LET'S BEAT DIABETES
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND ACTION IN COUNTIES MANUKAU

LET'S BEAT DIABETES UPDATE

www.letsbeatdiabetes.org.nz

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Gardens are inclusive places

"Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree" **Martin Luther**

The planting of a fruit orchard at the Auckland Spinal Unit in Bairds Rd this spring showed a sense of community as young and old, able-bodied and not-so abled worked together to create a space which people would enjoy. Richard Main, Project Manager for Let's Beat Diabetes, helped initiate and plan the garden as part of the Counties Manukau-wide Gardening for Health initiative.

CMDHB staff, volunteers and visitors mucked in together on one of the warmest August days to dig holes, plant and water the seedlings, and shovel barrows full of bark, moving muscle groups that many hadn't regularly used. Wheelchair-accessible raised vegetable beds have also been established.

Many of the rehabilitation staff are keen gardeners and their vision is to provide people with the opportunity to learn about growing fruit, vegetables and herbs and to provide fresh food for their families. These skills can be used to put in their own gardens.

"We hope the garden will attract staff, patients and visitors to move about and interact with the grounds and each other, and bring a sense of community and fun" says Doreen Yee, Coordinator at the Spinal Unit.

Diabetes and Spinal Injury

People with spinal cord disorders are more prone than most in developing type 2 diabetes. The risk of developing diabetes is increased for people who are sedentary or obese. Obesity, especially abdominal fat, is closely correlated with type 2 diabetes and is more common among people with spinal cord injury.

Medical research also shows that patients with spinal cord injuries are more likely to have lower muscle mass and more fatty tissue, and tend to carry more abdominal fat than able-bodied people of equal waist circumference. Thus, body weight and waist circumference tend to underestimate the risk for development of type 2 diabetes in people with spinal cord injury.

Regular physical activity and eating plenty of fruit and vegetables are some of the things which help in the prevention of obesity and Type 2 Diabetes.

Middlemore referrals to Whitiora to be trialled

An initiative arising from CMDHB Point Prevalence study findings will see all patients with diabetes who are *hospitalised in Middlemore* have non-discretionary referrals to Whitiora, the Middlemore Diabetes Specialist Unit.

Initial findings showed that fewer than 16% of patients with diabetes were being referred to the unit. Of the remaining 84% of patients, many required specialist assessment for good management of their condition.

The non-discretionary referral system will run as a pilot programme.

Whitiora Diabetes Service is the Secondary Care Team and is a nurse-led service that has integrated care with some primary practices and outreach clinics at Otara, Mangere, Manukau and Botany Downs.

Specialist teams of medical staff work directly with GPs and PHOs to help manage the conditions associated with all types of diabetes in the South Auckland community. The philosophy of the service is that Diabetes care is best sited in Primary Care with Secondary support.

Please talk to your family GP if you are concerned about the management and treatment of a diabetes condition and request a referral to the Whitiora service.

Church Celebrates Jazzercize Anniversary

For one year LotuMoui Jazzercize classes at EFKS Manuwera have run every Thursday evening and every Saturday morning without fail. It is a commitment to healthy mind, healthy bodies and healthy spirit that the congregation of EFKS know is worth celebrating.

All of the thirteen Church Committee members are regularly seen at jazzercize and with a congregation of 400 people, young, old and in between, up to 60% of them are regularly involved in the classes.

"The Church hall is small," says the secretary, Meresieni Tapaleao, "and sometimes we have had so many people turn up we have had to hold the Jazzacize outside, in the dark at six o'clock in the morning. But we don't mind because it's awesome and we enjoy it!"

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Throughout the year the Church has compiled a video diary of the progress they've made and the fun and laughs they've had.

An added celebration at the Jazzercize Anniversary is the presentation of First Aid and Coaching Certificates to five of the women who completed training during the year to support the Church classes. It is great recognition of their commitment to making the programme sustainable in the future as well as recognition of their own new skills.

EFKS Manurewa Jazzercize is supported by the CMDHB LotuMoui Programme.

