

Free program fills students in on healthy choices



Kate Ferguson is a pioneer of the Loozit program.

Picture: BRAD HUNTER

KATE Ferguson, unlike many Hills teenagers, knows how to make healthy lifestyle choices thanks to a program called Loozit.

The 14-year-old from Castle Hill was one of the first people to take part in the pioneering research program developed by The Children's Hospital at Westmead.

She and her mum Chris attended the eight-week program together, Kate in group activities with other teenagers while her mum trained with other parents.

"At first I didn't want to do it but mum talked me into it and I'm really glad I did it," Kate said.

Teenagers learned about healthy eating and exercise. Parents found out how to help their children reach their goals.

"I am eating a lot more fruit and a lot more vegetables now," said Kate.

Although she plays netball twice a week, Kate is now riding her bike to visit friends and exercising for at least 30 minutes a day.

Time spent on the computer or

watching television is limited to two hours a day other than homework.

"I feel more confident," said Kate.

Her mother said the whole family had benefited from healthier eating choices.

Loozit study co-ordinator and Children's Hospital research dietitian Janice O'Connor said: "We aim to empower young people with skills, knowledge and confidence to regain control of their body size, build self-esteem, and set healthy active goals.

"Loozit aims to help young people at a time in their lives when body image is at its most vulnerable and when establishing self-esteem is of high importance."

The first Loozit program for 2007 will start in school term two at the Hills Community Health Centre.

To register for the free nine-week program call Janice O'Connor on 9845 1291. Bookings are essential.