47% more often compared prices
Cooperative Extension Engages Learners of All Ages in Nutrition Education

4-H
• Youth 5 – 19 years
• Family

EFNEP
• Eligible Families and Youth and SNAP (Food Stamp) recipients
• Community Partners

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• Trained Youth Development Educators
• Volunteer Development

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• Trained Nutrition Educators
• Volunteer Development
What we do...

4-H
- Youth development
- Fitness
- Health Rocks!
- Agriculture/Gardening
- STEM or Science
- Leadership / Citizenship
- Family Involvement

EFNEP
- Nutrition and Physical Activity
- Food Resource Management
- Food Security
- Food Safety
- Life Skills (cooking, meal planning, garden enhanced nutrition)
- Family Involvement
Kansas Extension Programs Prevent Childhood Obesity

Get It- Do It! promotes physical activity and healthy eating while strengthening youth engagement in small towns.

Communities Preventing Childhood Obesity involves low income, rural communities in addressing local opportunities for improved eating and physical activities for 4 year olds (Kansas leads this $4.5 million, 7 state project).

Walk Kansas for Kids encourages youth to eat a variety of healthy foods and increase the amount of physical activity they do each week.
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-Ed)

- SNAP-Ed is a nutrition education program funded by USDA Food and Nutrition Service for families and individuals that qualify for SNAP (formerly Food Stamp) benefits

- Funding is available to Land Grant Universities (Cooperative Extension) through contracts with state and federal agencies

- Wisconsin Cooperative Extension was the first program, then it was piloted in 7 states in 1992, in FY 10, 54 LGUs were participating in 48 states
SNAP-Ed Partners

- USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and state implementing agencies
- SNAP-Ed Connection web site
- Land-grant universities and Cooperative Extension
- Other SNAP-Ed Implementers
- Center for Disease Control
SNAP-Ed

- In FY 2010, 4.5 million people were reached
- Priority audience is low income, e.g., at 120 percent of poverty or attend schools at or above 50 percent free/reduced lunch standard
Working Together: FNS and CES

- Coordinated Action
- Promising practices
- Benchmarking outcomes
- National forum
- Centralized resources
- Prioritizing and program foci
Cooperative Extension as a Catalyst

Socio-ecological Framework

Adapted from Story M et al., *Annu Rev Public Health* 2008;29:253-272
Highlights of a CES Report of FY 2010 SNAP-Ed Program

• Dietary Quality and Physical Activity
  – More than 50% of participants improved eating practices, closer to recommended amounts
  – 40% adopted the practice of eating breakfast
  – Between 38 and 62% increased physical activity
Highlights of a CES Report of FY 2010 SNAP-Ed Program

• *Food Security*
  – 34% enrolled in non-emergency food assistance programs
  – 39% reported having fewer food insecure days
  – 44% adopted beneficial food security practices
Highlights of a CES Report of FY 2010 SNAP-Ed Program

• **Food Safety**
  – 77% reported improved hygiene, such as hand washing
  – 48% adopted practice of keeping food at safe temperatures
Highlights of a CES Report of FY 2010 SNAP-Ed Program

• *Shopping Behavior/Food Resource Management*
  
  – 31% adopted beneficial shopping techniques (food shopping, preparation, storage)
  
  – 78% tried new foods/recipes
Highlights of a CES Report of FY 2010 SNAP-Ed Program

- **Environmental Settings**
  - Increased referrals across organizations
  - Joint efforts in communities
  - Increased availability of nutritious foods in schools, restaurants, grocery stores, and farmers’ markets
  - Trends for increased support for community anti-hunger programs
  - New grocery stores, farmers’ markets, and community gardens in low-income neighborhoods
Highlights of a CES Report of FY 2010
SNAP-Ed Program

• **Sectors of Influence**
  – Extension reached 1,055 agencies, media, food/beverage industry and other sectors through SNAP-Ed
  – More food service institutions required employees to be ServSafe Certified
  – School vending machine restrictions were enforced
Cooperative Extension’s Role in Nutrition Education

• There remains a strong need for localized, targeted and relevant nutrition education.

• Given our teaching, research and outreach mission and success in achieving desired changes among individuals, families and communities, Cooperative Extension continues to be one of the best at delivering nutrition education.