

# Research: Link between healthy outlook and healthy lifestyle

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(Medical Xpress)—A 'can do' attitude is the key to a healthy lifestyle, University of Melbourne economists have determined.

Researchers from the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research analysed data on the diet, exercise and [personality type](#) of more than 7000 people.

The [study](#) found those who believe their life can be changed by their own actions ate healthier food, exercised more, smoked less and avoided [binge drinking](#).

Professor Deborah Cobb-Clark, Director of the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, said those who have a greater faith in 'luck' or 'fate' are more likely to live an unhealthy life.

"Our research shows a direct link between the type of personality a person has and a [healthy lifestyle](#)," she said.

Professor Cobb-Clark hoped the study would help inform public health policies on conditions such as obesity.

"The main policy response to the [obesity epidemic](#) has been the provision of better information, but information alone is insufficient to change people's eating habits," she said.

"Understanding the psychological underpinning of a person's eating

patterns and [exercise habits](#) is central to understanding obesity."

The study also found men and women hold different views on the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

Men wanted physical results from their [healthy choices](#), while women were more receptive to the everyday enjoyment of leading a healthy lifestyle.

Professor Cobb-Clarke said the research demonstrated the need for more targeted policy responses.

"What works well for women may not work well for men," she said.

"Gender specific policy initiatives which respond to these objectives may be particularly helpful in promoting healthy lifestyles."

The study used data from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey.

Provided by University of Melbourne

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