

## Health News

### VITAL SIGNS

# Recipe for a healthier, longer life

Dietician, businesswoman and consultant Anne Till is one of the best-known names in nutrition and lifestyle management in SA. She is author of *The Ultimate Diet Solution* and serves on Discovery-Vitality's nutrition expert panel. She tells **Marika Sboros** how food can extend quality of life

**agree with research that appears to suggest vitamin supplements are a waste of time and money?**

The research actually doesn't show that. Study results are often misinterpreted and generalised.

**What do you think is at the heart of the pandemic of chronic lifestyle disease facing SA?**

Oxidative stress, free radical production, inflammation and associated immune response.

**What does that mean in lay terms?**

Current scientific evidence indicates that we should be turning our attention to what happens in our body at a cellular level. Food choices and nutrients can have an impact on disease risk with each and every food choice you make daily. Poor food choices, big portions, and inadequate nutrients contribute to oxidative stress — the over-production of reactive oxygen species or free radicals inside cells. This in turn contributes to cellular damage and low-grade inflammation, which trigger an immune response.

**What's behind these problems?**

In our current environment this process occurs continually, as many people pay little or no attention to what and how much they eat at any given time. Scientists believe oxidative stress, inflammation and consequent immune response may well underpin many chronic diseases, including diabetes, coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, arthritis and many other conditions.

**What are the implications?**

Never before have we had so much evidence to show it is how we choose to live our lives, and what we choose to eat, that will determine to a large extent whether we will live into our older years in health and optimal wellness, or die early. Nutrients and regular physical activity truly can save lives.

**What's the least healthy thing you do?**

Drink coffee, three cups a day, but real coffee, not instant.

**So no sweet vices?**

I eat fruit and that's enough to satisfy my sweet tooth.