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Prescription to be active continues to succeed

Health Minister Tony Ryall says the latest survey results show a Government initiative to get people active still having positive results after twelve years.

A Green Prescription is a health professional's written advice for a patient to be physically active as part of their health management. The top three reasons patients are given a Green Prescription are weight problems, high blood pressure/risk of stroke and diabetes. Over 32,000 adults received a Green Prescription in the last 12 months.

The annual patient survey shows 57 percent of those 'prescribed green' are still physically active eight months on and 59 percent have also made healthy changes to their diets. This has led to weight loss, lower blood pressure and improved cholesterol levels as well as other health benefits.

Tony Ryall says since the initiative was first launched in 1998 almost 200,000 people have been given a Green Prescription and over that time results have remained consistently positive.

"It is great to see that not only are these people reaping the benefits of a more active lifestyle but the latest research also shows about two-thirds of them are encouraging their friends and family to be active as well."

The Green Prescription initiative costs about \$4 million annually. Patients have the option to receive support from a trained exercise professional who remains in contact with them and helps to keep them motivated. The main activities prescribed are walking, swimming and gym exercises and most patients also receive information on healthy eating. Stu Hockey, a GP from City Medical in Gisborne says "The local Green Prescription team reinforce the messages of health, exercise and well being for my patients that lead to lifestyle changes that matter."

Rongoā Kākāriki
GREEN
PRESCRIPTION