

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: Wednesday 14 August 2019

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Media Available

TV/Radio grabs with Health Minister Roger Cook, CCWA CEO Ashley Reid & cancer surgeon Krishna Epari available via this link: <http://bit.ly/2TriOER>

LiveLighter TV/radio ads available via this link: <http://bit.ly/2TriOER>

LiveLighter calls for urgent obesity action with new campaign
Cancer Council Western Australia (CCWA) will today launch the next LiveLighter® public education campaign that urges Western Australians to reduce their cancer risk by reducing sugary drink consumption.

The new LiveLighter® advertisement, which has never been seen before in WA, will focus on the contribution of sugary drinks to dangerous toxic fat around the organs which can trigger certain cancers.

The campaign has been developed alongside new Cancer Council Australia-funded research published in the International Journal of Cancer that shows over 200,000 cancer cases could be avoided in Australia over the next 25 years if all Australian adults maintained a healthy weight and met the physical activity guidelines for cancer prevention¹.

CCWA CEO Ashley Reid says that this research indicates that there has never been a more urgent time to address the rise in overweight and obesity in Western Australia.

“Given two thirds of WA adults aged 16-years-old and over are above a healthy weight and nearly half are not active enough², these results show we have the potential to prevent a significant number of cancers in WA and potentially save thousands of lives,” Mr Reid said.

“As little as 40% of Australians know about obesity’s link to cancer, which is why we need to take action and raise awareness³.”

Cancer surgeon Mr Krishna Epari says the links between toxic fat and cancer are clear, but so are the steps needed to reduce a person’s risk.

¹ Wilson, L., Baade, P., Green, A., Jordan, S., Kendall, B., Neale, R., Olsen, C., Youlden, D. Webb, P., Whiteman, D., The impact of changing the prevalence of overweight/obesity and physical inactivity in Australia: An estimate of the proportion of potentially avoidable cancers 2013–2037, 2018

² National Health Survey (ABS) Australian Bureau of Statistics. National health survey results 2017-18. ABS 2018, cat No. 4364.0.55.001

³ Watson, W., Weber, M., Hughes, C., Wellard, L., Chapman, K., Support for food policy initiatives is associated with knowledge of obesity-related cancer risk factors. Public Health Research and Practice 2017. 27(5): p. 1-8.

“Research has shown that 13 types of cancer are more common in people who are above a healthy weight,” Mr Epari, who is an Upper Gastrointestinal and Bariatric Surgeon, said. “One of the easiest things people can do to reduce their risk is to reduce sugary drink consumption.

“Australians consume approximately 1.43 billion litres of sugary drinks each year, and alarmingly, 47% of Australian children consume sugary drinks every day⁴.

“Many people don’t realise the impact of sugary drinks on weight gain. For example, one 600mL bottle of regular soft drink contains 16 teaspoons of sugar.

“Cutting down on sugary drinks is critical as this is sugar our bodies just don’t need.”

Mr Reid added that while campaigns like LiveLighter are crucial, public education alone isn’t enough and called for a whole-of-sector response to the obesity issue.

CCWA has teamed up with Healthway and Telethon Kids Institute (TKI) to establish a Rapid Obesity Policy Translation program. This will ensure research conducted by TKI and other research organisations is rapidly translated into practice by CCWA and others, accelerating impact for children and families in WA.

CCWA has also linked up with WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) to support the campaign as the Primary Care partner to ensure GPs and front line staff are skilled in talking to patients about weight.

Mr Reid added: “We are delighted to announce these partnerships with Healthway, TKI and WAPHA, but this is just the start. We need every sector to urgently play their part.

“If we don’t act now, we are facing seeing a generation of kids grow up who will not live as long as their parents.

“We must, as a community, do more to support families, and to ensure kids are growing up in healthy environments where they are not bombarded with junk food advertising and proliferation of fast food outlets and we need to make sure junk food and sugary drinks are restricted in settings where our kids learn and play.

“We know that the community is behind this and we know they want our help. We need to work together to succeed in halting the rise in obesity and we need to do this now.”

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Background

- Research has shown that 13 types of cancer are more common in people who are above a healthy weight, including cancers of the oesophagus, breast, liver, gallbladder, kidney, bowel, multiple myeloma, meningioma, thyroid, gastric cardia, pancreas, ovaries and uterus.
- The campaign will be seen across mainstream TV and radio; metro, regional and Indigenous networks, cinemas, bus stops, shopping centres and across various digital platforms in WA. It will run from today until the start of October.

⁴ National Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey, 2011-12

- LiveLighter is funded by the Department of Health, and delivered by Cancer Council WA.
- More information is available via the website www.livelighter.com.au about how to make small lifestyle changes to improve people's health.