

Family and Consumer Sciences  
Extension Encourages and Supports  
Diabetes Self-Management

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

 University of  
**Kentucky**  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment



## Extension Provides a Support System and Teaches Lifestyle Management as a Fundamental Aspect of Diabetes Care

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*It starts with us*



*Fleming County pharmacist demonstrates use of insulin pump to diabetes support group.*

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Kentucky Department for Public Health, 13.1% of adults in Kentucky (449,324) have been diagnosed with diabetes. This is higher than the national average. Further, 1.1 million Kentucky adults are living with diagnosed or undiagnosed prediabetes (elevated blood sugar).

In addition to the negative impact of diabetes on health and quality of life, diabetes places an economic burden on communities through loss of wages and healthcare expenses. These costs for a person with diabetes is two to three times more expensive than individuals who don't have diabetes. In total, it is estimated that diabetes costs Kentuckians \$4.8 billion each year. Kentucky needs unique partnerships within communities to help individuals manage diabetes as well as prevent or delay the onset in individuals with prediabetes.

Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Extension offers support groups and programming for people with diabetes and/or their family members. They work in conjunction with Certified Diabetes Educators, Registered Dietitian Nutritionists, and other professionals. These programs focus on lifestyle management as a fundamental aspect of diabetes care, which includes diabetes self-management education, diabetes support, nutrition, and physical activity.

Diabetes support groups are an empowering tool for enabling individuals to manage and take control of their diabetes. Extension provides a safe setting and

has a unique ability to bring together community partners engaged in reducing diabetes prevalence within their communities.

In **Campbell County**, participants with diabetes and those diagnosed with prediabetes attend the Diabetes Support Group at the Campbell County Cooperative Extension Service to learn, practice and adopt new skills in order to help them cope with and better manage their diabetes. The prevalence of diagnosed diabetes in Campbell County is currently 10.9%. The Diabetes Support Group meets monthly with the FCS Agent in collaboration with a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and Certified Diabetes Educator from the Northern Kentucky Public Health Department. The FCS Agent emphasizes making healthy food choices and the importance of portion control. She has recently incorporated the UK curriculum Life Story: How Your History Can Help for overall health and wellness. She also demonstrates and provides samplings of UK recipes for several sessions each year and provides low-carbohydrate, portion-controlled snacks and fruits and vegetables each month.

In **Fleming County**, where the prevalence of diagnosed diabetes is 13.5%, FCS Extension and the Fleming County Health Department provide a monthly support group for individuals with diabetes or their loved ones. Twelve participants regularly attend. This support group provides a platform for healthcare providers involved in diabetes management and care, like pharmacists and Registered Diabetes Nutritionists, to speak on aspects of diabetes self-management monthly.

In **Trigg County**, the prevalence of diagnosed diabetes is 13.8%. The Extension office alongside a Certified Diabetes Educator from the Pennyrite District Health Department offer a quarterly support group meeting to help individuals manage their diabetes. Topics discussed include nutrition, managing medications, and building the right healthcare team. For example, a local optometrist came and presented information on eye health and diabetes at one session. Six people participate in this support group. In connection to this group, additional diabetes self-management classes have been offered to serve the community.

Diabetes is an issue that communities will continue to address for years to come. FCS Extension serves as an ideal partner for offering lifestyle management programs and bringing together community stakeholders to offer support groups and programming that empower constituents to take control and manage their diabetes.