

## Hello all

Welcome to the fourth edition of the Green Prescription newsletter for 2007. This month's newsletter is jam packed with information about some physical activity opportunities for you, your colleagues and your patients.

General Practitioners and Practice Nurses who prescribed "Green" last month will also receive with this newsletter a report outlining progress made by your patients since you referred them to us for physical activity patient support.

Congratulations also to Dr Rebecca Short from Waihopai Health Services who was our highest prescriber over the month of July. Thank you also to those of you who regularly support this programme which aims to educate, motivate and support your patients towards sustainable change in their physical activity levels.

This newsletter includes information about our *Over 40s Try-Activity*, the latest patient survey results from the Sport and Recreation New Zealand Annual Green Prescription survey as well as information on the benefits of walking, Conservation Week and Gore's new *Active for Life* programme.

**For any further information please contact us with the details provided below.**

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## Green Prescription Patient Survey Results!

In May 2007, Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) conducted the annual GRx patient survey. This report provides key results for respondents to the May 2007 survey of GRx patients from the Sport Southland regional sports trust area.

Summary of key findings for Southland include:

- Main reasons for prescribing 'Green' include weight issues (45%), arthritis (38%), high blood pressure/stroke (34%), and high cholesterol (33%)
- As with previous years, the main physical activities recommended by health professionals include walking, swimming and home based exercises
- 77% of those prescribed 'Green' state that they have noticed positive changes in their health compared with the national average of 74%.
- Positive changes included weight loss (42%), improved energy levels (37%), increased strength and fitness (30%) and a general sense of improved wellness (55%)

## Over 40's Try-Activity

Over 40, INACTIVE, and want to do something about it?

For just \$20 you get a choice of 20 different exercise sessions a week for 4 weeks at various facilities throughout Invercargill and Winton.

If you are Invercargill or Winton based and prescribed Green during the month of July, you will automatically receive a free Over 40s Try Activity to use or giveaway to a patient, friend or colleague!

For more information, please see flyer enclosed or contact us with the details provided.

## When it Comes to Walking, it's all Good

These days, it's easy for people to get confused about exercise -- how many minutes a day should they spend working out, for how long and at what exertion level? Conflicting facts and opinions abound, but one Mayo Clinic physician says the bottom line is this: walking is good, whether the outcome measurement is blood pressure, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, joint problems or mental health.

"Getting out there and taking a walk is what it's all about," says James Levine, M.D., Ph.D., and a Mayo Clinic expert on obesity. "You don't have to join a gym, you don't have to check your pulse. You just have to switch off the TV, get off the sofa and go for a walk."

The health benefit associated with walking is the subject of Dr. Levine's editorial in the July issue of *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*. Dr. Levine's piece is entitled, "Exercise: A Walk in the Park?" and accompanies a Proceedings article that showcases the merits of walking as beneficial exercise.

The study, undertaken by physicians from the Shinshu University Graduate School of Medicine in Matsumoto, Japan, determined that high-intensity interval walking may protect against high blood pressure and decreased muscle strength among older people. Over five months, the Japanese researchers studied 246 adults who engaged in either no walking or moderate to high-intensity walking. The group who engaged in high-intensity walking experienced the most significant improvement in their health, the researchers found.

In his editorial, Dr. Levine says the study lends credence to the notion that walking is a legitimate, worthy mode of exercise for all people. Dr. Levine says it's a welcome message for his patients, who fight obesity and appreciate that a walk is one way to improve their health. Unlike a health club membership or personal trainer, walking "is there for everyone," Dr. Levine says. "Walking doesn't cost you anything, you can do it barefoot and you can do it now, this minute. Sitting is bad for cholesterol, it's bad for your back and muscles," Dr. Levine says. "It's such a terrible thing for our bodies to do and the less of it you do, the better. But activity is not easy. If it were easy, everyone would do it."

Authors for the study in Mayo Clinic Proceedings on high-intensity walking were Ken-Ichi Nemoto; Hirokazu Gen-No, Ph.D.; Shizue Masuki, Ph.D.; Kazunobu Okazaki, Ph.D.; and Hiroshi Nose, M.D., Ph.D., all from the Shinshu University Graduate School of Medicine.



## ACTIVE FOR LIFE GORE

Te Rongoā Kakariki  
**Green  
Prescription**

Developed by Sport Southland in partnership with Every Bodies Health and Fitness Centre, *Active for Life* is a physical activity programme based around Exercise, Education and Emotional Support. The programme aims to increase cardiovascular fitness, muscle strength, balance, confidence and well-being in a gym setting.

COST: \$10 per year & \$2 per session

**Monday @ 11am—12pm**

Circuit training with Sport Southland staff.

**Wednesday @ 11am—12pm**

Low impact aerobics and gym session



## CONSERVATION WEEK August 6-12

You don't have to be a hardened trampler to reap the benefits of the great outdoors. There are heaps of easy tracks and walks and interesting places to visit in Southland. You may be surprised to discover that many of them are just down the road. This year the Department of Conservation's annual event, Conservation Week (August 6 – 12) is highlighting the range of activities people can do and see on public conservation land.

In Southland we are very fortunate, there is pretty much something for every interest and level of fitness and mobility. This can be a gentle wander with the kids to sitting somewhere taking in a spectacular view, learning about the incredible natural environment, or going on a camping trip with the family.

With a wealth of beautiful locations and historic places, there is so much to enjoy and experience, why not set yourself a goal this Conservation Week to get out and try a new recreation activity.

For more information go to [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz).  
- get out there and make the most of it!