

A closer look at science, diabetes, fat intake and influence on your health

By Nancy Ludwig, MS, RD, LD, Siletz Tribal Head Start Nutritionist

As part of my role as a consultant nutritionist to Siletz Tribal Head Start, I offer information for families. This segment focuses specifically on diabetes and looks at a variety of sources for information, including traditional diets and supplements.

Dietary fats are the source of much conflicting information and fear lingers around the subject. As a result, many people avoid all fats, even healthy ones.

Essential fatty acids (EFA) are required for health; no one disputes this. Research is not in agreement, however, about the intake of saturated fats.

As modern diets were introduced, deficiencies of EFAs from loss of traditional foods and the introduction of hydrogenated fats, along with sugar and refined flour, are believed to contribute to the development of type 2 diabetes.

Drs. Korn and Ryser describe research in their book *Preventing and Treating Diabetes Naturally The Native Way*. Phinney, Wortman and Bibus (2008) and Kuhnlein (1996) demonstrated the positive effects of low carbohydrate diets that provide mainly protein and fats on a traditional-style diet with a First Nation community. They found significant weight reduction and metabolic syndrome and diabetes improved.

This community-based study was also a feasibility project in which community members and medical staff collaborated. Similar types of diets, such as Atkins, also have been shown to be effective for weight loss and comparable or better in lowering triglycerides, blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose (Gardner et al, 2007)

Lipid abnormalities are common in people with type 2 diabetes. Research also

has shown that fish oil supplementation significantly lowers serum triglyceride levels in diabetic individuals (Montori, Farmer, Wollan and Dinneen, 2000) These fats also serve to reduce inflammation, which results from diets high in trans-fats, and to decrease neuropathic pain (Jamal, 1990; Jamal and Carmichael, 1990).

In a publication by Mary Enig and Sally Fallon (1999), the interplay among Native metabolism, diabetes and the Delta 6 desaturase enzyme is explored.

When traditional diets are maintained, prevention and treatment of diabetes include essential fatty acids derived from saturated fats such as fish, fish oils, nuts and seeds, and plants such as evening primrose. The enzyme (delta 6 desaturase) is important to the metabolism of fats.

Pacific Northwest Natives and others who have been predominantly, culturally and genetically users of more direct sources of DHA and EPA in seal oil, whale or oolichan over many generations may lack this enzyme (as a mutation where the enzyme was no longer needed). The enzyme is required for anti-inflammatory prostaglandins to be produced.

Lack of EFAs contribute to the development of diabetes and once an individual has diabetes, his or her capacity to utilize these EFAs and benefit from them also is further diminished, thus creating a cycle of ill health.

Deficiencies of biotin, vitamin E, protein, zinc, B-12 and B-6 also interfere with this protective enzyme. These vitamins often are deficient in diabetes and are an essential part of treatment for diabetes patients.

The article emphasizes that one of the most important dietary practices a Native

individual can do while eating EFAs is to also take in sufficient saturated fats, which aid assimilation. Contrary to popular medical beliefs, Dr. Enig states that saturated fats are not harmful to health and do not contribute to heart disease.

In summary, science is merely attempting to explain why health has declined in association with deviation from traditional diets. It is apparent that there isn't widespread agreement in science! Observational evidence, however, suggests the value of traditional foods and practices.

Unfortunately, in the process of healing, supplementation may be needed. There are no effective supplement protocols for all people, let alone all diabetics.

This column is not to be taken as medical advice. Please consult with your health care provider to find your best holistic approach to restore and maintain your state of wellness.

Resources

Preventing and Treating Diabetes Naturally The Native Way by Leslie E. Korn, Ph.D., MPH and Rudolph C. Ryser, Ph.D., DayKeeper Press, Olympia, Wash., 2009

References

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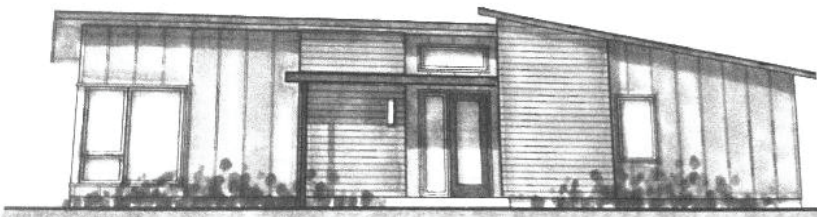
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For information: 503.752.2412 or NWNativeArtShow@Moran-Consulting.com

Registration: 3rd Annual Weaver's Teaching Weaver's Workshop - Oregon
Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute, Pendleton, Oregon
March 20 & 21, 2014; 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. Daily

One name per form, please make copies for additional participants.

Name _____

Tribal Affiliation (if applicable) _____ Organization/Department _____

Address _____ City, State, Zip Code _____

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Please list any Dietary and/or ADA Special Needs: _____



March 20 & 21, 2014

3rd Annual Weavers Teaching Weavers (East)

Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute
Pendleton, OR

An annual event to bring together experienced Native American weavers, east of the Cascades, to teach and learn from one another.

Event Contact Persons:
Ethel Greene
(208) 843-7409
egreene@nwic.edu
Thomas Morning Owl
(541) 969-9197
thomasmorningowl@ctuir.org
Or visit the NWIC Cooperative Extension webpage at:
www.nwic.edu/content/community

Schedule: Workshops will take place daily from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Registration: Advanced registration by Feb. 28
\$75 for Adults (18-49 yrs.), \$40 Seniors (50+)
\$15 per Youth or \$20 for 2 Youth
After March 1, registration is \$90 Adults, \$40 Seniors

* Vendors - Pay registration workshop fee plus pay \$20.00 to Tamástslíkt Museum Store.

Meals: A breakfast buffet & lunch is included in the registration fee.

Lodging: Wildhorse Resort & Casino, 1-800-654-9453 Group Rate for "Basketry Weavers Workshop" Reservations cut-off date is February 26, 2014

Additional Options: Red Lion Hotel, Super 8 Motel, 541-276-8881 Holiday Inn Express, 1-877-859-5095; Motel 6, 541-276-3160; Oxford Suites, 1-877-545-7848

This event is sponsored by the Northwest Indian College - Cooperative Extension
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