

Can this processed meat really be made into a healthy meal for Pacific Islanders?

Pisupo, corned beef, is a food product with a high fat and sodium content. The meat in pisupo is preserved with sodium nitrate or sodium nitrite, preservatives that have been scientifically proven to expose those who eat this food to a range of health risks including heart disease, cancer and Type 2 diabetes. Pisupo is now an iconic cultural product of ritual exchange and gifting in Samoa. Researching for the production of a film exploring non-communicable diseases in Samoa, it was discovered that the Heart Foundation of New Zealand features a “healthy heart” recipe for Pacific people using pisupo. Also featured for Pacific Islanders in New Zealand are healthy recipes for salt beef and mutton flaps. It suggests that Samoans and other Pacific Islanders are truly addicted to fatty meats and cannot change their diets. While pouring off the soluble fat, cutting away solid fat and adding more vegetables may make the food less harmful, it is still harmful. Could the New Zealand Beef Industry be one of the sponsors of the NZ Heart Foundations? What is not surprising is that Samoans and other Pacific people in New Zealand feature prominently among those suffering from non-communicable diseases including overweight and obesity.