



Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

Diabetes Education 2006

Learning for Life

The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension

The Problem

- According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 20.8 million people - 7% of the population - have diabetes in the U.S. Also, an estimated 54 million Americans have pre-diabetes, a condition that not only increases the risk for diabetes, but for cardiovascular disease as well.
- Approximately 486,000 adults in Georgia were diagnosed with diabetes in 2004. 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 a 2-4 times higher risk of 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, costs attributed to pre-mature death and lost job productivity in Georgia were added together, 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 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% and 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 people dealing with the disease.

Extension's Contribution to Solving the Problem

- Diabetes education programs provided nearly 3,000 hours of diabetes control and prevention instruction to 1,650 Georgians in 2006. Nearly 39% of the participants were low-income or at risk.
- The “*Walk-A-Weigh*” extension program reached 960 Georgians and provided 1,120 hours of nutrition and exercise education in 2006.
- Media was a major strategy for educating Georgians on controlling and preventing diabetes. For example, 48 diabetes articles in newsletters reached over 15,300 readers; 5 radio spots were broadcast to a listening audience of over 36,400 people; 6 newspaper columns went to a circulation of over 183,700 readers; and 5 exhibits reached over 1,185 people.

Impact on Georgians

- Of the participants who completed 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, 100% of the participants intend to use artificial sweeteners to control their sugar intake; 79% intend to have their A1c tested at least twice a year; and 88% intend to use carbohydrate counting to plan meals.
- All of the participants who completed the weight control education programs said the classes helped them to improve their knowledge and practices about weight control. Most of the participants planned to adopt recommended practices: 92% planned to walk regularly to help manage their weight; 95% planned to use liquid vegetable oils instead of solid fats in food preparation; and 100% planned to drink water before, during and after physical activity. The comparison of pre and post program data confirmed that 88% of the participants who completed the *Walk-a-Weigh* program improved their overall dietary and exercise behaviors and adopted a healthier lifestyle.
- Over 96% of the participants who attended the diabetes cooking school in Ware County indicated significant, positive changes in their diabetes management habits. Eighty-three percent (83%) of the participants modified their own recipes to cut sugar, fat or sodium; 93% have taken a list of questions to their doctor so they can discuss their diabetes; and 97% now read nutrition labels.

Contact

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