

Taking charge of your own health was goal of local diabetes event

On Saturday, June 8, the Manitoba Association of Healthcare Professionals (MAHCP) in collaboration with the Canadian Diabetes Association (CDA) presented a free event, *Diabetes Breakfast with the Experts*, in The Pas. The morning included two sessions on how to eat healthy with type 2 diabetes and how much physical activity is enough to prevent and manage type 2 diabetes.

“People, once diagnosed, have to process so much information about their health and the management of this chronic disease that it’s hard to know where to start. Information can be overwhelming,” says Lesa Nordick, Northern Region Director with MAHCP. “That’s why the MAHCP decided to partner with the CDA to hold this event. This is where information crystallizes into knowledge and empowerment sets in.”

Laura MacLean, registered dietitian with the Regional Diabetes Program in The Pas, presented the first session which covered basic healthy eating guidelines to help individuals manage their type 2 diabetes.

As a dietitian, she regularly provides nutrition education for diabetes management to individuals and also facilitates group sessions. Laura also completed her first half-marathon in Reykjavik, Iceland last year as a member of the Canadian Diabetes Association’s Team Diabetes program.

The second session, presented by Russell Thorne (B.P.E.), focused on learning how much and what type of physical activity is needed to prevent and manage type 2 diabetes. Russell is a Certified Exercise Physiologist and Corrective Exercise Specialist who works to help the public understand and apply information on health and wellness. He designs programs for communities, trains volunteers and other health professionals and produces manuals and videos on exercise and lifestyle.

Laura, Russell, and Lesa are all members of the Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals, Manitoba’s only exclusively Health Care Union, representing approximately 3500 employees and approximately 160 professions that include Audiologists, Resource Coordinators, Midwives, Mental Health Clinicians, Pastoral/Spiritual Care Workers, Recreation Therapists, Community Health Developers, Pharmacists, Pharmacy Technicians, Addiction Clinicians, and Emergency Medical Services Personnel just to name a few. MAHCP professionals work in both the community and institutional settings.

“When it comes to health, knowledge is the best management. Attendees to the event learned how to prevent and manage diabetes, while improving their overall health,” says Kelly Lambkin, Volunteer Engagement Manager, Manitoba/Nunavut and Saskatchewan, Canadian Diabetes Association. “The more an individual learns about diabetes, the better equipped they are for the life-long commitment to diabetes management.”

The event was catered by The Pas Golden Age Group who prepared a healthy home made breakfast using recipes provided by Laura McLean, who modified the recipes to make them a healthier option. The MAHCP covered the cost of running this event and participants went away with more knowledge, a healthy breakfast, recipes and bags with information provided by MAHCP.

About Diabetes

Diabetes has reached epidemic proportions with more than 107,500 Manitobans living with the disease. It's a condition in which the body cannot produce insulin or cannot effectively use the insulin it produces. The two main types of diabetes are type 1 and type 2.

Type 1 diabetes occurs when the pancreas is unable to produce insulin. People living with type 1 diabetes must rely on the daily delivery of insulin to survive. To date, there is no proven way to prevent type 1 diabetes.

People with type 2 diabetes do not produce enough insulin or their body does not effectively use the insulin that is produced. Fortunately, lifestyle changes can help prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes. A healthy meal plan, weight control and physical activity are important prevention steps for this group of individuals.

For more information on the Manitoba Association of Healthcare Professionals, visit **www.mahcp.ca** or call **1-800-315-3331**.

For more information on diabetes or the Canadian Diabetes Association, visit **diabetes.ca** or call **1-800-BANTING (226-8464)**.