

PKIMC to Offer Living Well Classes This Fall

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

A new class is being offered in Kodiak to help those living with chronic health conditions. The Living Well Alaska classes will be offered through Providence Kodiak Island Medical Center, with the help of University of Alaska Fairbanks's cooperative extension service and State of Alaska Health and Social Services.

PKIMC Spokesperson Karen Leatherman said chronic diseases are all too common in Alaska. The Alaska Division of Public Health estimates 26 percent of adults in Alaska reported having high blood pressure.

"And 35 percent of those tested reported having high blood cholesterol, and another really high statistic for Alaska: 23 percent of adults in Alaska reported being diagnosed with arthritis. So those are some of the chronic conditions that this class can really help people with in dealing with some of the challenges they might face and ways they can make things better for themselves and their symptoms and their life."

The classes meet every Monday from 6 p.m. until 8:30 p.m., October 14 through November 18. It costs \$20, but folks will get their money back if they attend all of the classes.

Belinda Chambers is a registered dietitian at PKIMC and said the classes won't focus on specific health conditions.

"We don't talk a whole lot about specific disease states, we talk in general about nutrition and healthy eating and exercise and problem solving, decision making, talking to your doctor. So instead of throwing a bunch of information at you we're teaching you the skills that you need to manage any chronic disease."

Chambers said they like people to bring a support person with them to the class so they have the help they need at home to make any changes.

Marlyce Cozart is a registered nurse and said the classes are very interactive and focus on different themes and living tools each week.

“Each week we talk about self management tools. So there’s physical activity, healthy eating, weight management, how to sleep better, how to work on problem solving, decision making, communication with health care providers. So there’s a lot of great information and we take it one step at a time and work on it at each one of the sessions.”

Folks interested in signing up should do so before October 7, but space is limited so the sooner the better.