Cooking at home = Prescription for healthy weight in 2016

New research shows more than half Australian adults are unhappy with their weight, with many wanting to eat better, trim portion sizes and cook at home more.

The national Omnipoll survey of 1,230 Australians aged 18-64 years, commissioned by Australia’s peak body for dietitians, the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA), revealed around 52% of adults want to lose weight. The survey also found around one in three (34%) want to boost their vegetable intake, a quarter (26%) are aiming to reduce portion sizes, and around one in five (19%) want to cook at home more.

The research comes as DAA launches Australia’s Healthy Weight Week (15-21 February), which calls on Australians to make simple changes towards smart eating, starting with cooking at home more often.

According to DAA Spokesperson Professor Clare Collins, research shows that people who regularly make their meals at home have better overall diets. They are more likely to eat smaller portions and take in fewer kilojoules and less fat, salt and sugar, compared with people who rarely eat home-cooked dinners.

And in turn, this is more likely to result in a healthy weight.

Professor Collins said by improving skills in home cooking, Australians can ‘up’ their vegetable intake by more than half a serve a day – an important finding given more than nine in 10 Australians don’t eat enough vegetables.

She said the Omnipoll survey also found around one in ten (14%) Australians currently eat out or buy take-away three or more times a week.

‘These days, we’re often in a hurry and can fall into a habit of eating take-away foods or snacking on unhealthy foods and drinks. Another challenge, in a culture with a ‘supersizing’ mentality, is eating portions sizes that are too big.

‘Cooking at home is one way to pack a punch when it comes to keeping your weight in check and improving your health, and that of your family. At home you have control over what goes into your meal and how much you serve up, so it’s the ultimate healthy weight weapon,’ said Professor Collins, an Accredited Practising Dietitian.

She added that healthy home cooking can be quick, easy and cheap.

Professor Collins called on Australians to rise to the challenge and kick-start healthy eating habits, starting with cooking at home every day during Australia’s Healthy Weight Week.

And she recommended getting the right nutrition advice and support from an Accredited Practising Dietitian.

Note to Editors: The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) is the professional body representing dietitians nationally. Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) is the only national credential recognised by the Australian Government, Medicare, the Department of Veteran Affairs and most private health funds as the quality standard for nutrition and dietetics services in Australia. For more information visit www.daa.asn.au. For the Media section on the DAA website contains DAA’s media releases and position on topical nutrition issues in the media.
Professor Collins said for Australians wanting to shape up, a realistic weight loss of around 2-4kg a month could be achieved with healthy eating, correct portion sizes and regular physical activity.

‘Being a healthy weight helps lower your risk of lifestyle-related conditions, such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some types of cancer – and importantly, helps you to feel your best and live life to the full. And the good news is it’s never too late to start,’ said Professor Collins.

In support of Australia's Healthy Weight Week, Rural Health Minister Fiona Nash said: ‘I applaud this initiative of the Dietitians Association of Australia. The Australian Government is committed to tackling obesity and educating Australians to eat better and lead healthier lives.’

Minister Nash chaired the inaugural meeting of the Healthy Food Partnership in late 2015, which brought together government, public health and the food industry to work collaboratively on these issues.

Find out what’s on near you this Australia’s Healthy Weight Week, and get nutrition tips and recipes, including the free Everyday Healthy II cookbook, developed by DAA and Sprout, at www.healthyweightweek.com.au

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For further information or to organise an interview with Professor Clare Collins, contact Maree Hall, Dietitians Association of Australia, on 0408 482 581.

Background information:

About Australia's Healthy Weight Week (15 to 21 February 2016):
AHWW, an initiative of the Dietitians Association of Australia, is an ideal time to kick-start healthy eating habits.

The aim for the 2016 campaign is straight-forward: to encourage more Australians to cook at home as a way to help achieve and maintain a healthy weight. AHWW also encourages Australians to seek expert and individual nutrition advice from an Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD). APDs are nutrition scientists with years of university study behind them. They work with people to develop tailored eating plans and support and motivate them to make diet changes for life.

Award-winning celebrity cook, Callum Hann, and Accredited Practising Dietitian, Themis Chryssidis (both from Sprout), are supporting AHWW in 2016 – including through a launch event in Adelaide on Monday 15 February.

Download the new AHWW cookbook Everyday Healthy II: Seasonal, Fresh and Tasty, from www.healthyweightweek.com.au. Ingredients for four of the recipes in the cookbook can be purchased from Thomas Farms Kitchen. Also see the AHWW website for nutrition tips, recipes, event details and a social media toolkit. Take part in the AHWW Instagram Cooking Challenge and follow AHWW at...
MEDIA RELEASE

www.twitter.com/DAA_feed and use #AHWW, and join the AHWW live Twitter Chat on Wednesday 17 February.

Fast facts

- The latest National Health Survey (2014-2015) found 63.4% of adults are overweight or obese, this equates to 11.2 million Australians. Looking a little deeper the survey found seven out of 10 men (70.8%) and just over half of women (56.3%) are overweight or obese.
- The same survey found only 7% of Australian adults meet the recommended daily serves of vegetables, and just 49.8% meet the Australian Dietary Guideline’s recommendation for fruit.
- According to Australia’s latest National Nutrition Survey (2011-2012), more than 2.3 million Australians aged 15 years and over reported that they were on a diet to lose weight or for some other health reason. This included 15% of females and 11% of males.

Note: Australia’s Healthy Weight Week 2016 is proudly supported by Thomas Farms Kitchen, Meat & Livestock Australia, CanPrint, Australian Mushroom Growers, and Next Media.

Lamb kofta, sweet potato mash, rocket salad & tahini yoghurt

Serves 4

Ingredients:
- 1 large sweet potato
- 500g lamb mince
- 2 teaspoons cumin seeds
- 2 teaspoons fennel seeds
- 1 tablespoon rice bran oil
- 1 pear
- ¼ red onion
- 2 large handfuls rocket
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Juice of a lemon
- ½ cup thick low fat Greek yoghurt
- 2 teaspoons tahini
- ¼ bunch mint leaves, picked

Method:
1. Preheat oven to 200C. Place sweet potato onto a tray, transfer to the oven and roast for an hour or until very tender. Cut each piece in half, scoop out flesh into a bowl and mash until smooth.
2. Combine lamb and spices in a bowl. Roll into 2cm balls. Heat a non-stick pan over high with the oil. Fry kofta in oil for 3-4 minutes or until golden brown all over and just cooked.
3. Slice pear and red onion thinly. Combine with rocket, olive oil and lemon juice.

Recipe developed by Sprout as part of the new AHWW cookbook *Everyday Healthy II: Seasonal, Fresh and Tasty*. Recipe image available on request. Contact Maree Hall on: prmanager@daa.asn.au

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1 Omnipoll survey (October 2015) of 1,230 Australians adults aged 18-64 years, commissioned by the Dietitians Association of Australia.