

**Research shows eating pulses may be a dietary prescription to help manage diabetes**

December 7, 2009 (Winnipeg, MB) – Research shows eating pulses – beans, peas, lentils and chickpeas – can help control blood sugar in diabetes. Today, 2.5 million Canadians have diabetes and that number is expected to grow to 3.7 million in 2010. An article in *The Globe and Mail* on December 7 predicts that diabetes is going to trigger an “economic tsunami”, increasing health care costs to \$16.9 billion in 10 years.

Pulses are a nutritious and affordable dietary approach to help manage diabetes and combat rising health care costs. Pulses have a low glycemic index, which results in a slower rise in blood sugar and lower insulin levels after a meal. Pulses are low in fat and provide nutrients like slowly-digestible carbohydrate, fibre, protein, vitamins and minerals.

Researchers from the Risk Factor Modification Centre at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto recently analyzed the results of 41 randomized, controlled experimental trials in 1,674 people to assess the evidence that beans benefit blood sugar control. The review showed pulses lowered fasting glucose and insulin levels when eaten alone, added to a high-fibre diet or as part of a low-glycemic diet.

“Pulses were also found to improve glycosylated hemoglobin (HbA1c), an indicator of long-term blood sugar control,” says Dr. John Sievenpiper, who led the study. “In fact, when pulses were eaten as part of a high-fibre or low-glycemic diet, the significant reduction in HbA1c seen in people with Type 2 diabetes was comparable to that achieved by oral medications.”

Health Canada advises eating beans and lentils more often to reduce saturated fat and increase fibre in the diet. The Canadian Diabetes Association recommends adding legumes to the diet to help lower the glycemic index and increase the fibre content. Human research studies funded by the Canadian pulse industry have shown that eating pulses can improve risk factors related to diabetes. Pulses can lower total and LDL (bad) cholesterol, reduce blood pressure in overweight or obese individuals, reduce waist size and help with weight management.

“Pulses are a made-in-Canada prescription for healthy living,” says Gordon Bacon, CEO of Pulse Canada. “Beans, peas and lentils have enormous potential as disease-fighting agents and contributors to good health and they can play a big role in reducing health care costs.”

Pulse Canada is the national association representing growers, traders and processors of pulse crops. Canada is the world's largest exporter of beans, peas, lentils and chickpeas and one of the largest pulse producers.

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