

AUSTRALIAN CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION ALLIANCE



Media Release

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Disadvantaged kids nearly twice as likely to be overweight or obese

Leading chronic disease groups are calling for more decisive action on obesity following the release of a chronic disease report card showing Australia's disadvantaged children are nearly twice as likely to be overweight or obese as our least disadvantaged children.

Professor Greg Johnson, chair of the Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance said the report (20/6) showed that while one in four Australian children was overweight or obese overall, prevalence was much higher in disadvantaged groups.

"One in three of our most disadvantaged children is overweight or obese compared to less than one in five of our least disadvantaged children," Professor Johnson said.

"This is of major concern because obese children tend to become obese adults, increasing their risk of developing chronic conditions such heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, kidney disease and some cancers.

"Adults who live in the most disadvantaged areas are also 20% more likely to be overweight and obese than those living in the least disadvantaged areas.

"Having a chronic disease increases your healthcare costs and can reduce your capacity to work, entrenching disadvantage.

"We also know that disadvantaged Australians die prematurely from chronic disease at up to twice the rate of those who are better off.

"We need to invest more in obesity prevention strategies targeting vulnerable groups if we are to reduce health disparities in Australia.

"Broader strategies are also critical, including restricting marketing of unhealthy foods to children, speeding up the reformulation of processed foods to make them healthier, improving food labelling to help people make healthier food choices and providing infrastructure that encourages physical activity.

"Obesity continues to be one of the biggest health challenges facing Australia today and we need to do everything we can to reduce the health burden it creates."

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Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance members: Cancer Council Australia; Diabetes Australia; Kidney HealthAustralia; Heart Foundation; National Stroke Foundation.