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Cooking Class Tips Tackle Diabetes

Choose low sodium products. Limit foods high in sugar and fat content. Eat lean meats, vegetables and fruits more often. Drink low-fat milk. Exercise as often as possible.

Those were some of the tips handed out during the City of Perris's first ever "diabetes cooking class" on March 15. The class, conducted by the Riverside Community Health Foundation, marks the City's latest efforts to improve the lives of Perris residents through community engagement and education.

Many Perris residents face an increased risk for diabetes as a result of consuming sugary drinks, high-fat, high-sodium foods and a lack of exercise. More than half—55 percent—of Californians have pre-diabetes or diabetes, while 69 percent are overweight and at a higher risk of developing diabetes in the future.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that one in three children born today will have diabetes by 2050.

Brittney Harris, a community dietician with the community health foundation, praised the City of Perris for hosting the diabetes cooking class.

"It's wonderful for the City of Perris to bring people together to learn how to eat well, even with diabetes, and live a healthier lifestyle," she said. "The City is trying to address a major health concern."

Among the helpful tips Harris pointed out:

- Portion control, limiting the amount of food consumed
- Skipping breakfast can result in over-eating during subsequent meals
- Reading labels on canned good to determine the amount of salt, sugar, carbohydrates and fats
- Bulking up on high-fiber foods like whole-grain cereals
- Eggs are good protein
- Eating more salads, cutting down on cookies, chips and candy
- Exercising at least 30 minutes a day



Brittney Harris, a dietician with the Riverside Community Health Foundation, discusses portion control, food choices and the importance of exercise during a March 15 diabetes cooking class at the City of Perris.

Following the class, Harris and Jessielee Sittig, another representative of the Riverside Community Health Foundation, distributed a salad that included mango, beans, lettuce, cilantro, lime juice and corn chips.

Julia Williams said she found the class "very helpful and informative."

"It's very important for people to learn about better ways of eating and healthier eating habits," Williams said. "This class has introduced people to ways of eating better."

Renee Henry, who is diabetic, said the class informed her about ways to stay ahead of the condition. She takes part in the City's Wednesday morning walking club, making laps around the Perris City Hall Campus. She also learned that draining canned vegetables helps remove significant amounts of sodium contained in liquids used to preserve the produce.

"I want to brush up on things I should be eating for a healthy lifestyle," she said. "I like the City of Perris because it offers a lot of great programs to help people get and stay healthy."



Jessielee Sittig prepares a healthy salad of mango, beans, lettuce and cilantro to demonstrate a healthy-food choice during a diabetes cooking class at the City of Perris.

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