

Cost benefit analyses show the results of effective nutrition education

A growing body of evidence confirms that well-designed nutrition programs such as WNEP improve diets and eating behaviors among families with limited resources. Cost-benefit analyses conducted in a number of states show nutrition education's economic impacts: savings from reduced health care costs; savings on food expenditures; less need for emergency food assistance; and reduced long-term health care costs.

As the human and economic toll of poor diet mounts in skyrocketing rates of diabetes, obesity, heart disease and other maladies, the value of Extension nutrition education is clear. Lessons about choosing and preparing healthier foods and following recommended food safety practices bring better health for families and individuals and fewer health care expenses. Nutrition education pays off economically—not only for learners, but also for taxpayers.



For more information, contact:

Beverly Phillips
State WNEP Coordinator
Family Living Programs
University of Wisconsin-Extension
608-262-0384
beverly.phillips@uwex.edu
www.uwex.edu/ces/wnep/index.cfm

WNEP education is supported by the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the USDA Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), University of Wisconsin-Extension/Cooperative Extension, FoodShare Wisconsin, and local partners.



An EEO/Affirmative Action employer, the University of Wisconsin-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and ADA requirements.



UW-EXTENSION • COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Nutrition education = better health for families



The Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program responds to people's needs

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES REMAIN HIGH, POVERTY IS ON THE RISE AND THE NEED FOR EMERGENCY FOOD SOURCES, SUCH AS FOOD PANTRIES, HAS REACHED AN ALL-TIME PEAK IN WISCONSIN.

Use of FoodShare (also known as food stamps, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP) is also growing. In autumn 2010, more than 764,000

Wisconsin residents participated in FoodShare—approximately 13% of the state's population. Because so many families are struggling to buy healthy, affordable food, the need for nutrition education is more crucial than ever.

The University of Wisconsin-Extension Nutrition Education Program (WNEP) has a strong track record of responding to the diverse needs of low-income Wisconsin residents through community-based nutrition

education programs. The majority of WNEP funding comes through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed).

Our reach

Extension nutrition educators conduct programs in 68 Wisconsin counties, reaching thousands of learners with a brief lesson or a series of more intensive lessons, depending on the learners' needs. Participants include parents of infants or children; school-age youth; adults without children; and senior adults. WNEP educators work with residents from many cultural groups—Hispanic or Latino, African American, Asian, Native



American, and other races, offering education to meet their specific needs.

Evidence from the U.S. Department of Agriculture shows that after taking part in a well-designed nutrition education program that teaches how a good diet can benefit long-term health, participants adopt better food shopping practices and tend to make more healthful food choices at the store.

Extension nutrition education's unique advantage: Experience, university resources and strong community partners

Extension's evidence-driven, community-based education responds to local needs and plays a key role in public initiatives, such as nutrition education programs. Extension colleagues across Wisconsin have built strong relationships with state and community partners. No other organization is built upon a direct link to University of Wisconsin resources and research and maintains a presence in every county in the state.

Extension nutrition educators work with hundreds of public and non-profit groups, schools, private sector organizations and other agencies. They play key roles in local hunger prevention coalitions and work to build new coalitions. They also provide ongoing consultation and support, enhance communication, and document activities and successes.



Extension nutrition educators reach out to local learners

Extension nutrition educators reach and teach people in community settings. Here are some examples.

School-age youth. Nutrition education lessons are taught to thousands of school-age children during the school day, at summer or after-school programs, at libraries, public health clinics, neighborhood centers, summer feeding sites, Head Start and Community Action agencies, and school and community gardens. Youth learn to choose and eat healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables. Young children also learn about the importance of hand-washing to keep food safe to eat.



Parents. Extension nutrition educators reach parents of infants or young children at a variety of locations, including WIC clinics and low-income elementary schools. In addition, newsletters covering the nutrition education topics being taught in school help start family discussions about making healthy eating choices. Parents learn how to include more fruits and vegetables in their family meals and be good role models for their children.

Disabled adults. Extension nutrition educators teach food-stamp-eligible disabled learners at day centers and group homes. These learners participate in lessons that help them become more self-sufficient when selecting and purchasing healthy food.

Senior adults. Extension nutrition educators teach older adults at senior dining sites. Senior adults learn new food shopping strategies to help them stretch their limited food dollars to purchase healthy foods.