

Celebrity Chef LaLa Joins Merck to Kick Off a Food and Health Tour in California Aimed to Help Educa

Merck today announced the launch of a food and health tour in Southern California with award-winning celebrity chef and certified nutritionist, Chef LaLa, to educate Hispanics about type 2 diabetes and to encourage them to make healthy lifestyle changes. *Sazone Su Salud* (Season Your Health), is a program that showcases simple, healthy recipes to help Hispanics lead a diabetes-friendly lifestyle. Paired with a healthcare provider, Chef LaLa will engage in live cooking demonstrations in three California communities – Bakersfield, Los Angeles and Orange County. The first event launches today in Bakersfield and will be held at Albertsons grocery store.

"As a Hispanic woman, chef and nutritionist, it's important for me to help my community understand that we can enjoy our traditional cuisine and still eat healthy," said Chef LaLa. "I'm excited to be a part of *Sazone Su Salud* to help educate Hispanics about easier ways to prepare healthy meals as one way to help manage their type 2 diabetes."

Type 2 diabetes disproportionately affects the Hispanic community in the U.S. Nearly one out of five Hispanic adults over the age of 50 reported having type 2 diabetes, which is among the highest prevalence for all racial/ethnic groups. In Los Angeles, Kern and Orange Counties more than 4.4% to 13.5% of Latino adults have been diagnosed with diabetes. Among U.S. regions with the highest Hispanic populations, California has the highest rate of type 2 diabetes among younger Hispanics aged 18 to 44 years (3.2% versus 1.3% for non-Hispanic whites in that age group).

"Through *Sazone Su Salud* and Chef LaLa, we hope to educate Hispanics about the serious health risks associated with type 2 diabetes and to raise awareness of diet steps they can make to help manage this complex disease," said Stephen Clement, M.D., C.D.E., director, Medical Affairs for Diabetes, U.S., Merck. "We are excited to reach out to Hispanics and to encourage them to talk to their doctors about type 2 diabetes – whether they are already diagnosed with diabetes or are at risk."

In addition to the events featuring Chef LaLa, Merck's *Sazone Su Salud* campaign is an integrated, multi-arm program that strives to educate Hispanics with type 2 diabetes through several channels:

- Culturally relevant educational resources that will be made available to patients in various settings, including local health fairs, pharmacies, and doctors' offices. Online, consumers can get bilingual tips and recipes from Chef LaLa at www.SazoneSuSalud.com¹.
- Bilingual community experts and community-based organizations who have partnered with Merck to help educate Hispanics about type 2 diabetes; and
- Community fairs where Merck exhibits information about the Merck Helps™ Patient Assistance Program
- Spanish-language newspaper placements that offer vouchers for diabetes medications available from Merck.

If diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, it is important to develop a comprehensive plan with a health care provider and to schedule routine checkups to help manage the condition. Additionally, individuals with type 2 diabetes often benefit from the support of family and friends.

About Chef LaLa

Chef LaLa is an accomplished chef, cookbook author, food stylist and consultant, certified nutritionist and motivational speaker.

Inspired by her family of restaurateurs, Chef LaLa is a creative entrepreneur of the first order, operating a first-class catering company, launching a line of CHEF LALA HOMEMADE sauces and marinades, designing CHEF LALA housewares, and developing concepts for a bi-lingual lifestyle television show. She studied at Le Cordon Bleu, an internationally renowned culinary school. Her books include "Latin Lover Lite" and "Best Loved Mexican Cooking with Chef LaLa."

About *Sazone Su Salud*

Sazone Su Salud is an educational campaign developed by Merck to provide culturally relevant and bilingual resources and programs in partnership with organizations that serve the Hispanic community. The goal of *Sazone Su Salud* is to increase awareness about type 2 diabetes within the Hispanic community and encourage them to proactively talk to their healthcare providers about the disease. For more information on *Sazone Su Salud*, visit www.SazoneSuSalud.com².

About Type 2 Diabetes

In type 2 diabetes, the body does not make enough insulin, and/or the insulin that the body makes does not work properly. This causes blood sugar levels to become too high, and the body may also keep making sugar even though it does not need it. Once a person has type 2 diabetes, it does not go away and having diabetes can lead to serious complications, like heart disease or stroke.

About the Merck Helps™ Patient Assistance Program

Sometimes, affording prescription medicines can be difficult. That's why at Merck, we have created the Patient Assistance Program—to keep affordable medicines within your reach. This private and confidential program provides medicine free of charge to eligible individuals, primarily the uninsured who, without our assistance, could not afford needed Merck medicines. Individuals who don't meet the insurance criteria may still qualify for the Merck Patient Assistance Program if they attest that they have special circumstances of financial and medical hardship, and their income meets the program criteria. A single application may provide for up to one year of medicine free of charge to eligible individuals and an individual may reapply as many times as needed. For program details, including eligibility requirements, visit www.MerckHelps.com³ or call 1-800-727-5400.

About Merck

Today's Merck is a global healthcare leader working to help the world be well. Merck is known as MSD outside the United States and Canada. Through our prescription medicines, vaccines, biologic therapies, and consumer care and animal health products, we work with customers and operate in more than 140 countries to deliver innovative health solutions. We also demonstrate our commitment to increasing access to healthcare through far-reaching policies, programs and partnerships. For more information, visit www.merck.com⁴ and connect with us on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

References

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