

# SMOKEFREE... it's about us

## KIA AUAHĪ KORE... mō tātou te kaupapa



Jason  
Matthews

Health Promoter

“Gentle persuasion” from his wife was the motivation TDHB Health Promoter Jason Matthews needed to quit smoking.

“She finally told me it was her way or the highway, and that was exactly what I needed to give up,” Jason says.

It was an easy choice - Jason had given up before and knew he could do it again. He had his first puff as a teenager but soon kicked the pack-a-day habit because it was hampering his efforts to become a top surfer. “It slowed my surfing down and that was a problem – I wasn’t as fit.”

He went “cold turkey” and immediately noticed the health benefits. His physical fitness improved and lung capacity increased.

By the time Jason was in his late 20s he was a national surfing champion. The success was one of the reasons he started smoking again. “I was showing off,” he says.

He hid his smoking from his wife. Working night shift helped. He would attempt to get rid of the cigarette smell before returning

home, resorting to deodorants and even eating whole lemons, skin and all, to mask the smell.

But the smell was impossible to hide, especially from a non-smoking partner who detests smoke. Jason’s wife could smell smoke on his clothes and confronted him. “She told me it was her or the cigarettes,” Jason says.

Jason went cold turkey again and it worked. He continued to go out and be surrounded by smokers, to prove to himself that he could resist the temptation of cigarettes.

Even now, 11 years after quitting, he still occasionally feels the impulse to smoke if the smell of a cigarette is in the air. “I keep it real - during those weak moments I focus on the reasons why I gave up in the first place. If I become too complacent, there’s a possibility it will come and drag me in again.”

His advice to others: “Don’t start smoking. It’s not worth it.”

