

Live a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions Class to be Offered October 13- November 17

By Janet Hackert, Nutrition Specialist

Once again there will be an opportunity to participate in a class that helps people live a healthy life with chronic conditions starting Thursday, October 13 from 10-noon at the Harrison County Health Department.

Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions is a six-week series for adults living with a chronic condition and the friends, families or others who support them. The program was developed by researchers at Stanford University to help people gain self-confidence in their ability to manage their own health.

In 2005, an estimated 5 million adults had fibromyalgia. As of 2007, 23.6 million people had diabetes. 25.1 million adults had been diagnosed with heart disease. And who is taking care of all these people dealing with chronic conditions? If a person spends a total of 30 minutes with medical professionals every three months, it leaves the other 129,000 minutes for the individual to be caring for him or herself! This class can help a person do that.

Participants learn how to find solutions to problems caused by their chronic conditions. They learn how to manage fatigue and stress more effectively, use good nutrition to help manage their condition, plan appropriate physical activity, and form an effective partnership with their health care team. They also learn relaxation techniques and other ways to use their minds to relieve symptoms that so often go along with chronic conditions.

Past class participants have positive things to say about it. One participant said this is a “reinforcement of what I know” and will use what she (re)learned to communicate effectively with her doctors. Another said, “it made me face up to my faults – and talk to myself to make positive changes.” This was after a class that taught how to change negative attitudes about self into positive self-talk. Another summed up the concerns of many who live with chronic conditions when she said, “The fastest way to a normal life is prioritizing your health!” Taking this class helped her and others do just that.

The class will be held at the Harrison County Health Department’s meeting room in Bethany on six Thursdays from 10 till noon, starting October 13, 2011. Christine Rucker, at the Harrison County Health Department, and myself, Janet Hackert, with University of Missouri Extension, will co-facilitate the class. The class is free but space is limited so please pre-register by contacting the Health Department at 425-6324 or the Extension Office at 425-6434. Please let us know as soon as possible if you would like to participate and if you need special accommodation let us know when you sign up.

(Written October 7, 2011)