

We are getting fatter and sicker. What are we going to do about it?

By Peter Brukner OAM, MBBS, FACSP, FASMF, FACSM, FFSEM



Peter Brukner OAM is a specialist sports and exercise physician whose most recent position has been Australian cricket team doctor from 2012-17. Peter is the founding partner of Olympic Park Sports Medicine Centre in Melbourne and Professor of Sports Medicine at La Trobe University. A founding Executive Member of the Australasian College of Sports Physicians, he served two terms as President and played a key role in establishing sports medicine as a medical specialty in Australia. Peter is the co-author of the widely used textbook Clinical Sports Medicine and has been team physician for professional football clubs as well as national athletics, swimming, soccer and men's hockey teams including Olympic and Commonwealth Games. Peter was the Socceroos Team Doctor at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa and subsequently became Head of Sports Medicine and Sports Science at Liverpool Football Club. Peter is the co-founder of the public health campaign SugarByHalf and is committed to the challenge of improving the nation's health with improved diet and increased physical activity. His most recent book A Fat Lot of Good was published in May 2018. Peter is also the Chair of Defeat Diabetes, an app-based program, aimed at improving diabetes control through diet. In November 2020 Peter gave a presentation to the New South Wales Bar Association as part of the Wellbeing Committee's Eat Sleep Move Initiative. This is available on the Bar Website.

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Nine years ago, I was living in Liverpool England and working at the football club there. At the time I thought I was reasonably healthy – the reality was that as well as having a family history of Type 2 Diabetes,¹ I was significantly overweight, borderline obese. I had high levels of triglycerides in my blood, high insulin levels, and for the previous ten years I had a condition known as fatty liver.² In retrospect I was clearly pre-diabetic.

I heard a radical idea that we had the recommended diet all wrong, that in fact it was carbohydrates that were the problem not fats. To be honest I thought this was a pretty crazy idea to start with, but the more I read, the more I looked into it, the more it became obvious to me that this was true. I had assumed that the dietary recommendations to reduce our fat intake were based on good science. In fact they were based on money, politics, and the American agriculture industry.

I decided it was time to do a little experiment on myself. I embarked on a three

month change of my diet. I eliminated all sugar, starches and all processed foods and instead ate like my parents or grandparents had eaten, with plenty of meat, fish, green vegetables, dairy, eggs, nuts and seeds. The only fruit I had was berries.

So what happened?

The first thing that happened was that I stopped being hungry. Instead of eating three meals and three snacks a day, I was able to reduce it to two meals a day and I still eat two meals to this day. Then the weight started to fall off, week after week after week I would lose approximately 1 kg. I also noticed that I had more energy, my sleep improved, I wasn't as tired during the day, my concentration was better, and my exercise capacity improved. So at the end of the 13 week trial, I had lost 13 kg. When I repeated my blood tests, my triglycerides had come down to normal, my insulin was normal again, and the fatty liver that I had had for 10 years had completely disappeared. A pretty good three months' work. In fact,

if you discovered a tablet that did all those things, you would make billions.

Ever since then, not only have I kept to that way of eating, restricting my carbohydrate intake, but I have become a passionate advocate of this way of living. I've seen literally hundreds of people I know and patients lose weight, put their Type 2 Diabetes into remission, have improved cardiovascular risk profile, improve their symptoms of inflammatory diseases such as arthritis, as well as making significant improvements in neurological conditions like Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's, as well as mental health problems such as depression and bipolar disorder.

There is now ample evidence in the scientific literature of the efficacy of this way of eating. By eliminating sugars, starches, 'vegetable'/seed oils³ and all processed foods, you can make a significant impact on your health. Don't wait until you have a heart attack (remember 50% of people don't survive their heart attack), or develop Type 2 Diabetes, or one of the other chronic diseases that are related to lifestyle—especially diet.



Now is the time to improve your diet by eliminating unhealthy foods and eating an enjoyable real food diet.

Seventy per cent of Australian males are overweight or obese, more than 50% of females, and more than 1/4 of our children. We have nearly 2 million Australians with Type 2 Diabetes, and another 2 million who are pre-diabetic, and over 4 million Australians have cardiovascular disease. This is a national disgrace.

We are one of the fattest and sickest countries in the world. How could this be with our wealth, our climate, our education, our access to good food, and yet we keep getting fatter and sicker. The single best thing you can do for your health is to improve your diet. The best way to improve your diet is eliminating sugars, starches, 'vegetable'/seed oils and processed foods.

If you want some resources, have a look at my book *A Fat Lot of Good*, and subscribe to our app-based program, Defeat Diabetes. **BN**

A FAT LOT OF GOOD

HOW THE EXPERTS GOT **FOOD AND DIET SO WRONG** AND
WHAT YOU CAN DO TO **TAKE BACK CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH**



DR PETER BRUKNER OAM

Leading sports medicine physician and founder of SugarByHalf

ENDNOTES

- 1 Type 2 Diabetes is the complete antithesis of Type 1 Diabetes. Type 1 Diabetes is an all or nothing condition where the pancreas fails to produce insulin. Whereas, Type 2 Diabetes and so-called prediabetes are points on a continuum. Type 2 Diabetes is an aspect of wider metabolic dysfunction. Type 2 Diabetes was when I was a medical student known as Mature Onset Diabetes. Tragically, Type 2 Diabetes is now affecting children.
- 2 When I was a medical student and young doctor, the condition of Fatty Liver was rare. Now, it is an epidemic.
- 3 So-called 'vegetable oils' which are in truth seed oils: such as, sunflower oil, safflower oil, canola, rapeseed oil, cottonseed oil, corn oil, soybean oil, grape seed oil and sesame oil.