

Extending Knowledge - Changing Lives



NATIONAL EXTENSION WORKING GROUP

Dining with Diabetes

How a program transformed Delawareans' health for the better: eating, nutrition and exercise

ISSUE

Delaware demonstrates a need for more diabetes education, as only 51 percent of those diagnosed have taken a class on managing their condition, according to the 2012 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Diabetes is the third leading cause of death in the U.S. The long-term health consequences of untreated or high blood sugar levels are staggering and result in blindness, heart disease, amputation of limbs, renal failure and other serious problems. As of 2014, about 11% of the Delaware population reported diabetes diagnosis. This number steadily increased, keeping pace with the rising rate of pre-diabetes and diabetes in the U.S.

RESPONSE

Dining with Diabetes provided diabetes education, cooking demonstrations and tasting of healthy foods. The first class focused on desserts; the second class, main dishes; and the final class, side dishes. After each lesson, participants took home recipes, diabetes resources and information on daily management of diabetes. They learned to reduce sugar, salt and fat without sacrificing taste.

A Cooperative Extension agent credentialed as a registered dietitian updated the research; developed recipe grocery lists and recipe talking points; coordinated food preparation with support from a nutrition assistant from the Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program and Master Food Educators; reviewed and updated take-home resources; and explained homework assignments to childcare providers enrolled in the series. In Kent County, Dining with Diabetes engaged members of African American churches as part of the Healthy Eating and Active Living initiative, providing participants with the tools, knowledge and opportunity to improve their overall health.

IMPACT

In 2015, 29 individuals enrolled in the Dining with Diabetes workshop series held once in the winter and once in the summer in New Castle County and once in the fall in Kent County. Attendees reported:

- Eating more vegetables (69%)
- Eating more fruits (53%)
- Reading nutrition facts on labels (61%)
- Reading ingredient labels (66%)
- Being more physically active (44%)
- Likelihood of eating on a regular basis (70%)
- Likelihood of eating breakfast (65%)
- Planning healthier meals (66%)
- Using different artificial sweeteners (44%)
- Using improved portion control (84%)