

The House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport
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Submission for Inquiry into Diabetes:

From:

Danni Duncan - Certified Fitness & Nutrition Coach, Master Female Trainer, Author and mum of 3 (1 year old twins and a 4 year old)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission in to this inquiry. I have been a fitness and nutrition coach for 3.5 years, helping women change their relationship with food, lose significant amounts of weight, incorporate movement into their lives and in turn educate their families and children on a healthy balanced lifestyle. Not only for their futures - reducing the risk of chronic disease but also for their mental health.

In addition to this I have written a baby and toddler recipe book called Nourishing Little Lives to help educate parents on what they should be feeding their children to give them the best opportunity to thrive long term - an area I'm hugely passionate about.

Over the years I have worked with women who have come to me after being told they were either pre diabetic or have recently been diagnosed with diabetes. These women came to me because they were told they needed to change their diets but the education around how to do this was so slim they weren't sure where to start. They were put on low calories diets, or advised to take fat loss drugs, or even have surgery to lose the fat that's causing them Type 2 Diabetes. They come to me because they don't want to resort to that. They KNOW there's another way, but are not sure how to do it. They want to change their LIFESTYLE so that the fat they loss sticks, is long term and doesn't come with a restrictive mindset.

Unfortunately for these women - it is now about managing their diabetes to ensure they are the healthiest versions moving forward - but more needs to be done as a preventative to help these people.

Poor food choices, lack of physical activity and ill education around a healthy balanced lifestyle is leading to more and more cases of diabetes not only in adults but in children as well. Doctors give blanket advice, or refer to big corporations with limited support and usually quick fixes. With usually no education around food and what it does for their bodies or any long term plan to help change the behaviours associated with obesity. It's not as easy as telling someone to eat 1000 calories and sending them on their way. There is no mindset shift, there is no behaviour change, there is no education taken away. What happens then is the cycle then starts again - and the patients don't actually change their lifestyle.

There NEEDS to be more education and care taken to ensure the support is there to change the behaviours and actions of people who are susceptible to diabetes and other

chronic diseases. There needs to be a referral system in place to people like myself who specialise in mindset shift combined with fat loss education to ensure long term change is reached. Otherwise - the problem will never go away.

It starts with us - as then this filters down to our children. For a child to see their parents eat minimal food in a bit to lose weight because their doctor said so, get surgery, be put on medication for the sole purpose of fat loss - we are missing the point in education our kids. Our kids need to understand WHAT they need to eat, WHY they should eat those foods, WHY they need to move their bodies and HOW to incorporate it in to their lives.

Prevention is key. Education is key. I will not stop until I see an active change in the way the government and affiliated companies deal with obesity amongst Australians. Until then - diabetes isn't going anywhere. Because it's then too late.

Thank you for taking the time to read this

Danni Duncan