

Albert Scott Community Centre hosts diabetes awareness event

BY BARBARA WOOLSEY, LEADER-POST AUGUST 12, 2010



Wayne Papequash gets a blood glucose test from diabetes educator and Safeway pharmacy employee LaVerne Churko during a diabetes event at the Albert Scott Community Centre on Wednesday, Aug. 11, 2010.

Photograph by: Roy Antal, Leader-Post

REGINA — Wayne Papequash got his blood-glucose level checked for the first time in his life Wednesday.

The North Central resident attended a diabetes awareness event at the Albert Scott Community Centre.

Sponsored by the Canadian Diabetes Association and the North Central Community Association (NCCA), the health fair and barbecue featured outdoor cultural activities and free check-ups.

"I thought I was just coming for a hamburger," laughed Papequash. "So far, I've got my blood pressure and my glucose checked ... Everything's lookin' pretty good."

Health professionals and community organizations also provided testing for kidney function, retinopathy, depression risk and foot care.

"Our whole objective here today is to get people in this community to be aware that they are at risk of developing diabetes," said Lori Latta, Saskatchewan manager of public programs and services for the Canadian Diabetes Association. "There are just a number of factors that make this area kind of a perfect storm for diabetes."

According to the Health Council of Canada, Canadians are more likely to have diabetes if they have low income or belong to an Aboriginal community.

Aboriginal people also have a higher risk of complications from diabetes; including kidney failure, foot amputations and heart disease.

Holding such an event can "help prevent diabetes and even prolong someone's life," said Jessica Hanna, project facilitator for NCCA.

"In North Central, we have a high rate of diabetes," she explained. "Learning the most you can about ways to stay healthy, no matter what income level you are, is really important. I think that we maybe don't have the education level and the knowledge that is necessary in order to stay healthy and this is one way we can raise that awareness."

Guests also had the opportunity to attend sessions on staying active, preparing low-cost, healthy meals and supporting family and friends who have the disease.

"It's a really good way for people just to become more aware of what's healthy and their bodies," said Hanna. "(They are) coming to a very public space that's not at all intimidating and learning a bit more about diabetes."

"The easier it is for people to manage their health, the more likely that they'll do it," agreed Latta. "The more pleasant and happy that experience is, the more they'll continue to manage their health."

The organization wants to continue holding diabetes awareness events in the area.

"Our attendance this year is quite a bit over what it was last year," said Latta. "We're excited that there's so much interest in the community."

"Everybody should know a little bit about what's going on inside their head and body," said Papequash. "The more information you know makes you a little bit safer."

In Saskatchewan, almost 70,000 people — one in every 14 — are diagnosed with diabetes.

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