



# A DIET FOR DIABETES?



**Dr Nick Wright** talks to Caroline Wood about the BROAD diet study which may hold the key to reversing type 2 diabetes symptoms, while helping T1Ds reduce their insulin requirements.

Imagine embarking on a healthy eating regime where you get to eat as much as you like, as long as it's plant-based and low fat. You don't need to cut carbs, count calories or exercise, and yet you still lose weight, reverse your type 2 diabetes, and increase your quality of life.

The same wholefood with no added-oil diet allows you to eat unlimited wholegrain carbs, including bread, pasta and rice, so it's also safe for people with type 1, who should find they need to inject less insulin because they are eating very low amounts of fat.

This diabetes-friendly diet does exist and was developed using research from around the world. It's called the BROAD diet and has been tested in Gisborne over the past five years by local GP Dr Nick Wright and his team, with very encouraging results especially for people with type 2 diabetes.

During the BROAD diet study, which began in 2013, four patients with diabetes took part and followed the recommended diet (see panel right). One was injecting insulin before the trial but he was able to stop taking it after making the recommended dietary changes. Two of the remaining three improved their condition to the point where they no longer met the diagnostic criteria for diabetes.

Dr Nick Wright says the diet is safe for

anyone with diabetes, including people with type 1, who could expect to reduce their insulin requirements by 30-40% if they follow it strictly. He recommends people with T1D work with their healthcare provider when making these changes.

During the BROAD diet study, 65 participants with obesity, diabetes or heart disease took part in a randomised trial with 33 of them following a low-fat, wholefood, plant-based diet. They came from all walks of life – farming, forestry, teaching, and retirees – and were randomly split into two groups.

Those who changed their diet were allowed to eat potatoes, beans, wholegrain pasta and bread and brown rice, spreads, soups, salads, and stir fries. They also received cooking classes and lifestyle change education during the 12-week intervention.

Food was not provided and participants were instructed to eat whenever they were hungry and until they were full. The diet programme excluded animal foods and refined oils, in favour of unlimited amounts of wholegrains, legumes, vegetables and fruits. Those who changed their diet also took 50mcg a day of vitamin B12.

After a year, participants who changed their diet had lost an average 11.5kg, decreased their waist circumference by an average of 9cm,