



NUTRITION AND HEALTH

Preventing Obesity and Promoting Health

Americans living close to the poverty level are suffering from a lack of access to and education about healthier food choices, active lifestyles and food safety at home. Land-grant university programs across the nation are doing great work in this area and creating partnerships to address the obesity crisis.

SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than one-third of U.S. adults (34.9% or 78.6 million) and 17%, or 12.5 million, of children are obese. In **Texas**, the Cooperative Extension Program taught a six-lesson series called A Taste of African Heritage to show how eating like your ancestors, at a time when diseases were not as prevalent, can help lower the risk of heart disease and high blood pressure, avoid or help treat diabetes and fight certain types of cancers. Topics included herbs and spices, greens, whole grains, beans and rice, tubers and mashes.
- In **North Carolina** the EFNEP program teamed up with community leaders and schools to teach adults and children strategies on how to plan, shop, fix and eat healthier meals with one another. The 4-H component of EFNEP encouraged youths to be more active, identify and choose healthier foods and practice keeping food safe at home.
- SNAP-Ed Assistants in **Kentucky** offered programs during class time, after school hours and in school clubs to pre-school and middle school students. They learned about balanced meals and how to use technology to measure calorie consumption by tracking how much from each food group they are eating.

- Registering at number six in the nation for highest obesity rate, **Arkansas** is addressing the problem with nutrition education programs that help participants make healthier food choices. They will also be more knowledgeable about adopting active lifestyles.

LIMITING SUGARY DRINKS DECREASES OBESITY

Sugary drinks are the leading source of added sugars in the American diet, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. These drinks are associated with weight gain/obesity, type 2 diabetes, metabolic syndrome, heart disease, kidney diseases, non-alcoholic liver disease, tooth decay and cavities and gout, a type of arthritis. They also make up 9.3% of the grocery budgets of participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, better known as SNAP, compared with 7.1% of the general population. Land-grant universities are working to help Americans drink more water and fewer drinks with sugar. For example, participants in **Alabama's** SNAP educational program decreased sugary drink consumption by 17%. In **California**, Contra Costa County's Project 4-H2O shared the benefits of drinking water instead of sodas to about 7,500 citizens.

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The Land-Grant University System is a uniquely American institution, and has operated successfully for more than a century. The landgrantimpacts.org website documents and demonstrates the collective and individual impacts of the national system of joint teaching, research, and extension institutions.

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