

# He kōrero hauora mō kā mokopuna Healthy hints for tots

This newsletter aims to provide health information and tips for the early childhood community in Otago and Southland. Use it as you wish – copy and distribute information to parents and whānau, use parts in your own newsletter. Electronic copies of this and previous newsletters are available at [www.southerndhb.govt.nz/pages/newsletters/](http://www.southerndhb.govt.nz/pages/newsletters/)

## Spring – Kana

**Ka taki te whararua Ko kā karere a Kana** If the shining cuckoo cries. It is the messenger of spring. On hearing the cry of the pipiwhararua waiata acknowledging and welcoming this manu have been sung. Some speak of the piri whararua as being a bird from Hawaiki that has guided many on their journey to Aotearoa.

**E te manu tēnā koe Kua tae tēnei ki te mahanatanga Kua puawai ngā rākau katoa**

O bird greetings to you

The warm season appears and all the trees have blossomed

## Helping Children Grow Their Own Vegetables

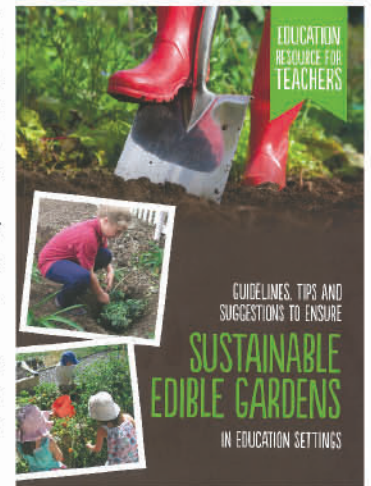
Spring is a great time to think about getting out into the vegetable garden and starting a new project with the children. Vegetable gardening not only provides children with fresh air and exercise, it also teaches them about vegetables, where they come from and how to grow them. Also there is an added bonus, growing vegetables with your children is likely to encourage them to eat more vegetables. Recent research suggests that children are five times more likely to eat salad when they have grown the vegetables themselves.



Getting children interested in gardening does not need to be difficult. If you don't have a vegetable garden already find a small patch of soil to work with or a container like an old bucket or even the bottom of a milk bottle. Put the garden in a sheltered sunny spot so the plants will grow well.

Choose the right seeds for this time of year and make sure they are easy to grow so that there are no failures. Good choices are carrots, lettuces, beans, courgettes and tomatoes. Radishes are an excellent choice since they grow quickly. Choosing fast growing vegetables is useful as children often have short attention spans and they are eager to see results.

And finally, have fun with the children in the garden. By introducing them to gardening when they are young and making the experience enjoyable you can give them a lifelong gift – a healthy passion for growing and eating vegetables



## Contact

Resource books on sustainable, edible gardens are available from Public Health South. If you would like a copy contact Christine Quested, Health Promotion Advisor, Public Health South. Ph.03 476 9818, email [christine.quested2@southerndhb.govt.nz](mailto:christine.quested2@southerndhb.govt.nz)

## Welcome to Spring Getting Outside - Protection from Tetanus

Tetanus is a vaccine preventable disease. The tetanus vaccine was introduced in 1960 and remains on the New Zealand National Immunisation Schedule. The vaccine is offered as a 3 dose primary course; first dose at 6 weeks, then at 3 months and 5 months with boosters at 4 years, 11 years, 45 years and 65 years. Boosters are also offered if you have a tetanus prone wound.

Tetanus is caused when Clostridium tetani bacteria are introduced to the human body and release tetanus toxins. Any wound such as a cut, graze or puncture allows an opening for tetanus bacteria to enter. This could happen from a puncture to the skin eg. from a rose thorn or nail. Children and people aged 65+ are especially at risk. The only way to build immunity is by immunisation.

Once the bacteria have been introduced the toxins produced attack the central nervous system and are spread easily to muscles. This results in: the muscles stiffening around the jaw, neck, back, chest, abdomen and limbs, breathing difficulties which result in reduced oxygen intake, abnormal heart rhythm, severe pain, extreme muscle spasms. Even with modern intensive care, approximately 10% of those who get tetanus will die.

In New Zealand between 2001 and 2012 there were 4 cases of tetanus in children aged between 1 and 9 years. None of these children were vaccinated. If you have not completed your series of tetanus vaccinations and you sustain a high risk wound, the only option to prevent tetanus is a course of tetanus immunoglobulin (TIG). TIG is derived from human blood donations. It is also recommended that a primary course of vaccine be given as well. TIG is only effective if given before the tetanus toxins take hold and will only protect you for 3 months. If you would like further information please visit: [www.immune.org.nz](http://www.immune.org.nz) or contact Southern District Health Board Immunisation Co-ordinators, [www.health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/diseases-and-illnesses/tetanus](http://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/diseases-and-illnesses/tetanus)

Immunisation is free: talk to your Family Doctor, Practice, Plunket or Public Health Nurse



# Is Butter Better? No

The saturated fat and butter debate is ongoing. Recently there have been reports in the media claiming that saturated fat is good for our health, however when you weigh up **all** of the evidence, it is clear that replacing saturated fat with unsaturated fats, particularly polyunsaturated fats, is beneficial for the heart.