The Pacific Community Obesity Implementation Plan has Gained Momentum

Aspects of the Pacific Community Obesity Plan focus on development and delivery of nutrition and physical activities for overweight Pacific youth programme and also development and delivery of a healthy lifestyles programme for Pacific parents. A tender process is already underway for both these programmes and it is expected that a selected provider will be identified by the end of November 2009.

Community-based groups are also applying for funding. There has been the recent release of 'Tupu: Pacific Gardening for Health Community Grants' whereby community-based organisations within Counties Manukau apply for funding to create a new garden project or strengthen existing gardens to improve their nutrition and increase physical activity.

Investing in the Pacific workforce development with scholarships and training in nutrition are another important aspect of this Plan. Throughout this year, there will be opportunities for the Pacific community to undertake the Certificate in Pacific Nutrition classes facilitated by the Heart Foundation. In addition, applications for scholarships to study Human Nutrition at Massey and Otago Universities are expected to be made available by end of November 2009.

Throughout the implementation of the plan, all initiatives will foster sustainability through links to existing activities within the different Samoan, Cook Island, Tongan, Niuean and other Pacific communities within Counties Manukau.

Tips for Growing Healthy Children

LBD, working through the Well Child action area developed a suite of information booklets with a local flavour to provide simple tips for growing healthy children.

The resource focusses on families with children under five and each sheet provides a different nutrition and activity tip. Collectively the suite aims to: increase breastfeeding rates, with a focus on exclusive breastfeeding in the 0 to 6 month age group; increase the consumption of fruit and vegetables and provide tips that support the supply, preparation, presentation and acceptance of these foods at the appropriate ages; reduce the sugar and fat consumption by providing information on the benefits implications of fatty, sugary and salty foods which contribute to obesity; and increasing physical activity of all family members by focusing on appropriate physical activity for children from birth to 5 years.

All photographs in the resource are of local children, parents and care-givers. A huge thankyou goes out to the many Counties Manukau early childhood education centres and families who made the resource truly reflective of our local community.

Providers can accesss booklets by contacting emailing Yasmien Khan yasmienkhan@middlemore.co.nz. The resource material is available in English and Samoan.

ENHANCE Study

The ENHANCE study, commissioned in 2007 by the Health Research Council of New Zealand in partnership with the Ministry of Health investigated how to improve food security and increase physical activity in Maaori, Pacific and low-income families. It was part of a wider initiative to improve public health and reduce the burden of chronic disease in the population.

Despite New Zealand having an adequate food supply many households struggle to feed their families. This is a particular issue for up to half of Pacific households and up to a third of Maaori households with children. There is also a clear need to increase population levels of physical activity, as approximately one-third of New Zealanders remain inactive.

Key recommendations from the ENHANCE report in relation to food security include considering a Smart Card to subsidise healthy food, ensuring people can access their full benefit entitlements, provision of food in schools, supporting community initiatives such as home and community gardens or farmers markets, teaching cooking and budgeting skills, iwi development around food initiatives, placing greater responsibility on the food industry, and regulating fringe lenders. Recommendations to enhance physical activity include developing capacity of the physical activity workforce, use of tikanga in culturally specific physical activity interventions, improving urban design, and greater use of evaluation and research to identify effective initiatives. Existing physical activity and food security initiatives that are effective should be built on, and the wider use of health impact assessment is encouraged.

Complex issues such as improving food security and increasing physical activity require a range of solutions. Recommendations from the study reflect this, and should be seen as a comprehensive package in which the Government, non-government organisations, the food industry and the community all have a role to play.

Kia ora Aunty

Kia ora Aunty,
How do I know if my whaanau are at risk of diabetes? Can you look at what we eat, what tests we could take, what lifestyle changes we should make? Or does it all happen because it's in the family? I want to know what to do to ensure we as a whaanau do not get diabetes.
Ma te wa

'Aunty Moves In' is a new series on Maori Television that highlight issues from health to life after prison with anything in between. It's a trendy approach to social issues: think a whaanau-styled mix between Super Nanny and Grand Designs.

The series aims to help Maaori families and others overcome real life difficulties with expert guidance. Finding the pathway forward on issues is often difficult and the "Aunties" are there to support, inform and advise on those age-old problems.

