



**The Path to Wellness:
First Steps
Basic Diabetes Management**

Diabetes is a serious condition that affects many Native Americans. The basic problem of diabetes is that the balance between sugar and insulin regulation is disrupted, resulting in high and low sugars in the blood.

Many complications can occur - blindness, heart attacks, amputations, and kidney failure. These can be avoided by maintaining a normal blood sugar, which can be done by:

- < Eating healthy foods
- < Eating at regular, frequent times
- < Eating the right amount of food, not too much or too little
- < Exercising daily

This daily management can be difficult because it involves changing behaviors. The Siletz Diabetes Program created a three-day retreat called "The Path to Wellness: First Steps." The retreat was designed to take people away from their current routines and give them a fresh start to practice these behaviors. Support people also were involved, such as family members or tribal staff who want to learn more about management. Some of the highlights of the retreat were:

- < All meals and lodging were provided. Our dietician, diabetic programs assistant, and the chef specially planned the meals and snacks.
- < A supermarket tour led by experts provided a chance to compare



Jack and Leslie McCord check out portion sizes at the diabetes retreat.

- prices, contents and nutrition of the foods that people like.
- < Exercise sessions led by two Native fitness trainers. Easy, FUN exercises!
- < Lessons on nutrition, medications, blood sugar testing and other important aspects of diabetes management
- < Tips for communicating with family and doctors
- < Stress management
- < Time to talk with others who have diabetes and get practical ideas for changing behavior

The three-day retreat received rave reviews from all of the participants and presenters and will be repeated soon. If you would like to learn more about diabetes, this is an excellent way to do it! Contact the Diabetes Program at the Siletz Clinic for more information.

**The Native American
Diabetes Project**

The Native American Diabetes Project has developed a diabetes lifestyle education program for people with diabetes and their families. "Strong in Body and Spirit!" is designed to be taught by tribal health workers and interested community members.

Oregon was selected as a test site for this new program. A four-day workshop was held at the Grand Ronde Lodge last week. Two teams of six members each represented Siletz. Cathy Rasmussen was a team leader for the Springfield, Salem and Portland areas, and Sandra Hahn was a team leader for the Siletz area. The teams were made up of health care workers and diabetic patients.

The curriculum builds on the strengths of Native American families and communities, including the use of stories and prayer.

PRAYER

Great Spirit,

We thank you for your blessings that have provided the healthy foods to nourish our bodies.

May we learn to appreciate and not take for granted all that we now know to make us healthier. May we be open to accept change that will benefit not only ourselves but our children as well.

QUOTE

"My Native people of golden brown will once again be healthy and strong as they make the necessary changes to turn things around and once again will be 'Strong in Body and Spirit!'"

Quit Now!

Another Smoking Cessation class will start in September. Anyone who wants to quit using tobacco should call the clinic or Kathryn Dick for more information. This class consists of four meetings of approximately 45 minutes each and is a good way to start tomorrow with a healthier lifestyle. Please call 444-1030 or 444-9671.

Chair Exercise is Fun!

Do you have problems getting around? Knee problems? Can't run? Are you in a wheelchair or have arthritis? If so, these classes are for you! We've been doing chair exercises this past month and have had fun doing them. Please come and exercise with us.

Where: Siletz Tribal Center
Days: Tuesdays and Thursdays
Time: 10 a.m.

Wear comfortable clothes. For more information, call the clinic at 444-1030 or Kathryn at 444-9671.