Therefore, the Heart Foundation's position remains the same: we should replace saturated fats in our diets with unsaturated fats. That means getting our fats from foods like avocado, oily fish (salmon, tuna, mackerel and sardines), nuts, seeds and plant oils like olive and canola oils. These are in place of foods like butter, cream, meat fat and coconut that are higher in saturated fat.



Making the simple swap from butter to margarine or other plant-based spreads, is one way to do this. For those who choose not to use margarine spreads, consider avocado, hummus and nut or seed butters as good options for a less-processed, more whole food approach. Alternatively, use no spread at all.

Are you worried about trans fats in margarine spreads? Trans fats are even more unhealthy for us than saturated fats. The good news is, New Zealand margarines and table spreads now contain less than 1% trans fats.

Rather than focusing on specific foods or nutrients, it's important for us to focus on the bigger picture, which is our overall dietary pattern. A heart-healthy eating pattern is based largely on minimally-processed foods with plenty of vegetables and fruit. It includes some whole grains in the place of refined grains. It also includes legumes, nuts, seeds, and other sources of healthy fats such as oily fish. It may also contain non-processed lean meats or poultry and/or dairy.



## Heart Foundation Contacts

Your local Health Promotion Coordinators are available to provide advice and resources to assist you in creating a heart-healthy environment in your ECE service. We'd love to hear from you!

**Rebecca Wilson** or **Qa-t-a Amun** for Otago:  
03 477 3999, [rebeccaw@heartfoundation.org.nz](mailto:rebeccaw@heartfoundation.org.nz) or  
[qamun@heartfoundation.org.nz](mailto:qamun@heartfoundation.org.nz)

**Linda Harris** or **Yvette Hodges** for Southland & Central Otago:  
03 214 5444, [lindah@heartfoundation.org.nz](mailto:lindah@heartfoundation.org.nz) or  
[yvetteH@heartfoundation.org.nz](mailto:yvetteH@heartfoundation.org.nz)

## Congratulations to the following ECE services for gaining a Healthy Heart Award recently:

**Pā Harakeke (Flourishing Award):** Arrowtown Preschool Cotter Ave, Arrowtown; Jade Star - Infant & Toddlers Centre, Dunedin; Richard Hudson Kindergarten, Dunedin; Rotary Park Kindergarten, Dunedin

**Whānau (Strengthening Award):** Green Street, House 11 - Mosgiel; Mornington Playcentre, Dunedin; Punavai Ole Atamai Pre-School, Dunedin; Queens Park Early Childhood Education, Invercargill; Rainbow Preschool, Dunedin; Riselaw Road Playcentre, Dunedin; St Kilda Kindergarten, Dunedin; Teviot Valley Educare Centre, Roxburgh

**Rito (Foundation Award):** Outram Playcentre, Dunedin

Your local Health Promotion Coordinators are available to provide advice and resources to assist you in creating a heart-healthy environment in your ECE service.

## Eating for Healthy Children

You've probably read it and seen it on the news: the number of overweight and obese children has continued to rise over the past two decades and this can contribute to heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, asthma & sleep apnoea.

### What can you do as a parent/caregiver?

- Children need 10-12 hours sleep
- Eat together as a family at the table as often as possible
- Limit the amount of sedentary activity
- Encourage physical activity
- Quiet time for reading and homework is fine. Limit the time your children watch television, play video games or surf the web to no more than 2 hours per day

### Encourage healthy eating habits.

- Eat a healthy breakfast every day

- Provide plenty of vegetables, fruits and whole-grain products
- Include low-fat or non-fat milk or dairy products
- Choose lean meats, poultry, fish, lentils and beans for protein
- Serve reasonably-sized portions.
- Encourage your family to drink lots of water
- Limit sugar-sweetened beverages
- Limit consumption of sugar and saturated fat
- Encourage the whole family to engage in an appropriate amount of physical activity and avoid too much sedentary time

For more information see: [www.kiwifamilies.co.nz](http://www.kiwifamilies.co.nz)

A wide range of nutrition articles and resources including breakfast, healthy lunches and quick and easy meals.

## Contact

Contact your Otago Public Health Nurse 03 476 9880  
Southland Well Child Service 03 211 0012

[publichealthnursing@southerndhb.govt.nz](mailto:publichealthnursing@southerndhb.govt.nz)



# The Importance of Play for Learning

The human brain can only focus on one thinking task at a time, therefore when a child is concentrating on learning a new movement skill, there is no room for thinking about learning anything else (Connell et al, 2016). Therefore, it is essential that children develop their movement skills first to ensure that their brains are ready for learning.



