

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SMH Diabetes Education Program Welcomes New Staff

PLYMOUTH, N.H. — The Speare Memorial Hospital Diabetes Education program, certified by the American Diabetes Association, is pleased to welcome new Registered Dietitians Jean Baker and Janette Gaumer. Together they will be providing diabetes education and general nutrition counseling.

Educating for Success

Jean Baker had been working as a medical writer and editor and comes to Speare after spending the last three years fully immersed in diabetes research, education and evidence based treatment recommendations. Working at Pri-Med, and in conjunction with the American Diabetes Association, she developed a full range of content for continuing medical education classes aimed at assisting primary care doctors to more proactively address diabetes with their patients.



Jean Baker (l) and Janette Gaumer (r)

“Diabetes used to be a disease of adults, but now we see it in adolescents and children,” Baker explains. “Because it impacts a huge segment of the population, it is important doctors stay current on the latest recommendations.”

That’s where education comes in: to bridge the gap between a doctor’s diagnosis and a patient’s treatment/self-management of diabetes. As Speare’s new diabetes education coordinator, Baker will be doing just that, bringing her full spectrum of knowledge about the disease into her discussions with patients. She says she is looking forward to working with patients, helping them understand the disease, how it is affecting them and what the tools for successful self-management are.

Following an initial assessment, Baker will provide newly diagnosed patients with personal medical nutrition therapy, including meal planning and shopping skills, helping them set goals for losing weight and controlling blood sugar. From there patients enroll in a four-week series of classes that help them learn to live with diabetes. Topics include: defining diabetes, what the diagnosis means, the role of exercise, what to eat when, and why, putting concepts into practice, and the role of medications.

Baker, who holds a master's in nutrition from the University of Oklahoma and a master's in nutrition communication from Tufts University, says 95 percent of patients with diabetes are type 2. "It is important to know the primary risk factors—overweight, over 40, family history of the disease and an impaired fasting glucose (100 – 126 mg/dl)—so people can take the right actions in the right amount of time, while they are still symptomless," stresses Baker.

Eating to Optimize Performance

For **Janette Gaumer**, also a nutrition counselor, food is fuel. In fact, she'll even use your car as a perfect analogy for how the body works and uses food to keep it running smoothly. "Your body is the finest tuned machine out there," she says. "If we put as much care and maintenance into ourselves as we do our cars, our bodies would function much more smoothly. Instead, we are a pack it in and fill it up society."

Because of life's fast pace Gaumer acknowledges it is hard to stay on track, but insists, "It is okay to live on the go, but you have to plan ahead." To succeed, Gaumer helps people learn the role of fats, fiber, protein and carbohydrates in their diets, and how to read nutrition labels to better understand what they are really eating—paying particular attention to serving sizes. She also encourages a back to basics approach: whole grains, less processed food, more fruits and vegetables and nuts.

Consistency is also key. Gaumer explains, "You need to fuel your body consistently throughout the day. If you only fuel once a day your body will store the nutrition inefficiently and cause your blood sugar to fluctuate between highs and lows." The result is eating more than you really need and a lack of energy.

Referencing her car analogy again, Gaumer also talks about the importance of exercise, "If you don't keep your vehicle tuned up and running, it won't work when you want it to. The same with your body. You need to exercise everyday even if it is just talking a walk or doing some simple stretches." By balancing foods to maximize health, and exercise to keep the body tuned-up, people can avoid the need for, or lower the dosage of, medications used to stabilize such things as cholesterol, blood pressure and blood sugars.

Gaumer, who earned her bachelor's in nutrition from the University of New Hampshire, walks her own talk. Together with her husband and three children, they make homemade bread every week, everyone's lunch has at least two fruits/veggies, and like the rest of us, eat "fast food"— a crock pot meal left simmering all day and ready to eat when they get home.

For more information about Spear Memorial Hospital's Diabetes Education program or nutrition counseling call Jean Baker at (603) 238-6472 or Janette Gaumer at (603) 238-2244. Spear Memorial Hospital is a 24-hour, acute care, non-profit community hospital and health care provider serving Plymouth and the communities of central New Hampshire for more than a century. Visit online at www.spearhospital.com and join us on Facebook.

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