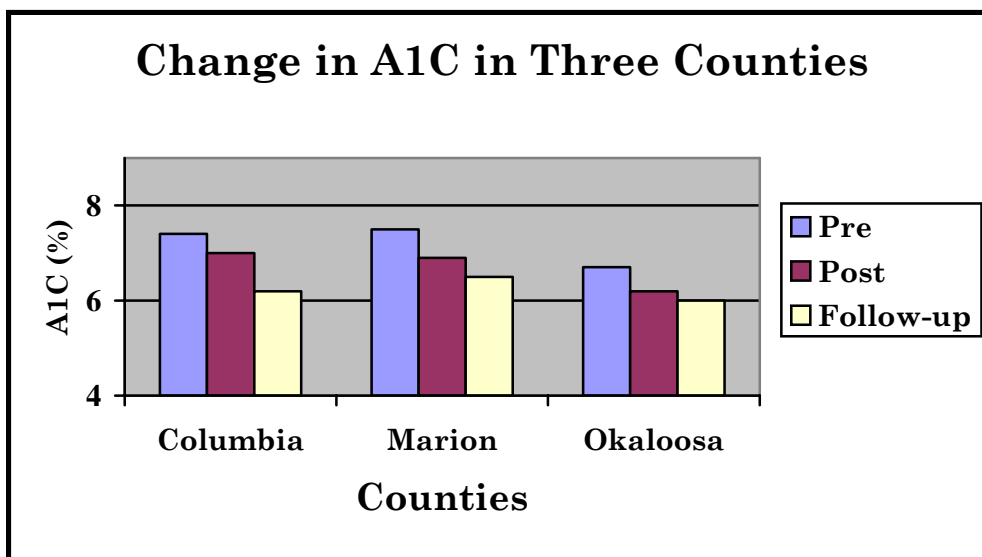




Improving Quality of Life and Reducing Health Risks Through Education

Take Charge of Your Diabetes is a nine-session educational program developed by **University of Florida IFAS Extension** faculty, and conducted in cooperation with health professionals in local communities. In 2003, **county Extension faculty** in Columbia, Marion, and Okaloosa Counties pilot tested the program.

The primary goal of *Take Charge of Your Diabetes* is to provide information and motivation to help persons with type 2 diabetes modify their lifestyles to better control their blood glucose levels and reduce risk for health complications. To evaluate the effectiveness of the program, we measured glycated hemoglobin (A1C) in blood samples prior to the first session (pre-education), at the end of the program (post-education), and three months after completion of the program (follow-up). A1C is an indicator of blood glucose control over a two to three month period. The results are summarized in the figure below.



In all three counties, the change in A1C from pre-education to post-education and from pre-education to follow-up was significant, indicating **improved blood glucose control**. In Columbia and Okaloosa Counties participants' blood pressure also was measured. Systolic blood pressure was

reduced by an average 11 mm Hg at post-education and 7.5 mm Hg at follow-up. These changes can **greatly reduce health risks** for the participants and **health care costs** for the participants, their employers, and the state of Florida.

Take Charge of Your Diabetes is currently being implemented in seventeen counties, with funding from the Florida Department of Health's Diabetes Prevention and Control Program.

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