

# HAUORA MANAWA HEART HEALTH

*The Community Heart Study*

Christmas 2010

Issue 11

## Merry Christmas

### Kia Ora

This year has been an interesting one. For those living in Christchurch it has been filled with the drama of having earthquakes so frequently that the majority of us are now incredibly accurate at estimating the size of each aftershock as it happens. It's a talent many of us would rather do without, so hopefully the shakes will continue to get smaller, fewer and farther between. For those in Wairoa the websites and news broadcasts about the gang conflict in the town has raised its profile both nationally and internationally. We hope that in the New Year the outstanding sporting and cultural achievements of the Wairoa community becomes as well documented.

I love December, mainly because as the weather warms up, people seem happier and it also means Christmas is coming very very soon. As kids Christmas was always a special time to get together as whanau, to enjoy good food but more importantly good company.

However even though I am a lot older now - Christmas seems to still hold that same magic. The magic of being in the Wairoa district includes the smell of paua fritters and crayfish on the BBQ. The scent of pine trees on the Opoutama straight and the warm ocean waters. In Christchurch the magic includes an ice-cream at Sumner beach, the salty air at Rapaki or going to Christmas in the Park at Hagley. –Suzanne Pitama

**On behalf of the Hauora Manawa team we wish you the best over the festive season - and hope that the magic of the season brings laughter and joy to your whanau.**

### Heart to Heart... with Lesley Armstrong

Recently we caught up with Lesley Armstrong, who featured in our very first newsletter. Lesley has been participating in our "Biggest Loser" challenge at MIHI, so at the final weigh in, we took the opportunity to have a chat.

When we last interviewed Lesley, she had joined the gym but she says that after a while she gave that up... the gym but not the exercise! She now exercises 4 times a week by taking long walks with a walking buddy. She says that while she hasn't lost a lot of weight she is noticing that she feels better and her clothes fit her much better too, which helps to keep her motivated. Lesley says that it helps that she has the support of her husband Ray who encourages her to make good food choices.

Lesley comes from a family where she is one of 5 siblings. She says she struggled with weight as she grew up because she was always bigger than her sisters. Her dad used to tell her "don't worry about your size you've got the personality" but she admits that it was still hard growing up and being called names. She says she always joked about her size to cover up



*Lesley Armstrong, Christchurch*

her embarrassment.

Now that she is losing weight and getting fitter she says she feels a lot happier and this is helping her to stick to her goals.

While she admits that she still struggles occasionally with diet choices, the lifestyle change that Lesley is most proud of making and keeping was to quit smoking. She says that before the heart study she smoked in times of stress but even with the stresses of work and the recent earthquakes, she has not even thought about having a cigarette. "Those days have gone, now I'm always conscious of trying to make good choices and I'm feeling really good".

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Even though we are nearing the end of the clinical part of the study, we'd still like to keep you up to date with our findings. Please let us know if you've changed address or need to update your contact details

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If you'd like a question answered in the newsletter or have a healthy recipe, success story or photo you'd like to share, please email these to:  
[clara-ann.paul@otago.ac.nz](mailto:clara-ann.paul@otago.ac.nz)

**Congratulations** to Miriam our news editor who will be studying nursing in 2011 .

Kia kaha e hoa!





Vicky Cameron

## In The News

Many of our participants have told us they suffer from gout or know members of their family who suffer from gout. Gout, historically known as “the disease of kings” because it was associated with eating rich foods, is a complex form of arthritis characterised by sudden, severe attacks of pain, redness and tenderness in the joints. What are the causes of gout, how is it related to heart disease and how is it treated?



Allamanda Faatoese

Gout often comes on suddenly and an acute attack can wake you up in the middle of the night feeling like your joints are on fire.

Gout is caused by high levels of uric acid in the blood, a substance found naturally in your body from the breakdown of certain foods (such as meats especially from the internal organs, some seafood, asparagus and mushrooms). If the levels of uric acid reach saturation they form urate crystals in the joints. These crystals are attacked by the body's immune system leading to inflammation and severe pain.

If untreated, urate crystals continue to grow and start forming nodules under the skin (called tophi); this can lead onto bone deformation and permanent damage. There is increasing evidence that high levels of uric acid in the blood also slightly increase the risk of heart disease. This is why the blood work for our participants on the study has included testing

for Urate.

Fortunately, gout is treatable, and there are ways to reduce the risk that gout will recur. Medications prescribed by your doctor can treat acute gout attacks and prevent future attacks. Medications are the most proven, effective way to treat gout symptoms. However, making certain changes to your diet can also help. During an attack of gout follow these guidelines:

**Drink** 8 to 16 cups (about 2 to 4 liters) of fluid each day, including at least half water.

**Avoid** alcohol.

**Eat** a moderate amount of protein, preferably from healthy sources, such as low-fat or fat-free dairy, tofu, eggs, and nut butters.

**Limit** your daily intake of meat, fish and poultry to 4 to 6 ounces (114 to 170 grams).

**Lose weight** if you are overweight, this may decrease uric acid levels in your body.

### Our Biggest Loser Challenge

As you may know we were so inspired by the fantastic changes many of you have made in the last 2 years that we decided to run a “biggest loser” style challenge at work! In 25 weeks, we lost a grand total of 28.8 kg! The overall winner's were Jane who lost 4.3 % body fat and Miriam who lost 8.1% body weight

### Tabouli

This is a lovely side dish that is light and fresh. It would look gorgeous sitting on a summer time Christmas table.



- ¾ cup dried cracked wheat (bourghul)
- 3 cups water
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 tomatoes
- ½ cup finely chopped mint
- 1 ½ cups chopped parsley
- 3 level teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 level teaspoon chopped garlic
- Salt and pepper to taste

Place cracked wheat and water in a medium sized mixing bowl. Allow to stand for 1 hour, stirring occasionally. Drain well, place into a large mixing bowl. Cut tomatoes in half and using a dessertspoon scoop out seeds and discard. Cut tomato shells into small chunks, add to bowl. Add parsley and mint; add to bowl with lemon juice, onion and garlic. Salt and pepper to taste then mix well and keep refrigerated until serving.

### Strawberry Jelly Cake

This dessert is simple, delicious and pretty! It's the perfect Christmas treat.

- |                                  |                               |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Small Sponge Cake</b>         | ½ C <b>Orange Juice</b>       |
| ¼ C <b>boiling Water</b>         | ½ C <b>strawberry topping</b> |
| 10 gram <b>gelatine</b>          | ½ tsp <b>vanilla essence</b>  |
| 1 C <b>evaporated light milk</b> | 1 <b>punnet strawberries</b>  |

**For top layer:**

- 2pkts **low joule strawberry jelly crystals**
- 1 C **boiling water and 1 C cold water**

Add boiling water to jelly crystals and stir until dissolved. Add cold water and mix well then refrigerate. Cut up sponge cake into chunks and arrange evenly over the base of a small serving dish. Carefully spoon orange juice over sponge. In a large mixing bowl, add milk and essence, and whip with electric beater until thick (about 2 mins). Dissolve gelatine powder into topping and mix well. Blend topping mix with whipped milk, beat until well combined. Pour over top of sponge and refrigerate until set.

Once the base has set, hull and slice strawberries, then place them over the base. Once the Jelly has just started to set, pour over top of the cake and strawberries and return to the refrigerator to set. Serve chilled with more fresh strawberries and vanilla ice-cream.