

Fact Sheet

For my adolescent with a weight problem: Where to from here?

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- Unfortunately, weight problems are common among adolescents in Australia. At least 1 in 4 young people in high school in Australia are overweight or obese.
- If you suspect that your adolescent may have a weight problem, it is important that he or she is correctly assessed. Your local GP or paediatrician will be able to assess their growth and level of development and provide further advice.
- The main factors that can be controlled to influence weight status are food intake and level of physical activity.
- Simple dietary changes that can be made include:
 - Swapping all full cream dairy foods (milk, yoghurt, cheese) to low fat varieties.
 - Stop the consumption of all fruit juice, cordial and soft drink.
 - Check food labels and only choose foods that have <10grams of fat per 100grams.
- Simple changes to physical activity that can be made include:
 - Restricting television viewing and computer usage to 2 hrs or less each day.
 - Encourage some regular physical activity such as 30 minutes of walking every day.
- There is an extreme shortage of services available to manage adolescent weight problems in the

community. Some services available include:

- **Adolescent Weight Management Clinic at The Children's Hospital at Westmead:** A program for young people with severe weight problems. This clinic requires a paediatrician referral.
- **Local hospital:** Some hospitals have departments which will see adolescents for weight management. For more information on your local services contact your GP or local hospital or community health centre.
- **Private dietitian:** Private dietitians can be found locally in the Yellow Pages. Members of private health funds may get some rebates after seeing a private dietitian.
- **Your family doctor may** be able to advise on other services in your local area.

Remember

- **Weight problems can often be successfully managed in adolescents by making some dietary changes and by becoming more physically active.**
- **Simple dietary changes that can be made include choosing low fat dairy foods and eliminating soft drinks.**
- **Simple changes to activity habits including adding 30 minutes of activity to your day and aiming to watch less than 2 hours of television.**
- **If you would like more help with weight management, discuss local options with your GP or paediatrician.**

This fact sheet is for education purposes only.
Please consult with your doctor or other health professional
to make sure this information is right for your child.

This document was reviewed on Thursday, 3rd August 2006.

the
children's
hospital at Westmead

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CHILDREN'S
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