



Monday, 2nd February 2009

Kick start 2009 health resolutions with LOOZIT: A weight management program for teens

After 2 years, 18 groups and countless success stories, LOOZIT is back helping young people look good and feel great the practical and healthy way.

The LOOZIT study developed by *The Children's Hospital at Westmead* is now available for young people in Sydney aged from 13 to 16 years who want help with weight management. The program aims to empower young people with skills, knowledge and confidence to re-gain control of their body size, build self esteem, set healthy lifestyle goals and have fun.

"Our program has a positive focus with emphasis on the whole family making realistic and achievable lifestyle changes that can fit in with everyday life in the long term." explains Janice O'Connor, Research Dietitian at The Children's Hospital at Westmead.

"We discuss healthy meals and snacks, encouraging young people to experiment with new foods and fresh ingredients. We also show them how they can become more active in a fun way, as well as look at self esteem and positive ways to manage stress."

The LOOZIT program was launched in 2006, with 18 groups having completed the 9-week program and the results and feedback from these participants have been encouraging. Not only have the participants demonstrated positive health outcomes, many of the young people in the program who were initially anxious about taking part have voiced how glad they are about having participated.

Parents attend separate sessions at the same time as the young people's groups to discuss how they can support their young person to make positive lifestyle changes.

"The program has not only helped my child gain more confidence and learn to set healthy active goals, but it has changed my whole family's habits. We have reduced our portion sizes, are more aware of what we are eating and have all increased our daily activity," one parent commented.

Past LOOZIT participants have enjoyed meeting other young people the same age who share similar concerns, they enjoy the fun activities the program offers and like the security of belonging to a supportive group.

“The young people support each other when they find it hard to stick to their goals around managing their weight and physical activity. During the course we see the teenagers change from people who don’t want to make eye contact to young people who enter a room, look at you and smile”, says O’Connor.

There is now an opportunity for more young people to join LOOZIT, with the program set to commence at The Hills Community Health Centre the week of the 23rd of February 2009.

Loozit is a research study that involves a 9 week free-of-charge program which runs one afternoon a week from 5.00pm – 6.15pm. Participants continue to be supported by a reunion of their group once a school term for a period of 2 years.

Bookings are essential. For further information please contact Binh Nguyen on (02) 9845-1224 or visit www.chw.edu.au/kids/loozit or email loozit@chw.edu.au.

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