

# HAUORA MANAWA HEART HEALTH

The Community Heart Study

December 2013

Issue 20

## Study Update – Suzanne Pitama



Kia ora Koutou,

As I write this newsletter to you, it is hard to believe that it will be Christmas in three weeks, it is nice to see all the trees finally regain their leaves and the bitter southern wind here in Te Waipounamu have less of a bite! Health research is only able to proceed in New Zealand if people are prepared to be part of the various investigations and lines of enquiry that are proposed by science. This year marks the Hauora Manawa's sixth year of involvement with the Wairoa community and five years with our Christchurch community, and we are so grateful that as participants and stakeholders you have not only continued to support this research but also been actively engaged in sharing your stories of your journey with us. 2014 will be the last year of our project, in which we hope to be able to share with you more specific findings that we have found through your generous time and information sharing (including having lots of blood tests and being weighed). For those of you who have yet to complete your fifth year follow up with us please email Karen Tikao-Mason or ring us on the 0800 number as soon as you can, we are keen to have you still be involved and can work around you to ensure you can participate (we are happy to meet you in a place suitable to you or to meet you outside of usual work hours) especially before Christmas. We are also keen for you to have the final benefits of having us give you a summary with your baseline, second year follow up and fifth year follow up data. This summary will assist you to monitor your cardio-vascular health and well-being into the future. I look forward to returning back home to the Wairoa district for Christmas and New Years and if any Christchurch participants are also going to be in the area – please stop in and enjoy the great food and hospitality of the East Coast (not to mention great beaches). For those from the Wairoa district heading to Christchurch we have a lot of funky new things opening now (including great restaurants) and invite you to come and enjoy our 'post-quake Christchurch'. On behalf of our team we want to wish you the best for the remainder of the year, and hope your Christmas is a happy and safe one.

- 1) Study Update
- 2) In the News
- 3) Heart to Heart
- 4) Great Recipes

**We would like to keep you all up to date with our findings from the study.**

**So if you need to update your details including email address please contact us:**

Hauora Manawa  
The Community Heart Study  
Maori Indigenous Health Institute  
University of Otago,  
Christchurch  
PO Box 4345  
Christchurch

**Free Phone:**  
0800 HAUORA  
(0800 428672)

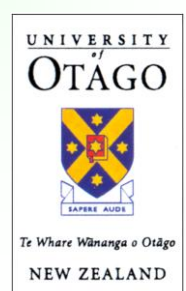
please email these to:  
[clara-ann.paul@otago.ac.nz](mailto:clara-ann.paul@otago.ac.nz)  
or  
[karen.tikaomason@otago.ac.nz](mailto:karen.tikaomason@otago.ac.nz)



## The Best Gift to give yourself this Christmas -Good Health and Wellbeing-

...When you start to believe in yourself & acknowledge what you're capable of you will tap into your true potential. Forget the stories & excuses; instead believe in what you can achieve. Grab the opportunity to be healthy with both hands & make today the start of your new journey to live a healthy life.

Set realistic goals on what you can expect to achieve  
Take responsibility for your actions and what you eat  
Know that being overweight is harder than being healthy  
No one is perfect so don't try to be, one step at a time  
Enjoy and be happy





# In The News...

## Sweet Tooth or Sweet Poison?

As a child I (Suzanne) had a very sweet tooth, chocolate was not safe around me. This was often met with conversations about risk to teeth decay and as I got older was related to my 'new' risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Because I work in health I have seen the devastating impact of diabetes, chronic kidney disease and of course cardiovascular disease; however in recent readings I have realised that actually having a sweet tooth...has put me at risk to a lot more. So I wanted to share with you some of my new found 'knowledge'.

Within health, the consistent message to the public has been – please reduce your sugar intake so you are not at risk for diabetes. However, research has highlighted a couple of other key risks associated with sugar, those being:

1. That sugar reduces your body's ability to control your appetite (hence causing issues that lead to obesity).
2. That sugar also contributes to cholesterol levels.

So what does this mean for you, as someone who is trying to keep their cardiovascular risk low?

Firstly that in an attempt to entice us to eat more by the food industry, more sugar has been added to what we eat. Did you know that in 1970 in Britain, sugar consumption was about 4 lbs per person per year, but by the year 2000 in the USA people consumed up to 73 lbs per year. This has occurred through the food industry adding more fructose and sucrose (fructose and glucose) into most of our basic foods (including bread, cereals, sauces etc). Hence sugar has in many ways to becoming invisible to us.

So, when we eat more sugar the following happens.

