



Risk factors for gut cancers tackled in an innovative campaign.

With over 5,400 New Zealanders diagnosed every year with gut or digestive system cancer, collectively these are the most common cancers.

Gut cancers include oesophageal, pancreatic, stomach, liver, bowel, gallbladder & bile duct cancers. Sadly, the survival rates for this group of cancers are particularly low with over 50% of those diagnosed not surviving beyond 5 years. In its mission to address these statistics, the Gut Cancer Foundation launched a new campaign this year called GIVE IT UP for Gut Cancer.

During March over 630 Kiwis signed up to give up either sugar, alcohol, or the sofa for the entire month.

The GIVE IT UP campaign was created to not only raise vital funds to find better ways to detect, diagnose and treat gut cancers but also raise awareness that reducing obesity and alcohol intake, and increasing exercise can all help reduce the risk of developing them. On both counts, the campaign was hugely successful.

Participants were supported through the month with campaign partners, nutritionist Sean Robertson (4 Wheels of Health), and personal trainer Aviv Jones. With their expert guidance, the GIVE IT UP participants kicked their habits into touch in pursuit of a healthier lifestyle.

Gut Cancer Foundation Executive Officer Liam Willis said, "one of the most rewarding aspects of the campaign was seeing our amazing supporters go through genuine lifestyle changes. These changes had a profound impact on their quality of life and will also help reduce the risk of developing gut cancers if they remain in place".

GIVE IT UP participant Wendy Zerjal said "Although I started to just give up sugar, bit by bit, I've started to reform some other habits too. I've changed where and when we shop, cooking from fresh, playing with new recipes, getting more exercise, getting more involved in some community activities, like yoga, healthy living classes, and painting. As the sunshine hours lessen, I sometimes feel a bit down, but not this year. I'm so pleased I'm doing this, and it's good to know that it's for such a good cause outside of my benefit. Makes it that much more meaningful."



GIVE IT UP FOR GUT CANCER

The face of the campaign 47-year-old oesophageal cancer survivor, Karen Pratt said "I was diagnosed with oesophageal cancer in April 2019. After a year of tough treatment, I can consider myself one of the lucky few who have lived to tell my story. Keep supporting the amazing work the Gut Cancer Foundation is doing to bring awareness of gut cancers and funding for vital research and clinical trials so that more people live to tell their stories."

The GIVE IT UP for Gut Cancer campaign saw over \$100,000 raised to fund life-saving research, education, and awareness campaigns for those impacted by or at risk of gut cancers. The awareness messaging of reducing the risk of developing a gut cancer through reducing obesity, alcohol intake, and increasing exercise reached an audience of over half a million New Zealanders.

Following the success of the first year of GIVE IT UP for Gut Cancer, the Gut Cancer Foundation is planning to ramp up the campaign in 2022. Keep an eye out for the campaign launching in January 2022!

You can find out more about the Gut Cancer Foundation's work and subscribe to their newsletter at www.gutcancer.org.nz