



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2015 Volume VI: Physiological Determinants of Global Health

Diabetes and Navajo Nation

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by Priscilla Black

An observation of Native American Indians shopping at our local grocery store is frightening. Most young parents fill up their shopping carts with sugary foods or foods that are high in carbohydrates. The new age of process food has our native people in a battle against diabetes. A generation of many Navajos understanding Type 2 diabetes is here. Student will see that human pancreas is an amazing gland that has a two part system that regulates the sugar in the blood stream. The unit will give teachers some ideas of how to catch a young person's mind with an introduction of how Navajos and Alaskan Indians are two times more likely to be victims of Type II diabetes. Let's not stop at that, as you research Type II diabetes, you will be surprise that the United States and other countries are seeing increased incidence of this hormonal disease with great concerns. What is there to do? This unit will break down the reasons why Type II diabetes has becomes a problem. Students will learn the anatomy and physiology of the pancreas. It will help students understand how the body break downs sugar, store it and uses sugar. And of course, how the cells accept or rejects the glucose in our blood stream.

(Developed for English Language Arts, grade 4; recommended for Science, grade 4)

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