- The amount of sugar in our system reduces our body's ability to produce insulin and leptin – both of these hormones control our appetite. So in effect, the sugar turns 'off' our switch that tells us we are full. So we keep feeling like we are hungry. When we reduce our sugar, by opting out of certain foods, changing to no sugar options and/or starting to eat different foods you will within a week or two notice feeling significantly fuller, quicker. Not because your stomach has shrunk, but because the hormones are telling your brain that it's had enough. One of our local staff has lost 10kgs alone from just removing the sugar in her diet!
- Not reducing sugar from your diet results permanently elevated blood sugar level, which puts you at a greater risk of developing diabetes, and for the diabetes to progress faster. Some research also highlights that when woman reduce their sugar intake it reduces the more severe symptoms of menopause.

- That elevated blood sugar levels suppress the body's immune response (so make you more susceptible to getting and staying sick).
- Did you know that when we consume fructose sugar it immediately changes to circulating fatty acids in our blood triglycerides. Fructose also effects sustained increases in LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol levels, which can lead to increased risk of heart disease and stroke.
- That sugar is addictive, so your body actually craves it even when you don't need it.

So how might you begin to reduce (or actually get rid of) sugar in your diet?

How about the following tips:

1. Do your research on the internet there are some great sites that can kick start your new 'sugar free' way of living.
2. When shopping, check the labels on the food – you are specifically looking for any type of sugar (cane, raw etc), but also fructose and sucrose (glucose is ok). Be aware that honey, maple syrup, malt, corn syrup etc is fructose so reduction or not using it is necessary to withdraw from sugar.
3. Look for alternatives (did you know there are some Leggos pasta sauces that are sugar free?), especially with breads, cereals etc.
4. Be prepared for withdrawal symptoms including low mood and headaches (do you know you get the same withdrawal symptoms from sugar as you do from opioids!! Crazy).
5. Don't see it as a 'punishment' not to eat sugar, view it instead of moving away from 'sweet poison' and increasing your overall health and well-being.

With the upcoming festive period approaching, this might seem like bad timing...but is it? Or is it an opportunity to set goals for the festive period to not only change the way we think about what should be on the Christmas table, so we can actively work to decrease our cardiovascular risk for 2014. I let you ponder that...

Check these out - very interesting and great recipes

[Sugar: The Bitter Truth - YouTube](#)

[Sweet poison transcript - Sunday Night - Channel 7 - Yahoo!7 TV ...](#)

<http://www.symplytoogood.com.au/>

<http://www.nzsugarfree.co.nz/>

## Heart to Heart.....with Cate Grace

..this study was one of my catalysts for change..



Recently I (Clara-Ann) was talking with one of our Heart Study participant's Cate Grace about catching up for our 5<sup>th</sup> year follow-up, she shared with me her remarkable journey that I found so inspiring I asked Cate if we could share her personal story with you all. This is her journey....

Cate is 40 years old, wife to Riwai and Founder and Managing Director of categrace.com and Leap Fitness & Motivation Ltd, who enjoys inspiring and empowering people, reading biographies, exploring new teas and ciders, travelling, noticing small things, sunshine and sunsets, discovering new healthy recipes, listening to peoples good news, researching holistic health and human movement.

*My decision to become involved in the Heart Study was an easy one, my Mum has high blood pressure and my maternal Nana had cardiac arrhythmia and high blood pressure, she had also had a stroke in 2001. I participated in the Heart Study to ensure I was keeping on track as I was heading into my middle years. I also hoped that this five year research would help others manage their risks and ultimately in some way save someone's life.*

*The experience of attending the Heart Clinic was daunting, **until** I stepped out of the lift and felt welcomed and at ease. The staff were so friendly, supportive and helpful. I was super impressed with how they kept in touch with us all even when they lost their original offices in the Chch 2011 earthquakes.*

*At my first Heart Study visit in 2008 I was deemed obese, was poorly managing my health conditions including arthritis, asthma and endometriosis. Five years on and it has been an amazing and fairy tale journey. I have gone from a size 24 to curvy size 16 and have learnt about my inside health along the way. I embrace my curves and crutches (due to rheumatoid arthritis). I have learnt so much about my body and have worked towards keeping healthy, fit, strong and toned. I have discovered how to manage life and am now living a balanced and fulfilling life. I now positively manage my own health and wellness and life is fabulous! In 2010 I founded my own wellness business, Leap Fitness and Motivation Ltd. We offer a holistic approach to lifestyle, exercise, appreciation and positivity and inspire people who have experienced a health challenge or have experienced trauma, to work towards a positive model of self-managing their health and wellness. In 2012, I was fit enough to take part in Outward Bound. Earlier this year I launched my second business, categrace.com a blog and speaking company, where I am blessed to be able to share my story around the world on managing your wellness in a positive way. In September this year I was offered the ultimate prize to share the stage in London as one of '10 Global Personal Trainers to Watch'. From over 1500 personal trainers in 43 countries I was chosen to compete and it was life changing. I returned home and was also named Catch Fitness NZ Personal Trainer of 2013.*

