

Kai Lelei programme

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Counties Manukau District Health Board has developed a community education programme which will seek to educate South Auckland's Pacific population on the far-reaching benefits of healthy food choices and healthy lifestyles.

Kai Lelei means 'good food' or to 'eat well'. General Manager of Pacific Health Fepulea'i Margie Apa says the Kai Lelei programme is about encouraging people to make better food choices through community nutrition workshops. "We are trying to change the concept of what a 'Kai Lelei' is, to include healthier food choices or healthier alternatives in both our homes and at celebrations and feasts," she says.

While Kai Lelei is part of the LotuMoui health programme working with 50 Pacific churches, the programme also fits into the wider Let's Beat Diabetes strategy, which aims to combat the growing diabetes epidemic in the Counties Manukau region.

Kai Lelei is already showing signs of success. Three hundred people have attended the five community workshops run so far – an indication of the commitment from the Pacific community to make better informed decisions about their lifestyle. There are seven community nutrition workshops in total; six ethnic-specific and one delivered in English. The workshops are free and anyone can attend the remaining workshops that run until June this year.

The workshops provide information about healthier eating choices to the community, in ways that are practical and specific to Pacific lifestyles. All participants receive a curriculum outlining information covered in the workshop that has been developed by expert Pacific nutritionists and clinicians including those from Pacific Islands Heartbeat, Auckland Regional Public Health Service, New Zealand Food and Safety Authority and Counties Manukau District Health Board.

It's hoped the workshops will lay the Foundations for better health in the community. "Many health conditions can be improved by eating a well-balanced and healthier diet. "Diabetes is one illness that responds especially well to improvements in diet

and physical activity. Changing eating habits, and making swaps to healthier alternatives, is the first step on the road to better health” says Mrs Apa.

CMDHB is in the process of finalising a number of resources to support the community workshops. A nutrition toolkit for all LotuMoui Churches will include information on food safety, how to develop a nutrition policy for churches, information on the four food groups, recommended daily servings and the nutritional content of foods. CMDHB is developing interactive resources for Sunday Schools to teach children about nutrition.

A Recipe Book is also being devised in partnership with the Auckland Regional Public Health Service, which will focus on recipes that cater for large families.

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