



Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

—*Diabetes Education 2005*

Learning for Life

The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension

The Problem

- According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 20.8 million people (or 7% of the population) have diabetes in the U.S. Also 41 million Americans have pre-diabetes, a condition that not only increases risk for diabetes, but also for cardiovascular disease.
- Approximately, 6.9% of the adult population in Georgia had been diagnosed with diabetes in 2001. For every two persons diagnosed with diabetes, another has not yet been diagnosed (Georgia Department of Human Resources).
- Individuals of African, Latino/Hispanic, American Indian and Asian descent have 2-4 times higher risk for getting Type 2 diabetes when compared to individuals of Northern European heritage.
- Only one-fourth of all Georgians moderately exercise on a regular basis. It is estimated that this inactivity contributes to 18% of all cases of diabetes.
- Diabetes was the 6th leading cause of death in Georgia in 2000. For every death attributed to diabetes, at least two more deaths have diabetes as a contributing factor.
- In the year 2000, diabetes cost approximately \$138 million in hospital charges in Georgia. If all medical costs and costs attributed to pre-mature death and lost job productivity in Georgia were added up, the actual economic impact of diabetes would be closer to \$4 billion per year.
- Diabetes is the leading cause of blindness, kidney disease, non-traumatic amputations and retinopathy in this country.
- According to the American Diabetes Association, the per capita medical cost for diabetes has increased from an average of \$10,071 in 1997 to \$13,243 in the year 2002 - an increase of 30%.
- The average Georgian between the ages of 18 and 64 with diabetes misses 8.3 days of work per year compared to 1.7 days for someone without diabetes.

Research-based Solutions

- The Diabetes Prevention Program demonstrated that modest weight loss (5-7% of current body weight) and regular physical activity (30 minutes 5 days a week) can reduce the risk for developing Type 2 diabetes.
- The Diabetes Control and Complication Trial demonstrated that lowering the A1C (average blood glucose for three months) to 7% or less could reduce diabetic neuropathy by 60%, retinopathy by 34%, and kidney disease by 56% in those who have Type 1 diabetes.
- The United Kingdom study of Type 2 diabetes control showed that lowering blood glucose could reduce the risk of blindness and kidney failure by 25%; controlling blood pressure as well as blood glucose could lower risk for heart failure by 56% and stroke by 44%.

Extension's Role

- Provide the *Focus on Diabetes* CD to those who are affected by diabetes to teach the basics of diabetes self-management.
- Distribute the *Diabetes Life Lines Newsletter*.
- Participate in community wide programs to promote awareness of diabetes risk in the general population.
- Develop diabetes coalitions in each county with community leaders, health care professionals and people affected by diabetes to enhance diabetes awareness and self-management.
- Conduct *Right Bite Diabetes Cooking Schools* to teach healthy food preparation skills to those affected by diabetes or those at risk for developing diabetes.
- Offer *Walk-a-Weigh Programs* to promote weight control and physical fitness for those who have diabetes or for those who are at risk for developing it.
- Work with diabetes support groups to enhance diabetes self-management and to provide peer support for

dealing with the disease.

Extension's Contribution to Solving the Problem

- Diabetes education programs provided nearly 2,500 hours of diabetes control and prevention instruction to 2,792 Georgians in 2005. Nearly 33% of the participants were low-income Georgians.
- The *Walk-A-Weigh* extension program reached 847 Georgians and provided 930 hours of nutrition and exercise education in 2005.
- Media was a major strategy for educating Georgians on controlling and preventing diabetes. For example, the *Diabetes Life Lines Newsletter* reached over 13,450 readers; four radio spots were broadcast to a listening audience of over 67,000 people; nineteen newspaper columns went to a circulation of over 229,000 readers; and two television programs were targeted to over 20,500 viewers; 10 exhibits reached over 1,400 people.

Impact on Georgians

- Of Georgians who participated in diabetes education programs, 94% said those sessions were very helpful for them in learning how to control diabetes by practicing healthy habits. Most of the participants improved their diabetes management knowledge and planned to follow healthy practices. For example, 64% planned to be physically active five or more days; 58% planned to identify signs of low and high blood glucose levels; 88% planned to keep written records of their blood glucose values, food intake, medicine doses and physical activity; 83% planned to use artificial sweeteners to control their sugar and calorie intake; and 65% planned to eat at least 3 vegetables every day.
- Ninety-six percent of the Georgians who participated in weight control education programs said the classes helped them to improve their knowledge and practices about weight control. Most of them planned to adopt recommended practices: 83% planned to walk regularly to help manage their weight; 72% planned to read nutrition labels for calories and fat content; and 66% planned to eat low-fat snacks and desserts.
- A comparison of pre and post program data confirmed that 95% of the participants who completed the *Walk-a-Weigh* program improved their overall dietary and exercise behavior and adopted a healthier lifestyle. Data further confirmed that 78% of the participants were able to reduce their excess body weight by following a healthy lifestyle. They lost an average of 4 pounds in six weeks. The medical data confirmed that *Walk-a-Weigh* participants significantly reduced their high blood pressure and cholesterol levels. This reduction in risk factors contributed to improvements in their health.

Contact

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