

# Rice risk: Eating more white rice can cause diabetes

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SOLOMON Islanders love having a bowl of rice on their tables during meal times, but an overseas study has warned that too much of it contributes to diabetes.

On Tuesday a US-based study linked eating too much white rice to higher risk of developing type-2 diabetes.

The study however, suggested that eating more brown rice is healthier than the white variety.

The finding has also been supported by local health authorities and medical practitioners who recommended less white rice during meal times to brown rice and more vegetables and fruits.

A spokesperson at the Ministry of Health said the finding is interesting and that locals must take heed of it.

A nutritionist at the health ministry Josephine Watoto said she is yet to see the report and would comment later.

However, she said eating the right amount and little is important.

The study conducted by the Harvard Public Health Scientist found that people who ate at least five servings of white rice per week had a 17 per cent greater risk of developing diabetes than those who consumed less than one serving per month.

Examining data from over 197,000 adults for up to 22 years, the study also found that consuming two or more servings of brown rice per week was associated with an 11 per cent lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes than those who ate less than one serving a month.

Patients with diabetes have high blood sugar levels, which are linked to the body's inability to produce enough insulin in order to properly break down sugars and starches into glucose for energy, the study said.

Local senior surgeon Dr Douglas Pikacha last year during his Christmas and New year advice on food intake said that Solomon Islanders eat too much of refined and processed food such as rice, noodles, biscuits, bread, ring cakes and many more.

And this contributes to problems like haemorrhoids, anal fissures and acute appendicitis.

He said more dietary fibre food is important for the intestine.

Brown rice, which retains the bran and germ, has more fibre, minerals, vitamins and phytochemicals than white rice.

It also usually does not cause blood sugar levels to spike as much as the white variety.

The study believe replacing white rice and other refined grains with whole grains, including brown rice, would help lower the risk of type 2 diabetes.

A nurse at the National Referral Hospital Romity Huka said locals should change their habit of eating too much white rice given these findings.

He said parents played an important role in reducing white rice consumption by their kids because it can contribute to diabetes as found in the study and constipation.

White rice is one of the staple foods in the country.

**By MOFFAT MAMU**

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