



Building a healthy, active Australia

Healthy Eating and Regular Physical Activity- Information for Australian Families

What is it?

Regular physical activity and healthy food can make a real difference to the wellbeing of our children - while they are at school and as they become adults.

As part of the Australian Government's \$116 million *Building a Healthy, Active Australia* package, Australians will get practical help through an \$11 million information programme about how healthy eating and regular physical activity can assist in ensuring the wellbeing of children.

Why is it needed?

Good nutrition contributes to brain development and academic achievement. A healthy diet and physical activity are also essential to maintaining healthy body weight and reducing the chances of developing heart disease and diabetes.

We are faced with a wider range of cheaper and more accessible foods than ever before. The rise in the consumption of high energy foods, coupled with reduced levels of physical activity, is contributing to the fact that there are currently 1.5 million young people under the age of 18 in Australia who are either overweight or obese. Once children or adolescents are overweight, it is difficult for them to get back to a healthy weight.

Information will be made available through the mass media to:

- raise community awareness of what can be done to deal with these issues;
- provide practical pointers for parents on the things they need to know; and
- give children the information they need to make the best choices when it comes to eating and being active.

What will this information programme do?

There will be two strands: one on nutrition and healthy eating; and one on the importance of

building more physical activity into our children's lives.

Taken together, these will make a positive contribution to healthy and active living among Australian children and their families by providing them with reliable, practical, and consumer-friendly information on the benefits of physical activity and healthy eating, including:

- why physical activity and healthy eating are important in achieving good health;
- how to make physical activity a part of each day;
- how to eat a more balanced diet; and
- where to find further information and support.

Australian parents will be encouraged to help their children participate in physical activity. Children and their families will also be encouraged to increase their daily consumption of fruit and vegetables.

When will the programme begin?

The information programme will start in the second half of 2004, including national advertising to raise public awareness, wide distribution of promotional materials (posters, recipes and information kits), available to order and produced in languages to cater for non-English speaking audiences, and a phone line to assist families with further information.

How do I get involved?

Talk about the issues involved and discuss with your family how you can become healthier and more active.

More information on this Australian Government initiative as well as practical advice on being more physically active and choosing healthy foods can be found at www.healthyactive.gov.au