One of those facilitators is Richard Cooper, Diabetes Self Management Educator from Counties Manukau.
Richard says that, "our biggest problem is what we eat and how much we eat. If we can eat the right foods with proper portions and add at least 30 minutes activity each day that will make a huge difference in managing ourselves and our whaanau."
Richard says that "the experience on 'Aunty Moves In' and also working with the family and alongside the two lovely aunties Maria and Ata has been a privelege."

"I have enjoyed seeing the changes the family have made especially Bishop, the father. Before he would be drinking alcohol every night, his sugar level was up around 14. Now he has cut back drinking to only on weekends and very little consumption. His sugar levels are now down to 6 – 8 and he looks a lot happier and spends more quality time with his mokopuna."

"The whaanau now make healthier choices in their food. They have also attended our Manurewa Men's Group 'Tu Whatukura' at the Manurewa Marae."

'The Aunty Moves In' series concentrates on affecting positive behaviour change and preventative measures.

10 Myth Busters

A lot of what people think they know about diabetes simple isn't true. Diabetes is a complex condition, and there are conflicting theories on what causes it, how it is diagnosed, and how it is managed. Below is a list of common myths relating to diabetes.

1. Myth: Eating Sugar causes diabetes
Diabetes is caused by a combination of genetic and lifestyle factors, not by eating sugar. However, excess intake of sugar or sweet foods can cause weight gain, which in turn can increase the risk of developing diabetes.

2. Myth: Only older people develop diabetes
Unfortunately, more and more children are developing type 2 diabetes because of today's lifestyle of too much fast food, playing computer games and watching too much TV etc, rather than being active. Also people with a family history of type 2 diabetes are more at risk.

3. Myth: Diabetes education is only for people with bad diabetes
Because you have to make decisions about your diabetes every day it is important that you have the right information right from the start.

4. Myth: You can catch diabetes from someone else
NO. Although we don't know exactly why some people get diabetes, we know that diabetes is not contagious – it can't be caught like a cold or flu. There seems to be some genetic link in diabetes, and environmental factors also play a part.

5. Myth: Type 2 diabetes is mild diabetes
NO. There is no such thing as mild or borderline diabetes. It's like being pregnant; you either are pregnant or not. All types of diabetes are equally serious, and if not properly controlled can lead to serious complications.

6. Myth: People with diabetes eventually go blind
Diabetes is the leading cause of blindness in people of working age. Research has shown that you can reduce your chance of developing complications such as damage to your eyes if you:

- Control your blood pressure and glucose (sugar) levels
- Keep active
- Achieve/ maintain your ideal weight
- Give up smoking.

7. Myth: People with diabetes should not eat foods containing sugar
Not all sugary foods will raise your blood glucose level too much.
Small amounts of added sugar and foods containing sugar can be included as part of a healthy eating pattern, but are best included as part of a low fat, high fibre meal.

A small amount is the equivalent of 1 - 2 teaspoons. An example would be:

- A scraping of regular jam or honey on a slice of wholegrain bread.
- Sugar in savoury foods such as baked beans and tomato sauce.
- A teaspoon of sugar with cooked rolled oats.
- A teaspoon of milo or ovaltine in a cup of low fat milk.

It is important to discuss this with your Dietitian.

8. Myth: People with diabetes must eat special food
A meal pattern for people with diabetes is just the same as that recommended for everyone, ie low in fat, salt and sugar, with meals based on starchy foods like bread pasta, rice, taro, green banana, or cassava. One daily meal should include half a plate of vegetables. Fruit should be limited to 3 – 4 servings a day but spread out during the day. Diabetic versions of sugar-containing foods offer no special benefit.

9. Myth: Bananas are a good snack food
Bananas are a high-energy, high carbohydrate food. Half a small banana is a snack. One large banana is equal to eating 2 slices of bread. Still a medium sized banana can be used as a meal replacement when tempted to rush out the door without a meal.

