

Dr. David Campbell



PREVENTION | HEALTH SERVICES

Project: Enhancing food skills among people exiting homelessness

Thank you. Through donor support, Dr. David Campbell, Associate Professor of Medicine with the Department of Community Health Sciences at the University of Calgary, is bringing us one step closer to better health for people experiencing homelessness and at risk for or living with type 2 diabetes.

In Canada, who you are impacts how healthy you'll be. This is health inequity – when your level of income or where you live affects your health outcomes. This is unfair and unjust.

Preventing or managing diabetes is difficult, often requiring medications, a strict diet, regular exercise, monitoring blood sugar levels, and access to a healthcare team. This is especially challenging for people experiencing homelessness, who face many inequitable barriers. As a result, they often receive a diabetes diagnosis, and experience more diabetes-related complications, poorer health, and worsened quality of life. Dr. Campbell is working to reduce inequitable health barriers for people experiencing homelessness.

Moving into supportive or transitional housing is a big step forward for people experiencing homelessness, but it comes with the challenge of establishing routines like cooking for oneself, sometimes after years of receiving meals provided by shelters. Many skills and steps are needed to consistently prepare healthy meals from scratch.

Dr. Campbell's research is taking a "culinary medicine" approach – offering nutrition advice paired with hands-on cooking classes for participants moving into transitional housing, helping them learn how to prepare healthy, affordable meals. Learning these practical food skills can help people prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes or better manage their diabetes.

Dr. Campbell's team will measure changes to healthy eating, cooking confidence, blood sugar levels, and fruit and vegetable intake, and interview participants to hear directly about their experiences, what helped them, and how the program affected their health and daily lives. Ultimately, this research aims to empower individuals to take control of their health by giving them new food skills. The team will share their findings broadly, through scientific reports as well as a documentary film that they hope will reach those who can benefit most and help policymakers make programs like this more widely available.

Thank you for your generosity. Diabetes Canada is grateful to our donors for supporting critical research that will improve the lives of people with diabetes.