

A NEW PERSPECTIVE TO WEIGHT CONTROL MANAGEMENT

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Weight control management is considered as an inefficient use of time (Charlwood and Gibbons 1986). Yet, the average weight of Australians has increased (NHF 1989). Supervised exercise has been shown to be effective in weight control, especially for long term body weight maintenance (Pavlou et al. 1989).

In an attempt to address this problem and due to public demand, the Nutrition Department of the Central Coast Area Health Service and the sports centre of a local club collaborated in the development of a weight loss program, called the "In Shape Club". Participants pay \$50 for 10 weeks of fitness assessment, cholesterol screening, supervised gentle exercise classes and activities, nutrition education and creative healthy cooking demonstrations. They are provided with a folder consisting of progress charts, nutrition and exercise information and recipes as well as a T-shirt. Competitions, with prizes, will be included as incentives.

Program results include changes, over the 10 weeks, in anthropometric measurements, serum cholesterol and dietary behaviour regarding fat intake. Follow up will be arranged at 3 and 6 months to assess maintenance of above changes achieved.

The Nutrition Department has used existing community resources and participated with a community organization to offer weight control management in more positive conditions, away from the hospital setting (Ottawa Charter 1986). In this way, the burden of weight control management is diminished for the dietitian and at the same time, a greater proportion of the community is reached with the possibility of long term support and body weight maintenance.

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