

HEALTH REPORT

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OVERWEIGHT AND OUT-OF-SHAPE: AUSTRALIANS IN DENIAL

New research shows Australians are in denial and don't understand the impact of obesity and diabetes on their health.

Research-based medicines company, Pfizer Australia today released the latest issue of the Pfizer Australia Health Report. The national research was conducted by Pfizer Australia on behalf of Diabetes Australia.

According to the research*:

- 63 per cent of Australians understated their perceived risk of Type 2 diabetes
- 26 per cent of people who are overweight don't consider themselves above ideal weight
- 67 per cent of Australians think they are eating healthily most of the time however they are not

According to Diabetes Australia, these findings suggest that people's perceptions of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle are not matching up to reality.

A spokesperson for Diabetes Australia, Associate Professor Maarten Kamp, said obesity is a major health problem in Australia with approximately 60 per cent of Australian adults and 30 per cent of Australian children overweight or obese.

"Type 2 diabetes is the most preventable chronic condition associated with the obesity epidemic," said Professor Kamp, a diabetes specialist from the Gold Coast Hospital.

"Australia is currently in the midst of a diabetes epidemic with more than three million Australians estimated as having diabetes or pre-diabetes. Being overweight or obese puts you at a higher risk of developing Type 2 diabetes," he said.

The President of Diabetes Australia, Associate Professor Peter Little said this research highlights the need for better public awareness and education campaign community understanding about obesity and Type 2 diabetes and a more realistic assessment of personal risk.

"We need a lot more public education around maintaining healthy weight, healthy eating and physical activity," he said.



"The good news is that a healthy lifestyle can reduce your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes by as much as 60 per cent," he said.

Key tips from Diabetes Australia for preventing the onset of diabetes are:

- o do regular physical activity
- o make healthy food choices
- o maintain a healthy weight
- o be aware of the risk factors
- o have regular health checks

"Don't wait to be diagnosed with diabetes before you make positive lifestyle changes. Everyone should eat and exercise as if they have diabetes," said Associate Professor Little.

To assist with educating the public about diabetes, Diabetes Australia has collaborated with Pfizer Australia to produce this month's edition of the Pfizer Australia Health Report. Free copies can be requested by phoning **1800 675 229** or by visiting www.healthreport.com.au where people can also sign-up for email alerts of future editions.

* The findings on Australian perceptions of diabetes are based on responses from 1370 Australians aged 18 years and over. The research was conducted in August 2005 by independent consultants Stollznow Research.

Pfizer Australia is the nation's leading research-based health care company, investing over \$42m in local research and development annually. It researches innovative medical treatments. For more information, visit www.pfizer.com.au.

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NB: INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL SPOKESPEOPLE ARE ALSO AVAILABLE IN EACH STATE/TERRITORY.

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