



Loozers shed weight and gain confidence

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A PROGRAM run through Westmead Hospital is helping teenagers to lose weight and, importantly, to understand food labels, portion sizes, glucose intake and carbohydrates.

The Loozit program takes an educational approach that is helping teens struggling with their weight to get healthy and maintain a new lifestyle.

Karen Renfrey and daughter Courtney, from Ryde, started the program in February last year, when Courtney was 14.

Courtney weighed 91.7kg at the time, having lost 4.3kg before starting. By the time she finished the nine-week program she had lost another 4.5kg, taking her down to 87.2kg. She now weighs 84kg, 7.7kg less than when she began with Loozit.

Mrs Renfrey says the program taught the pair practical ways of approaching long-term weight management.

"The program is an education, not a diet," Mrs Renfrey said. "It teaches teenagers things like how much sugar is in a can of Coke, or how big snack is supposed to be.

"It is a reality check and you realise if you eat a certain food, you need to do a certain amount of exercise to burn it off."

Designed for 13 to 16-year-olds, Loozit is a free research program that uses SMS, email and phone coaching to keep teens on track.

Parents also attend separate information sessions to discuss how they can help support their child.

Mrs Renfrey said the program went beyond what teenagers were taught in schools.

"Kids learn about the basic food groups



Courtney Renfrey prepares a balanced meal as part of her weight control program.

Picture: BRENT MCGILVARY -FP273552

but not about label reading and carbohydrates and sugar levels. I certainly wasn't aware of all that, which is why it is beneficial that parents are involved."

Importantly, Courtney's self esteem has returned and she has the confidence to continue everything she learnt through Loozit with the support of her mother.

"Courtney was beautiful before but when someone loses weight they stand taller, want to dress better and take pride in themselves," Mrs Renfrey said.

More young people can join Loozit, with a new program set to start on May 11.

Bookings are essential.

Contact Bing Nguyen on 9845 1224 or visit chw.edu.au/kids/loozit for more details.