



**Diabetes Prevention:
The Tie That Binds Our Future and Theirs
By Carmencita “Chita” Domingo
Member of the National Diabetes Education Program’s
*Small Steps. Big Rewards. Team to Prevent Diabetes***

It is hard to believe that I have been a permanent resident of the United States for 20 years. My family and I came from the Philippines to seek a better life. We did the right thing. Today, at age 63, I have five lovely children and four remarkable grandchildren. My time in this country has been wonderful, and yet the memories of how far I have traveled are bittersweet.

It also was 20 years ago that my aunt died of complications related to diabetes. My aunt, who knew she had diabetes, was overweight and did not get much physical activity. I suspect she did not know that there was more she could do to improve her health. Nor did my other aunts, on both sides of the family, who also had diabetes.

Today, we know that Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are at increased risk for type 2 diabetes—even those who think they are at a healthy weight. We also know that type 2 diabetes can be prevented or delayed by making changes in our lifestyles. We just need to take small steps — eat healthy foods, get active for 30 minutes a day, five days a week, and lose a small amount of weight — to receive the big rewards.

Knowing diabetes can be prevented or delayed has given me peace of mind from one of my greatest fears. A year ago, I began taking steps to reduce my risk for diabetes. Now, I eat more vegetables and fruits than rice. I dance, walk, and do 30-minute workouts with a videotape. I feel better and

I have more energy to be around for my family.

This routine is working for me. And it can work for other Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders as well. The National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) is reaching out to Asian and Pacific Islander Americans with information to help us enjoy good health, to live well, and to prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes.

Using the theme, “Two Reasons I Find Time to Prevent Diabetes...My Future and Theirs,” as part of its multicultural *Small Steps. Big Rewards. Prevent type 2 Diabetes* campaign, NDEP has educational tip sheets, public service ads, and a GAME PLAN brochure for tracking calorie intake and physical activity. The theme speaks to our strong family bonds, which also make us feel responsible for our health. When we are healthy, we can enjoy our families and our grandchildren. It’s an investment in the quality of family life that all of us should make.

Join me in this effort to prevent diabetes in our community. Our loved ones are depending on us to take small steps for a huge reward—a life free from diabetes.

For more information and resources on diabetes prevention, contact the NDEP at 1-800-438-5383 or log on to www.ndep.nih.gov. Materials are available in various Asian and Pacific Islander languages.

Carmencita “Chita” Domingo, a Filipino immigrant and soon-to-be citizen of the United States, is the activity director at Hope Adult Day Health Care Center in San Diego. As a member of the National Diabetes Education Program’s Small Steps Big Rewards Team to Prevent type 2 Diabetes, Ms. Domingo is leading by example to let Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders know that type 2 diabetes can be prevented.