10. Myth: Sugar free foods are always the best choice
Sugar free does not mean 'carbohydrate' free or that you can eat these freely!
Example: 'Sugar Free' Biscuits/ Chocolates
Sugar free products contain no sugars and their sweetness is usually from artificial sweeteners and or sugar alcohols, e.g sorbitol or xylitol. They may provide smaller amounts of carbohydrate but could still affect blood glucose control. The total fat and calorie content may still be high. 'Regular' products can be suitable and cheaper.

Losing Weight Well

Guidelines for weight loss challenges

Weight loss challenges have become very popular partly because of reality television and some huge prize incentives for the winners. Companies, churches and marae are starting to get into weight loss more and more. Sarah Buzink, CMDHB Dietitian, helps explain how to lose weight well.

Are weight loss challenges a good way to lose weight?

I think these challenges are a good way to help motivate people. Social support is very important in helping people to lose weight and having a group of friends and workmates to encourage each other can be really helpful.

Most challenges are run over a few weeks, especially leading up to summer and have prizes for the person who has lost the most weight. Do you think this is the best way to encourage healthy weight loss?

It is good to have an incentive to help with motivation, however, my concerns are mainly around challenge organisers encouraging and rewarding rapid weight loss. Rapid weight loss can lead people to using extreme measures. This is particularly dangerous for people with diabetes who could have regular hypos (low blood sugars) or fainting even for people without diabetes. Also, not all challenges help participants with weight maintenance after the challenge has finished so stop-start dieting in weight loss challenges could encourage weight cycling. This see-sawing of body weight is not healthy and more likely to lead to more weight gain in the long run.

You mention rapid weight loss as a bad thing – what would you consider as healthy weight loss?

Healthy weight loss is weight loss that someone can maintain and keep off for a long time. If people lose too much weight too quickly it can lead to extreme tiredness, muscle wasting and infections.

A healthy weight loss for most people, even if they are very overweight, is about ½ - 1 kilogram per week. That can mean getting to a healthy weight can take many months or even years. However even small weight losses are beneficial to health (for every 1 kg of weight lost, there is a 16% reduced chance of developing diabetes).[1]

If someone was thinking about joining a weight loss challenge what would you recommend they look for or do to help them manage a healthy weight loss?

First of all check that the challenge doesn't involve losing unrealistic amounts of weight. Monitor your weight and if you are losing more than 1-2 kg per week, slow down, so you stay fit and well. A challenge that looks at percentage body weight is better than total number of kilos lost, because someone who is bigger can afford to lose more than a smaller person.

In order to lose the weight, eat regular meals (e.g. breakfast, lunch and dinner). This helps to speed up the metabolism and ensure the body is getting sufficient nutrients. Include some carbohydrate (bread, rice, potatoes, kumara, taro or green banana) with every meal for sufficient energy and to prevent craving sweet foods.

If you have diabetes do not stop taking your tablets. Check your blood sugars regularly and discuss with your health professional if they are going low.

Eat plenty of vegetables. These have very little calories and can help with keeping you full. Fruit is also a good snack.

Eat plenty of vegetables. These have very little calories and can help with keeping you full. Fruit is also a good snack.

Drink plenty of fluids especially water to help you stop feeling hungry and to replace fluids lost during exercise.

Cut out the junk foods including pies, fizzy drinks, lollies, chocolate bars and takeaways. If you do have them, have smaller amounts as a treat.

Watch your portion sizes particularly of meat. You only need 1 palm sized portion per day of meat, chicken, or fish (and cut of the fat or skin).

[1] Effect of Weight Loss with Lifestyle Intervention on Risk of Diabetes, *Diabetes Care* vol. 29, 2006

Lite Blue Milk Initiative

A collaboration between the Let's Beat Diabetes Programme and two diary giants -Goodman Fielder and Fonterra and the two supermarket chains, Foodstuffs and Progressive, has resulted in raising the profile of lite blue milk in order to make a positive impact on the health of people in Counties Manukau.

The pilot phase of the lite blue milk initiative focuses on the Pacific community and includes interactive presentations, sampling opportunities, taste tests, and a Pacific Church-based competition.

Industry-funded research into consumption, behaviours and attitudes towards milk amongst Pacific, Maaori and South Asian living in Counties Manukau and community consultation feed into the planning process for the lite blue pilot which will run until April 2010.

