

Media Release

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Funding a healthier future

Bay of Plenty mums are learning how to make healthier meals for their families at cooking classes being held at the Merivale Community Centre.

“With three kids meal times can be really full on. I want to find out how to make healthier meals quickly,” says Tiria Maunder.

The cooking classes are run by Bay of Plenty District Health Board community educator and chef Stephen Cameron who says that people in the Merivale community want to make positive changes and move away from takeaway food.

“The aim of the cooking course is to show the mums that healthy choices can be cost effective by using less meat and more vegetables,” says Stephen. “It’s also about helping them understand the value of eating healthily and how to cook quick healthy meals for their kids.”

Stephen demonstrates how to cook a simple stir fry, explaining the nutritional value of all the ingredients as he goes along. The mums then get some hands-on time to make their own.

“We talk about the difference between good and bad fat. Fat equals flavour but it’s healthier to cut the fat off the meat and add in some sesame oil which is really flavoursome,” says Stephen.

Mum of three Tiria explains that when she was growing up their meals were mainly based on meat and potatoes.

“With six sisters we had to make do but we always ate big meals, sometimes a roast dinner. I learnt from my parents and follow what they did.”

Advice given to the mums is simple and practical to help them make changes to their everyday lives.

“Many people don’t realise that frozen vegetables are just as good as fresh, sometimes even better because they are frozen on the day they are harvested which locks in all their goodness,” says Stephen.

While the mums are cooking, their kids are burning energy next door in the after-school programme.

“Some of the older kids come through and help with the cooking,” says Stephen. “We then all sit down together to eat a healthy meal.”

The community cooking classes are funded by the BOPDHB as part of the Ministry of Health’s Healthy Eating Healthy action (HEHA) campaign. Community groups, health organisations and Hauora throughout the BOP wishing to improve nutrition and physical activity can request the support of the HEHA community educator. For more information contact Stephen Cameron on 07 579 8285 or visit the website www.bopdhb.govt.nz, click on the HEHA logo and go to ‘Community Info’.

Funding available now

Community groups, health organisations and Hauora throughout the BOP wishing to improve nutrition and physical activity can request the support of the HEHA community educator for:

- Good simple nutrition education
- Cost effective meal planning advice (working with a limited budget)
- Simple healthy cooking techniques
- Maintaining the essence of Maori kai preparation with a focus on good nutrition
- Interactive cooking classes with hands-on learning
- A fun and empowering environment



BOPDHB community educator and chef Stephen Cameron explains the difference between good and bad fats to Merivale mums.

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