1. What is diabetes and why is it important to talk about it in our community?

Sample Answer:

- Diabetes is a disease that occurs when your body cannot produce or properly use insulin (a natural hormone) to control the amount of glucose (sugar) in your blood.

- The most common types of diabetes are called type 1, type 2 and gestational diabetes which can happen during pregnancy.

- Uncontrolled diabetes may hurt your eyes, kidneys, nerves and heart and even cause death.

2. What causes diabetes?

Sample Answer:

- The exact causes are not fully understood but you are more likely to get diabetes if:
  - If someone in your family has diabetes;
  - You are African American, American Indian, Hispanic/Latino American, South East Asian American;
  - You are overweight or are over the age of 45;
  - You had diabetes when you were pregnant;
  - You have a history of heart disease, high blood pressure, and/or high cholesterol

- Eating table sugar or candy does not cause diabetes however eating too many sweets can cause weight gain which can lead to diabetes.
• Individuals or “New Americans” not used to eating foods high in sugar and carbohydrates may be more at risk of weight gain that can lead to diabetes.

3. **What is glucose?**
   Sample Answer:

   • Your body breaks down foods to make glucose or blood sugar that gives your body the energy it needs to live, work and play.

   • Your blood always has some glucose in it but too much glucose in your blood is harmful and can lead to diabetes.

   • If diabetes is not recognized or treated, the glucose that builds up in the body may cause damage to our heart, kidneys, eyes nerves and other parts of the body.

4. **How can I tell if I have diabetes (what are the symptoms)?**
   Sample Answer:

   • Often people aren’t aware the early symptoms of diabetes including:
      
      o Feeling tired (more than usual)
      o Being thirsty (more than usual)
      o Using the bathroom (more than usual)
      o Blurred vision (eyesight)
      o Sores on the body heal slowly (more than usual)

   • Advanced symptoms of diabetes can include the feeling of tightness in your chest or pressure on the heart.

   • The best way to know if you have diabetes is to have your doctor or health care provider give you a blood glucose test.
5. What is a glucose test?
Sample Answer:

- Your doctor will take a small amount of your blood and measure how much glucose is in your body.

- People with diabetes will often test their own blood to be sure they are controlling their blood glucose (blood sugar) levels with a proper diet, exercise and medications.

6. If I have diabetes, how can I take care of it?
Sample Answer:

- There is no cure for diabetes. Once you have it, you will always have it. People must learn to control their diabetes with help from a doctor or health care provider.

- Some people with diabetes take medicine every day by swallowing a pill or receiving an insulin injection (shot) or both.

- People with diabetes learn how to test their blood sugars visiting the doctor or health care provider who will teach them how to use a blood glucose monitor.

- By developing healthy eating habits and getting regular exercise and sometimes taking medication or insulin shots, diabetes can be controlled.

7. What can I do to keep myself and my family from getting diabetes?
Sample Answer:
• A healthy diet and moderate exercise are the key ingredients to preventing or controlling diabetes. Families play a role in teaching children not to overeat and to eat healthy foods.

• Eating lots of vegetables and fruits. Try picking from the rainbow of colors (red, green, yellow and orange). Eat non-starchy vegetables such as spinach, carrots, broccoli and green beans.

• Be aware of the foods in your culture that are high in sugar or starches and cause weight gain by eating too much such as:
  
  o SE Asian: Sticky rice; noodles; Kapoon
  o Hispanic: Tortillas; Fried foods
  o Somali: Injera

• Choose breads and pasta made with whole grains. Limit grain products that are high in sugars.

• Low fat meat, chicken, fish and tofu are healthy foods.

• Choose dairy products that are low fat and prepare foods with little or no added fat or salt.

8. **Why is exercise so important for controlling or preventing diabetes?** Sample Answer:

• Regular physical activity (exercise) burns calories and that helps lower your blood glucose and cholesterol that can lead to diabetes.

• Exercise can improve blood pressure and your body’s ability to use insulin not to mention exercise helps you lose weight.

• Daily exercise can be as simple as walking more, riding a bike, dancing, stretching, gardening or (*provide cultural specific activity*).

9. **What are some unhealthy eating habits?**
Sample Answer:

• Overeating. Take only enough food to satisfy your hunger rather than overeating (serve yourself small portions instead of eating from the serving bowl)
• Drinking too many sweet beverages made with sugar or corn syrup (check the label for sugar amounts and calories).
• Drinking too many alcoholic beverages (wine, beer or liquors). They can cause weight gain that may increase blood sugars.
• Eating fast food meals. They tend to be high in fat and cause weight gain.
• Eating too many snacks and sweet foods. Limit how much and how often you eat candies or foods made with lots of sugar, fat or salt.

10. Is there anything else our expert guest might like to add?

(Optional question only if time permits)

Sample Answer:

• Recreational centers are places where people can exercise with little or no cost year round.

• Community clinics have resources and diabetes educators who can help people learn how to control diabetes.

• Guests may wish to use extra time to elaborate more on any culturally specific diabetes prevention and control suggestions impacting Lao, Vietnamese, Somali, Cambodian, Hmong and Hispanic families….