THE NAVAJO (DINÉ) EXPERIENCE WITH DIABETES: RECLAIMING HEALTH WITH FOOD FOR LIFE

Betti Delrow, MSW, Navajo Nation Special Diabetes Project
Lena Guerito, Nutritionist, Navajo Nation Special Diabetes Project
Caroline Trapp, DNP, CDE, Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine

Disclosure to Participants

• Notice of Requirements For Successful Completion
  – Please refer to learning goals and objectives
  – Learners must attend the full activity and complete the evaluation in order to claim continuing education credit/hours

• Conflict of Interest (COI) and Financial Relationship Disclosures:
  – All three presenters report no COI or financial relationships
  – Presenter: Betti Delrow, MSW, Manager, Navajo Nation Special Diabetes Project
  – Presenter: Lena Guerito, Nutritionist, Navajo Nation Special Diabetes Project
  – Presenter: Caroline Trapp, DNP, APN-BC, DNP, FAANP, Premier Internists and Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine

• Non-Endorsement of Products:
  – Accredited status does not imply endorsement by AADE, ANCC, ACPE or CDR of any commercial products displayed in conjunction with this educational activity

• Off-Label Use:
  – Participants will be notified by speakers if any product used for a purpose other than that approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Diné (Navajo) Nation Traditional Food, Non-Traditional Foods and the Diné Power Plate

Lena Guerito, Nutritionist
Navajo Nation Special Diabetes Project
Shiprock Service Area

Diabetes is an epidemic among the Navajo people.

The Navajo Nation is located at the Four Corners Area – We have a very high rate of diabetes.
The Navajo Nation Special Diabetes Project (NNSDP) works with health providers, clinics, county health organizations, state diabetes coalitions, and tribal health programs to:

- Provides education to prevent diabetes.
- Main office is in Window Rock, Arizona.
- Eight sub-Offices serve the 28,000 square-miles of the Navajo Nation.
- Served more than 80,000 Navajos last year.

Story
- The Diné traditional foods have been used for many generations. Diné traditional foods have been taught through grandmother to mother to daughter.
- Early Diné homemakers had the knowledge and skills of the ways of preparing traditional foods to make nutritious meals. These delicious and appetizing recipe dishes were never formally written down. It was done by memory.
- Measurements of the recipes’ ingredients were done by hand and fingers.

Our Traditional Foods
- Many varieties of corn and foods made from corn.
- Beans
- Squash
- Nuts and seeds
- Wild berries, root vegetables, melons, yucca
- Bananas, Cactus
- Culinary Ash
- Tea from wild plants
- Deer, elk, rabbit

Not traditional foods – Commodity Foods

Not Traditional Foods
Entering Window Rock, Arizona

We strive to preserve Diné traditional food beliefs.
- Indian Corn is used for:
  - Food
  - Ceremony

Ceremonies: Corn Pollen
- Diné corn represents kindness, caring and blessings.
- Ceremonial uses: welcoming a young women (Kinlada), blessing for new home, living in good harmony.

The Three Sisters: A Native Tradition
- Did You Know?
  - The corn, beans, and squash grow together so that they benefit from each other.
  - The corn provides a structure for the beans to climb.
  - The beans provide the nitrogen to the soil that the other plants utilize.
  - And the squash spreads along the ground preventing weeds.

Annie's Steamed Corn With Chili

The Three Sisters: A Healthy Native Tradition
- Corn is full of nutrients: natural fats, carbohydrate, fiber, sodium, minerals, and some vitamins.
- Squash provides vitamins, minerals, fiber, and many other nutrients that our body needs.

Beans are loaded with fiber and protein, and are low in fat. They are inexpensive to buy.
Dine Traditional Food Beliefs

• Corn is used in wide variety of recipes:
  – Blue corn mush, pancake, sweet tamales, Diné earth cake, blue corn bread, dumpling, blue corn dumplings (flat for summer/round noodle for winter), steam corn, Steamed Corn Cereal, Kneel Down Bread, corn silk for cereal (fresh or dry).

Corn, squash and beans remain important foods.

Juniper Tree Ash

• A good source of calcium. Often added to Blue Corn Mush.

Blue Corn Mush with Juniper Ash

Blue Corn Tortillas

Kneel Down Bread

Start with backyard garden.

Bake Kneel Down Bread in the ground.

Finished product: Eaten fresh, stored for winter food supplies.
Navajo Earth Cake

Alkand

Ingredients:
- Wheat Sprout
- White & Yellow Corn
- Raisins
- Hot Boiling Water

Chilchin

Grinding Sumac Berries, preparing for a mealtime.
Grinded for fresh Sumac Berry Pudding

Navajo Tea

Navajo Tea Plant

Yucca Plant with Bananas

Wild Onion Plant/Flower & Bulb

Wild Onion Soup

Wild Carrot Plants
Food for Life: Cooking to Live in the Beauty Way
Collaboration between PCRM and NNSDP (Began in 2010)

Introducing…Our New Power Plate Food Graphic!
PCRM - 2009
NNSDP - 2015

Food for Life
Healthy Eating to Prevent and Beat Diabetes in Indian Country (Available at pcrm.org/CurriculumNA)
• Week 1: A Reason for Hope
• Week 2: Three Sisters, Commodities; Fiber
• Week 3: Grains; Plant-Based Nutrition Lessons
• Week 4: Grocery Store Tour
• Week 5: Stocking Up: Drying, Freezing, Canning, Sprouting; Handling Challenges
• Week 6: Feeding the Family, Holidays, Celebrations, Ceremonies and Keeping it Going, Graduation

Each class: 2 hours, with PowerPoint, discussion and Cooking Demo (and Tasting!); handouts and recipes provided.
After our 3-site, eight-class pilot:
- Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board endorsement
- Implementation by Navajo nutritionists
- Expanded to 8 Northern Pueblos, NM (2015)
- National Indian Health Board (2014)
- 17,000 DVDs distributed; 6000+ views at ThePowerPlate.org

Ahéhee!
We thank all of the people who participated in classes and the film production.

References
Brown, Rose, The Late Navajo Traditional Herbal Medicine Women. Personal communication.
Grey, Gloria, Traditional Counselor; "Strong in Body, Mind, and Spirit" Curriculum / Traditional Teaching, Navajo Traditional Foods Medicinal Herb, Navajo Identity Through Clans.

For More Information
Caroline Trapp, Betti Delrow, Lena Guerito
ctrapp@pcrm.org, b.delrow@nnsdp.org, l.guerito@nnsdp.org

AADE15