

# Tahoe nutritionist touts plants over animals

By Kathryn Reed

The link between food and health was underscored this month in a nutrition presentation before the South Lake Tahoe City Council.

Registered dietician June Denney promoted a plant-based diet in her talk with physician Greg Bergner. Her message was that food can cause and prevent disease.

Citing the 2015 Global Burden of Disease Study, Denney said, the No. 1 cause of premature death and disease is food.

Diet-related chronic diseases include:

- Obesity
- Cardiovascular disease
- Hypertension
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Osteoporosis.

Denney provided information from multiple studies showing the benefits of eating vegetables over meat.

Stats included:

- Strawberries are the most powerful anti-angiogenic food
- 1 serving per month of kale or collard greens reduces the risk of glaucoma by 69 percent

- Beets and arugula decrease blood pressure, improve COPD, peripheral artery disease and improve fitness performance

- One banana a day can decrease the chance of stroke by 40 percent.

One of the problems people have in the United States is with serving sizes. Three ounces of cooked red meat is a serving. Most hamburgers, though, are the equivalent of two servings. So, not only are people eating foods that are bad for them, the quantities are more than most people realize.

With most African nations not adopting a Western diet, they don't have the same diseases as the United States.

Denney shared:

- 1 in 3 Americans die of cardiovascular disease
- 1 in 1,000 Africans die of cardiovascular disease
- Some hospitals in Africa have not seen a single case of colon cancer
- Kenya sees 20 times less breast cancer than the United States.

"We are doing something wrong," Denney said.

The presentation was in recognition of March being National Nutrition Month.