



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Does your diet need a WOF?

Nelson's senior citizens have been told to give their eating habits a 'warrant of fitness' by expert dietitian, Kaye Dennison. "As we grow older, we are very good at reviewing our housing, hobbies and horsepower to suit our changing needs, but don't take the same interest in what we're eating," Dennison said.

The New Zealand registered dietitian was addressing a New Zealand Nutrition Foundation seminar, 'Nutrition risk in older people: making meals matter'. In her extensive experience as a dietitian working with older people, Ms Dennison regularly encounters people who have not reassessed their eating habits as they age, resulting in malnutrition.

She suggests the following checklist:

- If your belt, rings or watch seem a bit loose and you've lost weight unintentionally, talk to your doctor or practice nurse.
- Ask to be weighed whenever you visit the surgery or medical centre.
- If you start on new medication, ask your doctor if it is likely to affect your appetite, taste or smell. These are all factors which affect how you eat.

Remaining fit and well later in life is dependent on good nutrition, meaning increased quality in an often restricted quantity. In order to fulfil Ministry of Health recommendations, older New Zealanders should be eating foods giving them more calcium, vitamins D and B₁₂, folic acid and magnesium. An extra milky drink or a nourishing bowl of creamy meat and vegetable soup can make all the difference. Healthy guidelines for other age groups, such as low fat and low salt diets, can be over-restrictive in later life, compromising good nutrition.

"Next time your car is due for a WOF, give yourself a check-up too and take a look at what you're eating," Dennison advised.

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For further information contact: Sue Pollard at 09 489 3417 or 021 640 995

Released by the New Zealand Nutrition Foundation

The New Zealand Nutrition Foundation is a non-profit organisation which works pro-actively in the nutrition and food sectors with the food industry, Government bodies, other health promotion agencies, health and education professionals and the media. Its mission is "to enhance the quality of life of New Zealanders by encouraging informed, healthy and enjoyable food choices." This seminar was arranged by the Foundation's Committee for Healthy Ageing, in partnership with the Nelson Marlborough District Health Board.