

HAUORA MANAWA HEART HEALTH

The Community Heart Study

August 2009

CHRISTCHURCH

Issue 3

Study Update – Suzanne Pitama

Kia Ora Koutou,

I am hoping that this newsletter finds you well and not exposed to the swine flu! The only bonus I can think of being quarantined is the opportunity to catch up with the Oprah Show (not everyone's cup of tea I know!). We are still trying to follow up with some participants who have yet to go to their GP based on our screening clinics. If there is an

issue with you getting to your GP, or you are still having difficulty finding a GP please ring us and we will assist you. This month we have a focus on high blood pressure (hypertension), I hope you enjoy this issue, and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have an idea or story that you would like us to include in the newsletter. Stay warm!

Did you know... Early analysis of the information collected at our Heart Clinics suggest that:

In the Wairoa cohort 25% of participants had been previously diagnosed with hypertension, or high blood pressure. From the readings taken at clinic, we found that an extra 23% of participants had blood pressure readings that would suggest they were hypertensive.

In the Christchurch Maori cohort, 22% had been previously diagnosed with hypertension, with an extra 12% showing hypertensive readings on Clinic day.

In the Christchurch non-Maori cohort, 15% of participants had been previously diagnosed with hypertension, with an extra 5% returning high blood pressure readings at clinic.

This means that out of a group of 20 participants in Wairoa, about 4 may have been unaware that they had hypertension, compared to 2 participants in the Christchurch Maori, and 1 participant in the Christchurch non Maori cohorts.

In The News

Hypertension (high blood pressure) is a major risk factor for heart disease, the "number 1" cause of death in Aotearoa. It is estimated that approximately 25 % of the world population lives with hypertension.

Blood pressure is a measurement of the force exerted on arterial walls as blood is pumped from the heart. This is recorded as a ratio of two numbers: systolic blood pressure is the maximum pressure exerted when the heart is pumping, and diastolic blood pressure is the lowest



pressure which occurs between each heart beat.

Blood pressure can be lowered and maintained at an acceptable level through a healthier lifestyle, diet and exercise, but in many cases medication may be

By Vicky Cameron

required.

Most people who develop hypertension do not have any symptoms at all but some symptoms of hypertension can include nose bleeds, dizziness, head-aches, blurry vision, and shortness of breath. However, although a person with hypertension may not feel sick, if left untreated, the condition could be causing major damage to their internal organs. This is why it is important to have your blood pressure tested regularly.

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Healthy Heart

Blood
Pressure

A diagnosis of hypertension may come as a shock, but the good news is that in many cases it can be effectively controlled by some simple changes to lifestyle and diet.

Here are a few tips that can help you maintain a healthy blood pressure:

* **Get moving!** Add a little extra activity into your daily routine. Try walking the kids to school each day or park your car a little further away from where you need to go. Just 30 minutes extra walking each day can really make a big difference.

* **Reduce your salt intake** – try to cut out or restrict the amount of pre-packaged meals and snacks you eat, as these are usually high in salt.

* **Stop smoking**, don't over indulge in alcohol, and reduce your weight if you're overweight.

* **Relax!** Constant exposure to stress can increase your blood pressure. Practice ways to calm yourself down, and make sure you learn to take time out for yourself each day.

Heart to Heart with **Timothy Mason** of Parklands



Everyone who has participated in our study was randomly selected from the electoral roll and we were required to contact each person to get a definite "yes" or "no". As many people didn't respond to our initial invitation, we had to step up our contacting efforts from letters to phone calls and then finally to house visits! So it came as no surprise that when asked why he decided to be part of our study, Timothy Mason jokingly replied: "to get you lot off my back!" He also felt that as he was "approaching middle age it was time to get the heart checked, as everyone should".

If you have shopped at

Couplands Bakeries in New Brighton you will no doubt have met the friendly 50 yr old, where he works as the Assistant Manager. Though work keeps him busy, Tim also enjoys "the quiet life" and spends his spare time with family, listening to music and cooking.

Since attending the Heart Clinic Tim is learning to take better care of himself. This includes "eating a lot better, not stressing out too much and getting a good lot of exercise". Tim says that being involved in the study has been "an all round great experience [that] has made me more aware of my heart health".

Kai Ora Heart Food



While a small amount of salt is required in our daily diets, many of us are probably getting a lot more than we need. If you have high blood pressure, reducing your salt intake will be one of the first things your doctor recommends. Because salt is a flavour booster, getting used to eating low or no salt meals can be difficult. This month, we've found a great recipe for low salt food seasoning, that will help add flavour to your food while your taste buds adjust to having less salt. Use the seasoning when cooking meat, fish, veges, stews, or leave it in a shaker on the table to be used individually. It's fantastic with mashed potatoes!

Low Salt Seasoning

*Combine all ingredients in a small jar with a shaker top. Start with the following amounts then adjust the ingredients to your own tastes

- 1 Tablespoon Onion Powder
- 1 Tablespoon Garlic Powder
- 1 Tablespoon Paprika
- 1 Tablespoon Ground Mustard Powder
- 1 teaspoon dried Thyme (optional)
- ½ teaspoon black Pepper
- ½ teaspoon salt, onion salt **or** celery salt*

*For a No salt seasoning, replace salt with celery seeds.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

QUENTIN FOUNG, of Halswell who has won \$120 worth of New World vouchers!

WIN

This issue we have another **\$120 grocery voucher** to give away. As always, anyone who submits a question, comment or updates their contact details can enter. Please be sure to mention that you want your name placed in the draw. We will also give a **\$20 Voucher** for any recipe featured in Kai Ora.

You can send emails to:

miriam.esteves@otago.ac.nz

Or you can post letters to the address listed under Contact Us.

Contact Us

Have you moved or changed your phone number recently? It is important that we have your current contact details so please let us know of any changes by calling or dropping us a line:

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