

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DIABETES – ARE YOU AT RISK?

During National Diabetes Week (11-17 July 2010), WentWest Limited and western Sydney GPs are encouraging residents to find out if they are at risk of developing diabetes and learn more about preventative health programs.

Type 2 diabetes, the most common but preventable form of the disease, has been linked to many long term health complications including kidney damage, impaired vision and skin infections. In its most dire form, type 2 diabetes can even lead to foot amputations due to unrepairable damage to blood vessels of the lower limbs.

Toongabbie GP, Dr Shanthini Seelan, says that one misunderstood fact about the disease is the permanency of the condition. "Many people are not aware that once diagnosed with diabetes they have the condition for life. While dietary changes and regular exercise will significantly slow the progression of diabetes, it will unfortunately be a lifelong condition to manage".

WentWest Limited, which provides training and support services to more than 550 GPs across western Sydney, runs SHAPE (Sessions for Health and Physical Exercise). The innovative health and fitness program aims to prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease by educating participants on diet and nutrition and encouraging them to lead a more active lifestyle.

Since its launch 12 months ago, SHAPE has seen more than 300 western Sydney residents improve their diet and exercise habits, and changed the lives of many people who were heading towards type 2 diabetes.

Among those that have benefited from the program include Pendle Hill resident, Brindha Ponniah, who started the SHAPE program in February. "I was shocked about my initial health results," Brindha said. "I didn't realise that my waistline measurement was such a strong indicator of my vulnerability to type 2 diabetes".

Brindha found SHAPE to be an ideal combination of diet and nutritional education with structured exercise monitored by an exercise physiologist. "SHAPE allowed me to make small but essential changes to my lifestyle", Brindha said. "It gave me the knowledge and the skills I needed to turn around the things that were negatively impacting my health".

Since completing the SHAPE program, Brindha has continued to make progress with her lifestyle and now regularly walks and attends a local fitness centre. These changes have seen Brindha lose over five kilograms and decrease her waist measurement by 4cm, both critical in the prevention of diabetes.

To find out more about type 2 diabetes and prevention programs like SHAPE, go to: www.newleaseonlife.com.au or ask your doctor about completing an AUSDRISK (Australian Type 2 Diabetes Risk Assessment Tool) questionnaire.

Photo caption: SHAPE participant, Brindha Ponniah, and WentWest Dietitian and Exercise Physiologist, Diana Daoud.

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About WentWest:

Covering the full spectrum of general practice training, education and support, WentWest offers both the Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) program to general practice registrars in the Western Sydney region as well as providing division of general practice services to more than 200 general practices in the local government areas of Auburn, Blacktown, Holroyd and Parramatta.

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