

## Tennessee



# Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

A Nutrition Education Program for Low-Income Families

## 2003 Program Accomplishments

As a result of nutrition education from The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service, over 90 percent of families completing EFNEP classes (4,430) made healthier food choices and saved over \$244,536 (\$55.20 per family) a year on their food bills.

### Why is nutrition education for low-income families important?

Tennessee is facing a growing obesity epidemic. At least one out of every five adults in Tennessee is considered obese and as many as 46 percent of school children are overweight, or at risk of becoming overweight. Estimated adult-obesity attributable expenditures in Tennessee for chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer were \$1,840 million in 2000 and continue to increase. Obesity-related medical expenses for individuals receiving Medicaid services through TennCare were \$488 million.

Educating families with young children about how to choose healthy foods and be physically active on a limited budget is the mission of the Tennessee Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

### What did we accomplish in 2003?

In 2003, EFNEP enrolled over 7,000 low-income Tennessee families and 23,000 youth. As a result of education provided by EFNEP, 90 percent of families improved their diets while saving a total of \$244,536 (\$55.20 per family) a year on their food bills. For a small, initial investment in nutrition education, participants learned skills in shopping, meal planning and food safety that will save them money for years and reduce their risk for obesity and chronic disease. A recent cost-benefit study in Tennessee showed that for every \$1 spent on education, families saved \$2.48 on their food bills.



*Families learn basic food preparation skills that save them money and help them make healthier food choices.*

#### **Participants improved their nutrition practices...**

89 percent made healthy food choices, read nutrition labels, prepared foods with less salt, and fed their children breakfast; 41 percent fewer families ran out of food before the end of the month

#### **Participants learned to manage their resources...**

84 percent planned their meals ahead of time, compared food prices and used a grocery list

#### **Participants handled food safely...**

65 percent stored and thawed foods properly.

*For more information about EFNEP, contact:*

Janie Burney, PhD, RD

Associate Professor, Family and Consumer Sciences

865-974-8198