Weight Loss and Improved Blood Sugars: Program Shows Long Term Success in Managing Diabetes

The Situation
Recent results of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) in 2002 indicate that an estimated 64.5 percent of U.S. adults are either overweight or obese. One of the major risk factors from being overweight is type 2 diabetes.

Weight control is paramount in preventing the onset of type 2 diabetes and in managing the disease if already diagnosed. Life long changes in eating habits, physical activity, and attitudes about food and weight are essential to treating diabetes and lowering blood sugars.

Our Response
The Healthy Eating with Diabetes workshop taught in the Panhandle of Idaho was designed to help people make life long changes in their eating habits, physical activity habits, and in their attitudes about food, weight, and themselves.

The Healthy Eating with Diabetes workshop is a 10-hour course that includes such topics as using the Idaho Plate Method to determine food choices, serving sizes, carbohydrate counting, reading food labels, glycemic index, reducing your heart disease risk, soy and heart health, a 3-hour grocery store tour, eating out at restaurants, what to expect when visiting your physician, a definition of laboratory exams needed by people with diabetes, and planning meals using the plate method concept. All of these topics are geared toward inspiring people to make long-term behavior changes in their diets and physical fitness levels.

Program Outcomes
Short-term and long-term behavior changes are consistently reported in the comments made by program participants.

“I have followed the Idaho Plate Method and watched my serving sizes strictly since the last time we met a week ago and my blood sugars are down by 20 points. The lowest they have been in a long time!” – male from Coeur d’Alene, August 2003 workshop, comment made during class

“Since your class I have lost 24 lbs! My grocery store buying is definitely different – I read food labels, count my carbohydrates and overall choose lower fat foods. I eat a lot more fruits then I ever have – I choose fruit now over sweets like I used to do. I feel different in my clothes – they feel looser. Another big change I’ve seen since your class is I’m practicing what you taught us “if I goof up on what I was supposed to eat that day then I say “Tomorrow I will start again!” and I do! Before your class I would just give up.” – female from Coeur d’Alene, August 2003 workshop, comment made 3 months after program

“This is the first time I have ever been treated like a person and not somebody who deserves to have diabetes because I’m overweight. I can’t thank you enough.” – female from Coeur d’Alene, September 2002 workshop, comment made during class

“We have been going to the Diabetes Support Group meetings like you suggested over at the hospital and
I swear sometimes I feel like I could teach that class – and its all because of what you taught me.” – couple from Coeur d’Alene, March 2003 workshop, comment made 7 months after program

“We use everything from your class! We totally go by the Idaho Plate Method. I cook, but my husband (who was just diagnosed with diabetes the week before they took the August 2003 class) really understands now what he is supposed to be eating. He has lost 40 lbs since your class and his blood sugars are totally under control. If he follows the plate method diet its like he can do no wrong. I can’t say enough about you have done for us.” – couple from Coeur d’Alene, August 2003 workshop, comment made 3 months after class

“I never really knew how far reaching the disease was. I didn’t understand what my husband should eat – but after the class I did. I’m a totally visual person and the Idaho Plate Method really sticks in my mind. I put meals together for my husband based on the plate method. He just eats what I feed him. His blood sugars are very well controlled. – female from Bonners Ferry, January 2002 workshop and June 2002 workshop, comment made 1 year and 10 months after first class

“I never really understood what a carbohydrate was before I took this class, and now I do. I also have never really grocery shopped before – the Supermarket Tour was a real eye opener. I learned so much from that. This class was like night and day for me, what I knew before the class and what I knew after! I just had my hemoglobin A1C test done and it is 6.1% (optimal is below 7%). – male from Bonners Ferry, January 2002 workshop and June 2002 workshop, comment made 1 year and 10 months after first class

“I’ve lost 15 lbs using the Idaho Plate Method. My diabetes is under great control. I stick to 3 carbohydrate foods per meal – just like the plate method teaches. I read labels correctly now – not for the sugar content but for the carbohydrate content of the food, plus I focus on fats and sodium. I’m more conscious of the foods I buy at the grocery store and I eat more soy products, too.” – female from Coeur d’Alene, April 2003 workshop and August 2003 workshop, comment made 7 months after first class

“I am totally sold on the plate method. I have been on 14 different diet programs in my life and this is the first one that has ever worked. I tell everyone I can to come and take this class. I don’t have diabetes, but my husband does. I have lost 80 lbs! My husband’s hemoglobin A1Cs and lipid profiles have been perfect. This diet is common sense, it’s a no brainer. I know what to eat. – female from Coeur d’Alene, March 2002 workshop, comment made 1 year and 7 months after class

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