



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Family approach to battle against bulge**

**Liverpool Health Service is combating childhood obesity by teaching parents healthy lifestyle skills to manage their children's weight over the long-term.**

Liverpool Health Service senior clinical dietitian Tanya Hazlewood said prevention of weight gain in childhood was one of the most effective means of controlling obesity.

"Parents need to teach their children healthy eating patterns coupled with physical activity to manage their weight long-term," she said.

Obesity develops over time and is difficult to treat once developed, and habits learnt during early years can set in for life.

"Dieting is not an effective way to manage a child's weight, as this may affect growth and development," Tanya said.

The health service is running a four-week program for parents and carers of overweight children that gets the family to work together on weight management.

"The best approach starts with parents being good role models and a commitment from all the family," Tanya said.

"We provide advice on good nutrition, improving confidence and body image and including physical activity into the family routine," Tanya said.

"Simple tips like turning off the television at meal times can really help – it prevents children from associating eating with the TV."

Weight gain and obesity develop when the energy intake from food and drink is more than energy expenditure from physical activity.

Obesity can increase the risk of chronic illnesses such as Type-2 diabetes and heart disease and may also cause problems with bone growth in children.

The dietetics, physiotherapy and social work departments run the family weight management program at Liverpool Hospital, based on a course developed by the Children's Hospital at Westmead.

- The four-week morning or evening program starts for school term 4 on Tuesday 16 November (10.00am–12.00noon) or Wednesday 17 November (5.30pm – 7.30pm) for parents and carers of children between 2 and 12-years-old.

**For information and bookings contact: Liverpool Health Service (02) 9828 6766.**