

Why eat healthy - Fiji Times Online



Dr Jone Hawea holds up a packet of layalaya tea and sun dried banana snack, two of the healthy option they are offering to consumers. Picture: MERE NALEBA

EIGHTY per cent of deaths in hospitals are because of non-communicable related illness. This is one of the many reasons parents, guardians and adults are encouraged to provide healthy balanced meals for their children and those under their care.

The advantages of eating healthy at any given time always outweigh unhealthy eating, but for some reason, people still opt for junk food and unhealthy meals over fruits and a bowl of salad.

Everyone knows eating right and exercising regularly control weight gain. Starting the day with a healthy breakfast helps you avoid hunger spasms that could send you running for fast foods before lunch.

Many low-income earners consuming unhealthy food often because they cannot always afford to eat healthy. For some others, it is mainly because of the fact that people are accustomed to unhealthy eating from when they were younger.

Although many people know of the benefits of eating healthy, practising it is a different story altogether. Especially when we live in a culture where feasts signifies a birth of a child, marriages, funerals and another event marking the gathering of families, associates, friends etc.

Dr Jone Hawea, who is also the associate director of the Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprise and Development (FRIEND), said the organisation was always working towards promoting healthy diets which was inclusive of providing families various healthy food options to choose from.

FRIEND recently signed a MOU with the Motibhai Group of Companies meaning it is now the sole distributor for its products which includes herbal tea, fruit jams, healthy snacks and four other ranges of healthy food.

Dr Hawea said the herbal tea — lemon grass tea, layalaya and cinnamon tea — had been scientifically proven to reduce diabetes and hypertension.

"The herbal tea range has been shown to have very good health benefits in terms of preventing hypertension, diabetes as described in literature — lemon grass has very good health benefits," Dr Hawea said.

"You may not know this but eating healthy sure does improve your mood. Exercising and eating balanced meals help a person feel happy and relaxed, it reduces stress and helps people make wise decisions."

As we're beginning the second week of the second school term, Dr Hawea recommends parents make it a point to send their children to school with fruits and vegetables in their lunch containers.

FRIEND offers dried fruits in the market which includes sun dried bananas and pawpaw.

He said the two fruits did not have added additives or preservatives and were good for children.

"The dried fruits offer all the minerals and vitamins that come with a whole fruit if they were taken fresh. I would suggest that schoolchildren go for dried fruits," he said.

Interestingly, Dr Hawea mentioned that tea drinking is also linked to diabetes and hypertension this is mainly because of the other habits associated with tea drinking.

Dr Hawea said the herbal tea produced by FRIEND could be taken on its own and one did not need sugar when drinking it.

If you're still trying to decide whether to eat healthy or not, this should help you decide. It:

- * Improves mood;
- * Combats diseases;
- * Boosts energy; and
- * Improves longevity.