



# Loozit's a winner

## Health program for kids

By **Natalie Oliveri**

A WEIGHT loss and healthy living program developed by The Children's Hospital at Westmead is helping young people to take control of their lives while boosting their self-esteem.

The free program, called Loozit, is vital to helping lower to middle income families keep their weight under control, paediatrician Louise Baur said.

Professor Baur said families in western Sydney needed a program that was not only affordable but also easily accessible.

"Lower to middle income groups are more likely to have weight problems than the higher earners but a lot of people with high incomes do struggle with their weight too – it's just more of an issue in western Sydney," Professor Baur said.

She blames this on "poor urban planning in some areas", a reliance on cars because of bad public transport and a lack of recreational green space.

A study of Loozit by Professor

Baur, Dr Michael Kohn and Janice O'Connor was recently published in the *Nutrition and Dietetics* journal.

Loozit is believed to be the first program of its kind to be properly evaluated on its effectiveness.

It was developed for people aged 13-16 who are starting to struggle with their weight. Group sessions focus on healthy meals and snacks, becoming more active and building self-esteem. Participants meet once a week for nine weeks and then once a school term in the following two years.

Findings from the study showed that the self-esteem of young people increased, their waist circumference decreased and their "good" cholesterol improved.

The first participants in the Loozit trial helped to develop the program.

Parents also attend the meetings to help their children stay on track.

The next Loozit program starts on July 21 at various locations.

Details: Phone 9845 1291 or visit [www.chw.edu.au/kids/loozit/](http://www.chw.edu.au/kids/loozit/)



**Seeing results:** Louise Baur and Michael Kohn from the Children's Hospital at Westmead.  
**Picture Wesley Lonergan**