Counties Manukau District Health Board Dietitian Sarah Buzink says simple and achievable changes in behaviour such as swapping to lite blue milk are important steps to help people who have Type 2 Diabetes or other obesity related problems.

Counties Manukau has the highest rate of Type 2 Diabetes in New Zealand – a condition often driven by obesity.

"Most people are unaware that if they swap from standard milk to lite blue for a year that person could reduce their fat intake by almost one and a half kilos of fat from their diet," says Ms Buzink.

South Asian Community Networks Growing in Manukau

Guru Nanak Community Gardens developed at Sikh Temple

Indian youth and Sikh elders are finding a common bond working together at the Nanaksar Thath Isher Darbar Sikh Temple in Manurewa.

More than fifty members of the local Sikh community have begun to grow edible plants as part of a Guru Nanak community garden on the site. Vegetable beds have been planted with salads, beans, tomatoes, peppers, corn, eggplant, coriander, chilies and bitter gourd (the diabetes support plant).

As well as sharing garden skills, ideas and produce, the community garden is proving to be a catalyst for change with members now talking about and implementing gardens in their own homes.

The gardens are a joint activity between the Anand Isher Educational and Community Trust and the Let's Beat Diabetes Programme as part of the Counties Manukau-wide Gardening for Health and Sustainability initiative.

For more information on the Guru Nanak Community Gardens please contact Rajvinder Singh 09 2689539 rajanaksar@yahoo.co.nz

Hamari Vikash Project - Hindu Elders Foundation

Four groups from the Hindu Elders Foundation have begun vegetable gardening as part of a five-day-a-week healthy activity programme.

The Mangere-based Hamari Vikash Project is part of an action plan agreed by older-aged members of the Foundation to improve the health and wellbeing of people in their senior years by increasing their physical activity, camaraderie and sense of purpose.

The Elders have already purchased the gardening materials and plants, turned over the soil and planted legumes, salad vegetable, root crops and cucurbits with crops set to flourish amongst a mass of marigolds and zinnias.

The Hindu Elders Foundation is a division of the Hindu Council of New Zealand.

For more information on the Hindu Elders' Hamari Vikash Project please contact Pravin Patel, 09 275 1003 or 021 164 6468 papaps@gmail.com

ISSO SEVA Gardens Swaminarayan Temple

A new health initiative has begun for temple devotees at the Swaminarayan Temple in Papatoetoe.

At least 20 Indian families who live in the vicinity of the temple have committed to starting an Indian food garden on vacant land adjacent to the Temple complex. Many participants are new to food gardening but now wait in anticipation for their crops of eggplant, coriander and bitter gourd.

Traditional Indian plants, such as sacred basil and colourful companion flowers, feature in the garden and harvested food is shared and made available for the weekly Sunday temple meal.

The shared gardens have been named ISSO SEVA Gardens and feature a four-block design is planned with a central feature of medicinal and culinary herbs.

For more information about the ISSO SEVA Gardens please contact Bipin Thakkar, 027 622315 bipin@ethc.co.nz

Fund Catalyst for School and Community Focus

An outdoor classroom, bordered by raised vegetable gardens and the regeneration of an orchard in the distance are all part of a big dream which began at Onewhero School this year.

The rural area school, over the river and up the hill from Tuakau, has been looking at ways of establishing a point of difference in the community. According to Darren Mann, Assistant Principal, a $2000 nutrition grant received through the Let's Beat Diabetes Programme in June 2009 spurred the action for a new school-wide focus on healthy living which has attracted the attention of locals.

The grant went into establishing four raised vegetable beds for Year 7 and 8 pupils. The structures have been made out of donated Macrocarpa from the community and designed and built by Year 11 Technology students. Local families and businesses have also pitched in with seed trays, coconut fibre, compost and cash.

The healthy living focus starting with growing fruit and vegetables has coincided with the school working towards becoming a zero-waste Enviroschool. Yanni Zwarts, Technology teacher is very excited by the opportunities to build a sustainable healthy school. He has designed a purpose-built propagation unit and is happy to share his plans with other schools looking to do similar things. His students in Year 11 students have moved on to building large picnic tables for the outdoor classroom while earning credits for the unit standards in garden furniture.

