



MEDIA RELEASE

Embargoed until 5am Thursday 18 May 2017

University students missing out on the health front

New research finds that a massive 93 per cent of university students do not eat the necessary serves of fruit and vegetable that will support them to study effectively.

The University of Newcastle research, being presented today at the [Dietitians Association of Australia National Conference](#) in Hobart, targeted this group because young adults face a lot of challenges and young adulthood is a key time to cement healthy eating habits, which set them up for a healthy life.

Researcher and Accredited Practising Dietitian, Melinda Hutchesson, found only half (54.5%) of the 4,180 university students in the study ate the recommended two serves of fruit per day and less than 10 per cent (8.4%) ate the necessary five serves of vegetables a day.

“Our findings are a worry because, in the short term, busy students need all the help they can get to boost their immune systems to avoid even simple things like colds and stress, and in the long term because what they eat now determines how their bodies deal with disease and change over time,” said Dr Hutchesson.

While women, and students in a health and science related discipline did better than others, all students need to make an effort to meet the target of a couple of pieces of fruit and five serves of vegetables a day, where a serve is one cup of salad or a half a cup of cooked vegetables.

“Eating healthy foods is a lot cheaper than many students think. For example, apples are 60c per 100 grams compared to a chocolate bar which is around \$4.30 for the same amount. Healthy eating makes sense,” said Dr Hutchesson.

According to Dr Hutchesson, not knowing how to cook is a big barrier to healthy eating.

“Have some simple recipes on hand, that don’t take long to prepare, and are full of vegetables. Stir-fry and pasta dishes are easy to put together and a great way to boost vegetable intake,” said Dr Hutchesson.

She also calls on universities to play a role.

“There needs to be healthier options on campus in shops and vending machines, with pricing so students can afford them. Universities can also support students from health faculties to run health-focussed activities for all students,” said Dr Hutchesson.

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**For further information or to organise an interview with Melinda Hutchesson, contact
DAA: Maree Hall, on 0408 482 581, or Sally Moloney, on 0428 916 425.**

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.



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Background:

About the Dietitians Association of Australia National Conference

The DAA National Conference is being held from 18-20 May 2017 at the Hobart Grand Chancellor Hotel. For more information and program details, visit: www.daa2017.com.au and follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/DAA_feed (and use #DAA2017).

Press passes can be made available for interested media (including Australian-based journalists from print, radio, television and online media outlets) to attend sessions at the conference. To request a press pass, please contact Maree Hall 0408 482 581.

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