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Queenslanders tell themselves porkies about weight gain

Brisbane residents have blinkers on when it comes to piling on the pounds, with 78 per cent of them blaming their weight gain on genetics.

And even though regional Queenslanders are more realistic, 48 per cent of them rely on the same excuse for their burgeoning waistlines.

The findings were revealed in an AMA Queensland survey of the dietary habits and attitudes of 600 Queenslanders.

AMA Queensland President Dr Bill Boyd said people needed to admit the truth if they hoped to shift the extra kilos.

“Two in three Queenslanders are overweight or obeseⁱ – that’s not a genetic mutation,” Dr Boyd said.

“The simple truth is that, generally, we are eating too much and not moving enough. Putting it down to genetics is just shifting the blame.”

He said the popular image of fit, beach-loving Queenslanders was no longer accurate.

“We have seen a steady increase in our weight since the 1980s, which is putting enormous pressure on our health,” Dr Boyd said.

“There has been an explosion in chronic diseases and conditions as a result, including strokes, hypertension, heart attacks, some cancers and type 2 diabetes.

“We need to start making better lifestyle choices – and that includes not ignoring the real reason that we’ve gained weight.”

The AMA Queensland survey also found:

- **45 per cent of Queenslanders put on weight in the previous 12 months, with 20 per cent losing weight.**
- **50 per cent of those gaining weight said they had added an extra 1-5kg, with 33 per cent saying they had gained 6-10kg.**
- **Nine per cent said they had put on 11-16kg and eight per cent said they had piled on more than 15kg.**
- **79 per cent of Queenslanders said eating less and exercising more was their preferred way to lose weight, with six per cent opting for calorie-controlled ready meal programs.**
- **44 per cent of Queenslanders said they ate junk food once or twice a month, while 43 per cent said they ate junk food once or twice a week.**
- **9.5 per cent of Queenslanders said they ate junk food every or most days.**

Dr Boyd warned Queenslanders hoping to lose weight against fad diets, which often restrict key food groups and can cause health issues such as dehydration, headaches and nutrient deficiencies.

“Drastic lifestyle changes can’t be maintained, which is why people often fall back into their old habits,” he said.

“It is much better to make sustainable changes, like swapping high calorie foods for healthier, low calorie options or incorporating a walk into your everyday routine.

“Your GP can help you take the first steps towards losing weight healthily. They can identify whether there are any medical reasons for your weight gain and help you develop a tailored weight loss plan.

“A balanced diet and a regular exercise routine – and the help and support of your GP – will give long term, sustainable results.”

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ⁱ Queensland Health. (2016). *The health of Queenslanders 2016: Report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland.*