

SPORT HAWKE'S BAY GREEN PRESCRIPTION MATERNAL PROGRAMME



Teen Parent Unit netball tournament

In October 2013 the Hawke's Bay District Health Board (HBDHB) contracted Sport Hawke's Bay to implement a specialised antenatal programme based on the fundamentals of the Green Prescription (GRx) initiative. The Green Prescription Maternal (MGRx) programme provides group and one-on-one education, support and activities tailored to meet the needs of women pre, during and post pregnancy in a variety of community-based settings. The programme is facilitated to provide supportive healthy lifestyle approaches around pregnancy for Māori, Pacific and in particular young mothers to set goals for lifestyle change and improve physical activity.

The MGRx programme arose from the concerns of health professionals about the health status of inactive women during and after pregnancy in New Zealand. There is increased importance placed on the family environment in changing behaviour and supporting lifestyle changes to increase physical activity and improved nutrition.

Participants are referred to the programme through lead maternity carers (LMC) or via primary health care professionals who feel client's (and baby's) health would benefit from increased physical activity or nutritional advice. The programme links with the Dietitians' Unit at Hawke's Bay DHB, breastfeeding support services and healthy first foods initiation.

Sport Hawke's Bay has a 1.0 FTE programme coordinator who coordinates and facilitates the delivery of this programme. The programme has both a community-based approach as well as working with Teen Parent Units (TPU's). The community-based clients receive home visits which are focused on relationship building, discussing current lifestyle, concerns and priorities and working together to establish goals around physical activity and nutrition. Weekly group activity sessions are also available and include walking groups, exercise tasters, swimming, mums and babies swimming and linkages to facilities where suitable.

In 2015 the programme expanded into TPU's at William Colenso High School and Flaxmere College. With the support of both schools, the programme coordinator focussed on improving levels of physical activity and healthy lifestyle

choices. The programme coordinator introduced sport specific skills (netball) with the end goal of competing in the lower North Island Teen Parent Tournament. This competition allowed opportunities for interaction between both groups which added a competitive edge and a focus on enjoyment and social participation regardless of the skills.

With the support of the Māori strategy team at Sport Hawke's Bay, the TPU's were given the opportunity to experience waka-ama at Pandora Pond in Ahuriri. The programme coordinator combined both groups and the sessions were run over two afternoons with feedback from both the participants and teachers being extremely positive.



Waka-ama at Pandora Pond

"I don't believe the students undertook any exercise prior to involvement with Sport Hawke's Bay. However, they are more motivated now and as a group meet outside school hours due fully to the input of Vanessa [programme coordinator]"
Flaxmere Teen Parent Unit.

The past two years has demonstrated the ability of Sport Hawke's Bay to successfully deliver the Maternal GRx programme to Māori, Pacific and young women. The relationship with the TPU's has been a key learning in the delivery of models that support both the community as well as the TPU's. It has been identified that the participants in the TPU's are mostly interested in sports and group activities whereas the community-based participants are more interested in nutrition and weight loss. The programme has been mostly successful for those participants who were engaged for six months or more which reinforces the length of time it takes to both build relationships and for participants to be ready to make a change. For those participants requiring further support once the programme is completed there is also the opportunity to be referred on to either GRx Adults or GRx Active Families.

For further information on this programme or any of the other health programmes based at Sport Hawke's Bay please contact:

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