

Nau Mai – Te Ao Māori ⁶

Nau mai e ngā hua e hora nei
 I haere mai nā koe
 I whakatupua nuku, i whakatupua rangi
 Tāwhia ki a Rehua ki te ao mārama
 Kia whakairia ki runga
 Kia tina!
 TINA!
 Hui e!
 TAIKI E!

Prayer – Acknowledging The Māori World

We acknowledge these fruits laid before us
 Which have come from you
 Descended from our ancestral parents
 Into the world of light
 Let it be elevated above
 So that it has certainty
 And is maintained
 And it will be secure.

Tikanga relating to food¹

The following basic Māori practices rely on an understanding of tapu and noa – key concepts that underpin many practices, Tapu and noa are entirely consistent with a logical Māori view of hygiene and align with good health and safety practices.

- Food should never be passed over the head.
- Fridges/freezers used to store food or medication for human consumption should be clearly marked and not used for any other purpose.
- Tea towels should only be used for the purpose of drying dishes and washed separately from all other soiled linen.
- Anything that comes into contact with the body or body fluids must be kept separate from food and should not be placed on surfaces where food is placed.
- Receptacles used for drinking water should be solely used for that purpose.

- Staff should not sit on tables or workbenches and particularly on surfaces used for food or medication.
- Food or drink should never be taken into a room containing a tūpāpaku

Healthy kai

It is important to be aware of Māori lifestyles, including diet. Providers should be aware and become familiar with the specific cultural preferences and foods of their patients because they have an important role in their health.²

Dietary changes, while recommended for an individual, often need to be adopted by the whole whānau to be successful, because preparing separate meals is unrealistic. The person requiring the change in diet may not be responsible for shopping or cooking family meals, and expectations need to be realistic and culturally acceptable.

Some foods have special meaning and can be an important part of cultural preferences. Rather than advocating their complete removal from a diet, it may be more practical to discuss how they can be prepared to minimise the salt and fat content.

For example, healthier boil up:³

Use pre-trimmed meat or trim fat off meat.

Half way through boiling the meat pour off the fatty water, refill the pot, boil and continue to simmer the meat.

Add lots of vegetables then boil and simmer until they are cooked. Leave skin on potatoes and kumara. Add onions, garlic and herbs instead of salt for extra flavour.

Further reading:

Te Hotu Manawa Māori

www.tehotumanawa.org.nz

Tirohanga Māori by Mason Durie available from Te Iho – Māori Mental Health Training Programme website

www.teiho.org/MaoriHealthPerspectives/TirohangaMaoriByMasonDurie.aspx



Glossary:

Kai – Food, to eat

Manaakitanga – protection, blessings, show respect or kindness to.

Mana – prestige, respect, authority

Mihimihi – to greet

Noa – free from tapu

Pōwhiri – welcome

Tapu – sacred, restricted

Tikanga – rule, customs, protocol, lore

Tūpāpaku – body of the deceased

Whānau – family group, give birth

References

1. Auckland DHB. Tikanga Recommended Best Practice. Available from http://www.adhb.govt.nz/ResearchOffice/MRRC/tikanga_-_rbp.html Accessed June 2008.
2. Medical Council of New Zealand. Best Health Outcomes for Māori: Practice Implications. Available from <http://www.mcnz.org.nz> Accessed April 2008.
3. Nga Miti – He Kai Reka. Available from <http://www.beeflambnz.co.nz/resources/resources-healthProfessionals.html> Accessed July 2008.
4. Mead, H. Tikanga Māori Living by Māori Values. Wellington: Huia Publishers: 2003
5. Tapsell, R. Māori Rituals of Encounter: the Whānau Hui. Available from <http://www.teiho.org/RitualsOfEncounter/RitualsInClinicalPractice.aspx> (Accessed June 2008)
6. Kotahi Mano Kāiaka. Available from http://www.kmk.maori.nz/fileadmin/downloads/KARAKIA/Karakia_Mo_Te_Kai.pdf (Accessed June 2008)

Manaakitanga

Manaakitanga – nurturing relationships, looking after people and being very careful about how others are treated is a key component of Māori culture. The principles and values attached to it underpin all tikanga Māori. Manaakitanga is always considered important, no matter what the circumstances.

Manaakitanga focuses on positive human behaviour and encourages people to rise above their personal attitudes and feelings towards others. The aim is to nurture relationships and to respect the mana of other people no matter what their standing in society may be. Being hospitable and looking after visitors is given high priority.⁴

When visiting Māori on a marae or at home, it is important to allow sufficient time for any welcome and refreshments that may be offered. While health professionals do work under considerable time pressures it is considered impolite to not partake in this aspect. To socialise even briefly will greatly assist in developing rapport and building an effective therapeutic relationship. A whānau hui involving proper rituals of engagement and closure can be invaluable in developing rapport and partnership with patients and their families.

Health professionals are held in high esteem and so it is important to acknowledge the welcome. Often, in the clinical context, a more informal process of welcome is undertaken with some of the essential elements of the pōwhiri and some of the more informal aspects of the mihimihi. This may include speeches and waiata. Knowledge of these rituals is important in whānau meetings and in meetings with the local Māori community and providers.⁵

 Rituals can vary, so be guided by your hosts about what is appropriate. If you are not sure of the correct process, it is better to ask than to risk causing offence.