



AMA FAMILY DOCTOR WEEK, 23- 29 July 2017

Your Family Doctor: all about you

GPs HELP GUIDE PATIENTS TO A HEALTHIER WEIGHT

AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, said today that local GPs can provide people with expert advice on simple steps to achieve a healthier lifestyle and lose weight.

Dr Gannon said that, in Australia, around two out of three adults and one in four children are either overweight or obese.

“In some parts of the country, these figures are even worse,” Dr Gannon said.

“But a healthier lifestyle and healthier weight can be achieved with some simple changes to daily routines, with advice and guidance from your GP.

“GPs can explain the risks of carrying too much weight, and recommend achievable action.

“Excess weight increases the risk factors for cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, some musculoskeletal conditions, and cancers.

“Obesity is a complex health issue, but there are things people can do to manage or maintain their weight, and reduce the risk of health problems associated with overweight and obesity.

“Eating a varied diet, with an emphasis on fruit and vegetables and unprocessed foods is a good place to start.

“Most of us are not eating our two serves of fruit a day and almost all of us (93 per cent) are not eating enough vegetables.

“Too many Australians make fast food a regular part of their diet, making 51.5 million visits to a fast food outlet every month.

“Age is also a factor. Three out of four people aged 64-74 years are overweight, compared to almost 1.5 people out of four aged 18-24 years.

“The higher a person’s weight climbs, the higher the risks of developing a chronic disease. One chronic disease, particularly if unchecked, can lead to another, which leads to more complex and costly health conditions.

“About 70 per cent of people who are obese have at least one established morbidity, resulting in medical costs that are about 30 per cent greater than those of their healthy weight peers.

“Many more people have serious health conditions that they are unaware of. For example, it has been estimated that for every five cases of diabetes there are four undiagnosed cases.”

Dr Gannon said that simple changes can have positive long-term effects on a person’s health.

“An extra serve of fruit and vegetables a day could reduce the risk of heart disease. Going for a long walk every day is good for overall health.”

Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines recommend:

- Doing any physical activity is better than doing none. If you currently do no physical activity, start by doing some, and gradually build up to the recommended amount.
- Be active on most, preferably all, days every week.
- Accumulate 150 to 300 minutes (2.5 to 5 hours) of moderate intensity physical activity, or 75 to 150 minutes (1.25 to 2.5 hours) of vigorous intensity physical activity, or an equivalent combination of both moderate and vigorous activities, each week.
- Do muscle strengthening activities on at least two days each week.
- Just going for a 30 minute walk every day is enough to lower your blood pressure, reduce the chance of stroke, and improve your circulation. A regular walk will help improve your heart health, your mood, and your digestion.

Dr Gannon said that people should make a plan to discuss with their GP how a healthy lifestyle can help prevent disease, improve mental health, increase mobility, and improve your quality of life.

“Your local GP can you help you put into action any changes you may need to make to achieve a healthy and happier life,” Dr Gannon said.

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