

‘Thriving Tamariki – Shaping our future together’

Obesity has shoved its’ way into our Tai Tokerau communities. Almost half of our tamariki Māori are overweight or obese, while more than 80 percent of our Māori adults are either overweight or obese. Both the health and wealth of whānau are negatively affected by obesity.

At a social level obesity reduces life opportunities for individuals and whānau. It affects income levels, educational achievement, self-esteem and social participation.

Tamariki of obese parents are much more likely to be obese throughout their upbringing and later in life. Obesity affects educational attainment which reduces employment opportunities for whānau suffering from obesity. It also lowers productivity which means obese people earn less. They therefore have fewer opportunities to improve their income. It is a vicious cycle that we need to break.

Obesity also has serious health implications for individuals and whānau. It increases the risk of chronic heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke and some forms of cancer. It shortens life expectancy and the quality of a person’s life.

Two of the main drivers of obesity relates to food manufacturers and the food environment. Food manufacturers pack hidden sugars into a majority of processed food and drink to make them taste appealing so we want and buy more.

The food manufacturers use aggressive marketing tactics to push cheap, processed and unhealthy foods onto our people. They don’t just target adults with their marketing ploys they also target our easily influenced and vulnerable tamariki. Obesity is grabbing hold of our people, and playing havoc with their lives.

On average, New Zealanders consume 37 teaspoons of sugar per day. The World Health Organisation recommends that adults should consume less than about six teaspoons per day, and children less than about three teaspoons per day. We are consuming, on average more than 30 teaspoons of sugar per day than we should!



Health leaders in Tai Tokerau recognise that ‘sorting out obesity’ will require help from others and they have committed themselves to making that happen.

Using current literature, evidence and expert advice, these health leaders have developed a Tai Tokerau Childhood Obesity Prevention Framework. The Framework aims to create environments that support healthy eating for all our tamariki and whānau, raise the awareness of good nutrition, and put in place ways to reduce the consumption of sugary drinks and high fat convenience foods.

The goal of the Framework is to increase the number of tamariki Māori who are at a healthy weight by 5 percent through good kai in five years (2021).

To make a difference we will require cohesive action to influence change where we live, learn, work and play. This work will be calling upon local government, employers, retailers, education settings, health organisations, consumers, and others to do their bit. We are all responsible in making positive change for the future of our tamariki.

