



**Health**  
South Eastern Sydney  
Local Health District

**July 3, 2015**

### **NSW HEALTH LAUNCHES MAJOR CAMPAIGN TO MAKE HEALTHY NORMAL**

With more than half of NSW adults and almost a quarter of children overweight or obese, a new NSW Health campaign is encouraging people to make simple diet and exercise changes in a bid to address the growing obesity problem.

Julie Dixon, Director Planning, Population Health and Equity, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, said the *Make Healthy Normal* campaign's television advertising, print radio and social media messages were aimed at helping people become more physically active and improving overall dietary habits in NSW.

"Overweight and obesity costs the NSW economy around \$19 billion annually, and chronic disease is estimated to be responsible for 80 per cent of the total burden of disease in Australia," Ms Dixon said.

"Combined high body mass index, physical inactivity as well as low fruit and vegetable consumption are the largest contributors to the burden of disease.

"In contrast, healthy eating and physical activity are key factors in maintaining quality of life and preventing diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, stroke and some cancers across all life stages.

"To address the growing epidemic of these lifestyle and preventable diseases, largely caused by overweight and obesity, NSW Health has devised this campaign to help NSW reach a new normal, a healthy normal."

A recent NSW Health survey found less than half of the participants could correctly identify the proportion of overweight and obese adults in Australia. They also couldn't identify the recommended number of minutes of physical activity each day to maintain overall health.

Less than a fifth of participants were aware of the average daily kilojoule intake of Australian adults. Only half of the participants disagreed with the statement that "It's alright to be a bit overweight", with overweight or obese participants less likely to disagree.

Ms Dixon said just making some small changes could make an enormous difference to a person's overall health.

"Evidence shows that for overweight people, every kilogram of excess weight lost brings ongoing, long-term health benefits, and modest weight loss significantly reduces an individual's risk of chronic disease. For example, a five per cent weight loss can lead to 40-60 per cent less chance of developing diabetes over three years," she said.

"Small steps can make a big difference. Our key messages for the campaign are:

- choose smaller portions

- eat more fruit and vegetables
- make water your drink
- be active every day
- sit less
- and move more.”

**About:** The *Make Healthy Normal* campaign features television advertising on all major channels which will extend to digital, radio and print. The campaign will act as a catalyst for personal behaviour change and will also drive people to existing NSW Health programs, such as the free Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service and a suite of digital tools.

NSW Health will be encouraging people to start with small, manageable steps that will build up over time and improve a person’s health and wellbeing. Make Healthy Normal is a key component of the NSW Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) Strategy: Preventing overweight and obesity in New South Wales 2013-2018.

**For more information:**

**Make Healthy Normal website:** <http://www.makehealthynormal.nsw.gov.au/>

**Facebook account:** <https://www.facebook.com/makehealthynormal?fref=nf>