

Weekly Health updates

September 2018

MINISTRY of HEALTH & MEDICAL SERVICES
Shaping Fiji's Health



“WALK YOUR WAY TO BETTER HEART HEALTH”



Participants at the “Morning Walk” program organized by the Raiwaqa Health Centre which began from Thurston gardens right up to the My Suva Park

Last week Saturday, the Raiwaqa Health Centre staff organised a morning walk at My Suva Park to raise awareness on the theme “Walk Your Way to Better Heart Health” as part of the physical activity month of the annual health activity calendar. The key message driven through this event was that early morning 30 minutes’ walk is the key to tackle the Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD’s) like diabetes, hypertension and heart attacks.

Around 50 participants from the various communities, corporate sector, schools, individuals with families joined the Raiwaqa Health Staff for the morning walk. During this month various health centres from around the country have engaged the communities to take part in physical activities like walking, running and sports activities to help raise awareness on the importance of staying active to have a healthy life.

Staff Nurse of Raiwaqa Health Centre, Ms Shivangani Singh says that such public awareness is a great platform to drive the message that individuals need to be responsible in terms of the choices they make about their lifestyle.

During our outreach programs, we work with the community health workers to educate and inform the public of the many health benefits of exercising regularly. We are motivated by the positive response received and there are also participants from the nursing zone supporting us through this initiative,” Ms Singh said.

The theme of the walk also signifies the countdown towards the World Heart Day which is scheduled for the 29th of this month. This event will be a global platform to raise awareness about the prevention of cardiovascular disease, including heart disease and stroke.

The Ministry of Health and Medical Services continues to reach out to families and communities with awareness programs on maintaining healthy lifestyle choices, healthy diet, proper exercising for better health and wellness. The message it continues to drive out to the nation is that, NCD’s are lifestyle diseases and it’s preventable but the onus is on the people to make the right choices in terms of their lifestyle.

MAINTAINING BETTER HEALTH THROUGH SPORTS

The Ministry of Health and Medical Services is promoting physical activities like sports as a way to reach out to youths for the prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases and Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD). The Health Ministry continues with awareness programs to encourage families to embrace healthy lifestyle to be able to achieve their maximum potential in life.

Aligned with this vision, the Samabula Health Centre Staff last week also organized a volleyball tournament at My Suva Park. The purpose was to raise public awareness on the need for them to practice daily walking and sporting activities to have a healthy life.

Samabula Health Centre staff nurse, Ms Poonam Pal says that a collaborative approach is essential to ensure the sustainability of such activities that strengthens the support between communities and the health ministry to address Non-Communicable Diseases.



Participants at the sports day organized by the Samabula Health Centre at My Suva Park, last week Saturday

She further stated that since Saturday 29th September is World Heart Day, the Samabula Health Centre outreach team has conducted awareness on the prevention of Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD). The teams have reached out to the communities to disseminate information that included information factsheets, pamphlets and RHD calendars that contained vital information about the prevention of Acute Rheumatic Fever (ARF) and Rheumatic Heart Disease.

The Health Ministry also assisted the teams with sports equipment to help them organize such sporting activities and competitions in the rural villages and settlements.

Meanwhile, the Samabula Health Centre has expressed sincere gratitude to following corporate sector for their generosity and support in organizing of the sporting activities: Finance Pacific Corporation Ltd for sponsoring the venue, Autocare Ltd for the tents, and Tebara Bus Services Ltd for the transportation of the team from Samabula Health Centre to the venue.

CHILDREN PROVIDED WITH SUPPLEMENTARY IRON



NIMS Officer Ms Kiti Sovaraki at the Wellness Unit while explaining about the NIMS program

In a bid to reduce the Iron Deficiency Anaemia, the Ministry of Health and Medical services has commenced the National Iron and Micronutrient Supplementation program (NIMS) in schools around Fiji. The program was piloted in primary and secondary schools last year and upon review, the team has begun with the implementation in the 87 primary and secondary schools.

Iron deficiency anaemia occurs when the body doesn’t have enough iron to produce hemoglobin which is part of the red blood cells that enables the red blood cells to carry oxygenated blood throughout the body.

National Iron and Micronutrient Supplementation program officer, based at the Health Ministry’s

Wellness Centre Mrs Kiti Sovaraki has encouraged parents to provide their children with iron rich foods as that is the natural way to get the much need iron for the body.

Mrs Sovaraki stated that the provision of the NIMS Tablet is a short term solution but people must practice good eating habits, have nutritious diet plan to prevent anaemia. The Health team continues with its outreach programs on the health and nutrition.

Students have been issued consent forms together with the fact sheets for parents have been provided on the National Iron and Micronutrient Supplementation program. Fact sheets, lesson guides and medication guidelines have been given to the teachers to understand how the program works.

HEALTH MINISTRY LAUNCHES ‘HEART TO HEART’ RHEUMATIC HEART FEVER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The Ministry of Health and Medical Services continues to maximize awareness on the prevention of Rheumatic Heart Disease for this month through the launch of ‘Heart to Heart’ Rheumatic Heart Fever Awareness Campaign. The campaign is led by people living with Rheumatic Heart Disease is to raise awareness about the signs of Rheumatic Heart Fever and to encourage parents and carers of school aged children to seek care when needed.

Public Health Advisor, Dr Sainimere Boladuadua goes on to explain when parents and carers should pay extra attention to their child’s health, ‘if your child complains of a sore throat followed by sore or swollen joint, we recommend that you seek medical advice. This could be a sign of Rheumatic Heart Fever which may lead to damage to the valves of your heart. You could be protecting your child from getting very sick in the future. You could save their lives.’

RHD is more common than people may realise in Fiji. In the last two months alone, more than 50 new cases have been identified among primary school students in the Suva area alone. These are children that often appear healthy but have, in the past had Rheumatic Heart Fever which was left untreated.”

The RHD Prevention and Control Program encourages parents and carers to ‘think Rheumatic Heart Fever’ and seek medical advice and treatment to the soonest. If the disease in a child is picked up early enough and they are placed on treatment they have a chance of going on to live a normal and productive life.

The New Zealand Partnerships for International Development Fund is a major contributor to the Ministries RHD Control Program along with Cure Kids New Zealand, Accor Hotels and the Fiji Water Foundation.



Young people living with RHD after a RHD Advocacy and Communication Skills boot



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