

## HEALTHY HEARTS WEST - NUTRITION PROGRAMS IN WESTERN SYDNEY.

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The population of western Sydney has amongst the highest cardio-vascular disease mortality in Australia. Healthy Hearts West is a research and demonstration project that aims to reduce the population risk primarily by reducing dietary fat intake. Strategies being implemented to achieve this objective are educational programs focusing on enabling skills, awareness programs and a program to promote a healthy food environment.

Three discrete cooking programs have been devised after intensive piloting and revision. These are firstly, "Cooking For Your Heart", a four session program for established community groups; secondly, "Food For Fun And Health", a series of one session programs covering up to eight topic areas, primarily for disadvantaged women and new groups; and thirdly "Taste and Talk", primarily a promotional activity to raise awareness and/or recruit participants to the other programs. These programs are tailored to the needs of participants and take into account literacy, socio-economic disadvantage, previous life experiences and cultural and social norms related to food.

The Heart Health Centre (Marcel Cottage) is housed in a cottage on the grounds of Blacktown Hospital and is open to all members of the community who want information on diet and heart disease. It provides literature, videos, food fact leaflets and offers nutrition courses to other health professionals. Home economists run cooking classes, modify recipes, organise shopping centre displays and produce visual teaching aids.

The creation of a healthy food environment is essential if consumers' food choices are to be brought more closely in line with the nutrition targets of the Better Health Commission for the years 1995 and 2000. To begin with, the Healthy Hearts West Healthy Food Environment Program has targeted greengrocers in the Blacktown area. A preliminary survey of attitudes, promotion practices and availability of certain items has been carried out. An awareness program involving cooking demonstrations, posters, raffles and recipe sheets is under way.

Two facets of the project, the cooking classes and the intervention with the greengrocers will be described in further detail.

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