*It has truly been a most remarkable ride, however I believe the heart study was one of my catalysts for change, it helped me see the truth about where I was heading if I didn't do something about my health and now I pay it forward and I cannot thank the study enough for unlocking this gift for me and my clients. It has been a truly remarkable and life changing experience.*

Cate xx  
Categrace.com  
[cate@leap2it.co.nz](mailto:cate@leap2it.co.nz)

Cate was also featured in the latest December NEXT magazine – she is a wonderful, inspirational woman, thank you for sharing your story with all of our Heart Study participants.

## STRAWBERRY RICOTTA PIE — SERVES 12

**PASTRY:** ¼ cup plain flour  
¼ cup self-raising flour  
1 tablespoon white sugar  
1 tablespoon (30g) Flora® Light margarine melted  
1 egg white  
a little extra plain flour for rolling  
cooking spray

**FILLING:** baking paper  
250g punnet medium sized strawberries  
1 x 9g sachet strawberry Jelly Lite™  
1 tablespoon gelatine  
¼ cup boiling hot water  
500g light ricotta cheese  
250g low-fat cottage cheese  
2 x 175g tubs strawberry yoghurt (Yoplait-lite)  
1 teaspoon vanilla essence  
½ cup white sugar

Preheat oven 180°C fan forced.

**Step 1:** Pastry: Sift flours into a medium size mixing bowl, add sugar and combine.

**Step 2:** Combine melted margarine with egg white then add to bowl. Mix together using a wooden spoon, then knead ingredients using your hands.

**Step 3:** Place pastry onto a well-floured surface and sprinkle flour on top, then roll out to fit in the base of a 22cm springform cake tin that has been coated with cooking spray.

**Step 4:** Lift pastry into cake tin by rolling pastry over rolling pin. Press pastry out to reach edges so there are no gaps. Pastry only goes on base not up the sides of the tin. Bake for 10 minutes then leave to cool.

**Step 5:** Filling: Cut baking paper to fit around the inside wall of cake tin.

**Step 6:** Hull and cut each strawberry into slices and place the centre slices (largest) around edge of tin that has been lined with the baking paper.

**Step 7:** Dice remaining strawberries for filling.

**Step 8:** Dissolve jelly crystals and gelatine in boiling water. If needed, place in microwave for 10 seconds to help dissolve gelatine. Stir well.

**Step 9:** In a food processor, blend ricotta and cottage cheese until smooth. Add yoghurt and vanilla essence, blend for a few seconds. Gradually add sugar and blend until dissolved.

**Step 10:** Pour jelly mix slowly into filling and blend well. Remove blade then stir in chopped strawberries. Gently pour filling into centre of cake tin, making sure the strawberry slices on the edge don't fall out. Refrigerate for a few hours until set. Suitable to be frozen for 2-3 weeks.



## Ham and Corn Slice

3 whole eggs  
2 eggs whites  
½ cup skim milk  
1 teaspoon crushed garlic (in jar)  
¾ cup frozen corn kernels  
¾ cup canned creamed corn  
½ cup 25% reduced-fat tasty cheese grated  
¾ cup zucchini grated  
¾ cup sweet potatoes grated  
½ cup shallots sliced  
¾ cup (70g) 97% fat-free ham diced  
2 teaspoons salt-reduced vegetable stock powder  
¼ teaspoon pepper  
¾ cup self-raising flour  
Cooking spray  
2 tablespoons finely grated parmesan cheese.  
6 cherry or grape tomatoes cut in half.  
(recipes taken from Simply too good to be true)



Preheat oven 180°C fan forced.

In a large mixing bowl, beat eggs and egg whites together using an electric beater. Add milk and beat 30 seconds.

Add all the ingredients except flour, tomatoes, and parmesan cheese. Fold in flour, mixing together well.

Pour into a quiche or pie plate that has been coated with cooking spray. Spread evenly then top with halved tomatoes around edge.

Sprinkle parmesan cheese over top then bake 55-60 minutes or until browned and firm to touch in centre. Leave to rest for 5 minutes before serving. Serve hot or cold. Variations: Replace ham with 1 cup diced cooked skinless chicken breast or omit ham and replace with ¾ cup Diced red capsicum or celery for a vegetarian version.