

The Recipe for Diabetic Friendly Ethnic Cuisine

Lisa Boyes



Students demonstrate a healthy version of samosas to south asian clients at Rexdale Community Health Centre

What do you get when you combine and temper: one part traditional recipe, one talented George Brown Professor of Nutrition, one highly motivated George Brown Culinary Management Nutrition class, and one part commitment to making an impact on the health of high risk ethnic groups? The tasty answer is Professor Sobia Khan's project: Developing Diabetic Friendly Recipes for Ethnic Populations.

Community programs throughout Canada have indicated a significant need to augment their health education and support services for ethnic populations that have an extremely high risk of developing diabetes. Lifestyle patterns, such as cooking and eating habits and exercise, are known major factors in the onset, severity and management of this chronic and debilitating disease. Almost 80% of new Canadians come from populations that are at higher risk for type

2 diabetes, including South Asian, Asian, Hispanic, Chinese and African cultures. Native Canadians (Aboriginal) are also known to be at higher risk for diabetes. While community Centers do provide nutrition education and sample menus to their clients based on the North American diet model, they lack the resources to develop culturally relevant recipes based on specific ethnic diet preferences and traditional methods of food preparation.

Professor Khan, a brilliant and innovative Dietitian, is particularly cognizant of these lifestyle factors affecting high-risk populations. She has chosen to make an impact on the community through leveraging her role as a Professor of Nutrition at George Brown College, her connection to the community, and the applied research mandate of GBC and its partners: Canadian Diabetes Association (CDA), West Toronto Diabetes Education Program (WTDEP - LAMP and Four Villages Community Health Centres) and Rexdale Community Health Centre.

In 2007, Professor Khan began this project through the Seed Funding Program of the Office of Research and Innovation at George Brown College. The mandates of this project are to reach out to ethnic communities to collect their traditional recipes, and to reformulate the recipes to make them diabetic friendly, as part of the GBC Culinary Management Nutrition Program curriculum for the Centre for

Hospitality and Culinary Arts (CHCA). The methodology also includes testing the revised recipes in the target community through the community center partners to evaluate the taste of the diabetic friendly recipes, and obtaining approval and endorsement by Canadian Diabetes Association.



Developing recipes for clients at Four Villages Community Health Centre

The primary outcome of this project is the development and testing of ethnically sensitive healthy recipes to help manage diabetes in communities with high occurrences. The first recipes to be redeveloped are South East Asian recipes. A second benefit is the creation of a useable and transferable teaching model that can be extended to various ethnicities, community programs and can be related to other chronic conditions (e.g. heart disease) in the future. The project has also enabled the exposure of culinary students (specifically in the new 2-year Culinary Management Nutrition diploma program) to nutrition related community programs and chronic conditions.

We would like to thank our partners CDA and WTDEP, and our participating community health centres for their support and collaboration.

For more information on this project, contact:

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George Brown College, with 30,000 full- and part-time students and more than 900 faculty in more than 150 programs, aims to be a top community college of choice for applied research investment by industry and other partners. Its applied research strengths include advanced engineering and microelectronics; nursing and the social sciences; health informatics; IT; and design and new media. George Brown is currently allied with nine other Ontario colleges in the Colleges Ontario Network for Industry Innovation, started with a \$3.5m grant from the Ministry of Research and Innovation. CONII is building college capacity to bring research to the marketplace.