For example, if we take writing, this seemingly 'simple' task, when broken down can turn out to be very complex. A child needs to have developed the following:

- Upper body strength to be able to sit comfortably in an upright position.
- Shoulder muscles must be strong enough to position the arm for writing, control the direction of the elbow and forearm.
- The pincer grip; when the thumb is in the cortical position to the index finger, this movement is important to introduce as it is how children learn to hold onto a pencil.
- Hand-eye coordination, being able to work the hands and eyes fluently together can increase the ability to learn to read and write.
- Identifying directional language in play situations directly benefits a child's understanding in the classroom. The difference between a 'p' and a 'd' is the line goes under the line in a 'p' and the line of a 'd' sits above the line. This can be introduced by including directional words when climbing over and under the hill, for example.
- Cross-patterned movements help to strengthen the pathways between both hemispheres of the brain.
- In order to establish a dominant hand to write with and to have the ability to write across the whole page, a child needs to have crossed their midline.

For example, a child is asked at school to write about their rabbit at home. This child needs to use the left hemisphere of their brain (the logical side, recognising words, letters, and numbers) to spell the word 'Rabbit' and link to the right hemisphere of the brain (the more visual side, recognising

faces, places, and objects) to visualise whether the rabbit is brown or white, does it have long ears and a pink nose?

By making the connections between both sides of our brains through cross-patterned movements, children are not only able to master coordinated movements, but also advance their creativity for story writing as they link logic to their imagination between both hemispheres of their brain.

Before we sit our children down to teach them how to write, try some of the activities below to help lay down these important foundations for our children's future learning through play.



## Activity Ideas

**Upper body:** climbing trees, swinging on monkey bars, wheelbarrow walks, tug-of-war, handstands, crawling.

**Fine motor skills:** playing with playdough or goop, tearing up newspaper, picking up objects with pegs or tongs, stringing beads, finger play song, massaging hands and fingers, swinging on monkey bars.

**Hand-eye coordination:** catching bubbles, feathers, balloons, and scarf, catching, rolling and throwing a ball.

**Cross patterning:** crawling, climbing, dancing, marching, skipping, encouraging different movements with each side of the body.

**Developing language:** dancing to action songs, including directional language like 'up, over, under, above' in play situations.



## Contact

Sport Otago

Kerry MacLennan

027 669 1580

am@sportotago.co.nz

Rebekah Winter

027 436 7172

ef@sportotago.co.nz



# Caring for teeth – all ages!

## MODELLING GOOD ORAL HEALTH

Show your child how important it is to take care of their teeth by taking care of yours!



- Brush your teeth while your child brushes theirs. After they have had a turn at brushing, you should take over and finish brushing for them. They will need your assistance with brushing until around 8 years;
- Lead by example when dispensing toothpaste (fluoridated is best); a smear for anyone under 6 years and a pea-sized amount for anyone older;
- Spit – don't rinse (with water) after brushing, to leave some protective fluoride on your teeth. Get your child to do the same once they are able to spit properly;
- Floss your own teeth daily and floss your child's teeth for them until they are able to floss themselves at around 8 or 9 years;
- Have regular dental check-ups – for you and for your child.

0800 ORAL HEALTH (0800 672 543) or email [oralhealth@southerndhb.govt.nz](mailto:oralhealth@southerndhb.govt.nz)

Visit us on Talkteeth - Southern

**Community Oral Health Service**

He Oraka Niho

**FREE DENTAL CARE FOR 0 - 17 YEAR OLDS**

Want to know more?

Call 0800 ORAL HEALTH (0800 672 543) or email: [oralhealth@southerndhb.govt.nz](mailto:oralhealth@southerndhb.govt.nz)

## For resources contact

Judy Sibbe Phone 03 476 9870, [judy.sibbe@southerndhb.govt.nz](mailto:judy.sibbe@southerndhb.govt.nz)

Children can't get away from harmful second hand smoke if you smoke in the car with them.

# Let's make cars smokefree for children!



Can I have an occasional drink while I'm breastfeeding?

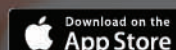
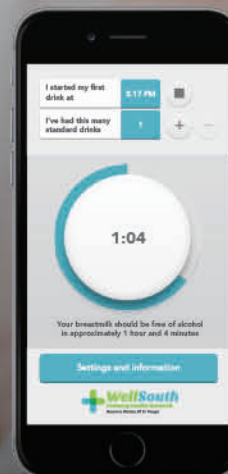
### Should I pump and dump?

*How does alcohol affect breastmilk?*

*How long should I wait after a drink, before feeding?*

Handy information on breastfeeding and alcohol, right in your pocket.

Search for 'Feed safe' on the App Store.



[wellsouth.org.nz/feedsafe](http://wellsouth.org.nz/feedsafe)