Year 7 students show off their worm farms made with reused ice-cream containers

BreastfeedingNZ on Twitter, Facebook and Bebo

BreastfeedingNZ is now live on Facebook, Twitter and Bebo to share videos and photos and breastfeeding tips with mums and families across the globe. The interactive social media sites are part of the phase two roll out of the National Breastfeeding Promotion Campaign.

The new campaign uses a mix of one-way communications in the form of print, radio and bus shelter and mall advertisements and two-way interactive social media sites to increase public acceptance and discussion of breastfeeding and to encourage communities to support and facilitate breastfeeding wherever appropriate and possible.

Daily 'Best for baby' and 'Mamma knows' five-minute weekly programme will run on MaiFM and Niu FM respectively. More FM Network will run breastfeeding adlibs, and will also have information about breastfeeding on its website.

Breastfeeding helps lay the foundations of a healthy life for a baby and also makes a positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of mothers.

More information on breastfeeding can be found at www.breastfeedingnz.org.nz or by contacting your local health provider.

SUPERMARKET DEMOS

5+ A Day™ Fruit and Vegetable mascot Fredge will be making a surprise visit in Manukau Pak 'n' Save stores as part of the joint Let's Beat Diabetes and 5+ A Day in-store cooking demonstrations.

The fourth and summer phase of the demonstration series is planned for late November to coincide with Pak 'n' Save's national yearly Fruit and Vegetable week and 5+ A Day Fruit and Vegetable Month.

This follows earlier phases where community groups were trained and demonstrated autumn school lunch wraps, hot winter soups and spring fruit smoothies through the stores.

Feedback from Maaori and Pacific families from previous demonstrations showed that that families were not so interested in changing traditional recipes – but they were very keen on learning and trying something new. Simple seasonal recipes cards are given out to supermarket shoppers and have enabled families to try the foods at home.

They have also been a great success at challenging some of the perceived 'cost' stereotypes around healthier foods as the recipe cards provide a shopping list of the ingredients with price guides- showing shoppers the approximate cost of each serving – enabling families to gauge the actual cost of feeding the whole family healthy food.

The intention of the pilot was to show shoppers how to incorporate fruit and vegetables into their every day diet by demonstrating cost effective and nutritious meals in a supermarket setting.

The pilot also assesses practicalities and effectiveness of community engagement with their local supermarket in order to develop a sustainable community engagement model. At the end of the pilot programme practical guidelines will be put together for community groups' future use.

Positive flow-on effects are already being seen through the community and the food industry. For community additional opportunities to demonstrate at local events and at other venues are already opening up to some of the demonstrators.

The healthy recipes have been shared with families, churches, school groups and other health professionals. Recipes are also available on www.letsbeatdiabetes.org.nz.

Eat Less Added Sugar

The American Heart Association has recommended that people eat less added sugar. This is the first time that specific recommendations have been made about the amount of sugar that can be eaten in a healthy diet.

The Association says that women should not eat more than six teaspoons (100 calories) of added sugar per day and most men should limit extra sugar intake to nine teaspoons (150 calories). This includes sugar and sugar syrups added in the cooking or manufacture of foods and drinks or added at the table.

According to the Heart Association sugar is an 'empty-calorie food' because it contains calories without any other nutritional value to the human body.

Over the last 30 years people have been increasing the number of calories eaten by an average of 150 to 300 calories per day. This means they are taking more energy into their bodies, and the great majority of those people are not using up that energy with regular increased levels of exercise. The extra energy is stored in the body as fat.

Eating too much sugar can lead to being overweight or obese which is a key factor in diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke. Researchers say that approximately half of the extra calories we are consuming come from sugar-sweetened drinks.

One can of fizzy drink a day is enough sugar to put a woman way over the recommended limit (one can of fizzy contains eight or nine teaspoons of sugar, about 130 calories).

For information about Type 2 Diabetes and the Let's Beat Diabetes Programme contact:
Megan Fowlie, Communications Manager, Let's Beat Diabetes Programme
(09) 262 9563 or go to www.letsbeatdiabetes.org.nz