

## Learn diabetes meal planning skills in a virtual world

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An estimated 25.8 million Americans or 8.3% of the population have diabetes and the incidence of diabetes is increasing most rapidly in children and young adults. Diabetes management includes following a diabetes meal plan, being physically active and possibly taking medication. This project focused on how to help young adults (18-28 year-olds) meet their diabetes meal plan recommendations. Studies have shown that teens and young adults are food illiterate they don't have the skills to plan and cook healthy meals. In addition, eating out with friends is an important part of their social life. To help these young adults acquire these crucial meal skills and not have to eliminate their social life, three virtual world settings kitchen, restaurant, all you can eat buffet -were designed where they could practice diabetes meal planning and recipe preparation. In the virtual kitchen they learned step by step how to read a recipe, follow the instructions and gather ingredients in baking and cooking recipes. In the virtual restaurant they learned how to select meals from one of five menus (American, Italian, Asian, Southwest and Steakhouse). In the virtual buffet they learned how to incorporate a wide variety of buffet foods into their meal plan. It was expected the skills they learned in these virtual world settings would transfer to real life so they could prepare their meals, be able to eat out in a variety of real life settings, and stay within their diabetes meal plan.

### Biography

SeAnne Safaii completed her Ph.D. from the University of Idaho and dietetics degree at North Dakota State University. She is an Assistant Professor in the Dietetics Program at the University of Idaho. She is a co-Principal Investigator (PI) on a National Institutes of Health grant that teaches young adults with diabetes meal planning skills in a virtual world and how to apply these skills in a real world.

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