

Workplace intervention boosts health for truck drivers

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A QUT-led workplace intervention program which saw a 15 per cent drop in drivers self-reporting their BMI as obese, has helped truckies eat healthier, exercise more and lose weight.

Health promotion expert Dr Marguerite Sendall, from QUT's Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation, said due to the nature of their job, truck drivers were at a higher risk of developing chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.

"The long hours and sedentary work life of truckies has the potential to be deadly when it comes to their [health](#)," Dr Sendall said.

Funded by the Queensland Government's Healthier.Happier.Workplaces initiative QUT developed the Queensland Transport Industry Workplace Health Intervention project to investigate the effectiveness of workplace-based nutrition and physical activity health promotion programs for truck drivers in south-east Queensland.

Dr Sendall said workplaces were recognised as places which could contribute to good health but truck drivers' workplaces were their vehicle and this mobile environment limited the effectiveness of traditional health promotion strategies.

To overcome this challenge, QUT worked with transport industry workplaces to develop [health promotion](#) interventions suited to a mobile workforce.

"These interventions included offering healthy options in vending machines at work, supply of free fruit to drivers and instigating the 10,000 steps workplace challenge," Dr Sendall said.

The two-year project involved five transport industry workplaces employing between 20 and 200 truck drivers across the south-east Queensland region.

"With the support of the QUT research team, each workplace implemented up to four or five interventions," she said.

"There is no 'one-size-fits-all' when it comes to improving nutrition and physical activity in transport industry workplaces," she said.

"What workplaces need to be doing is responding proactively to the barriers in each individual workplace. For example providing microwaves and small fridges, especially for line haul drivers."

Dr Sendall said a study of the effectiveness of the program has shown overall that managers and [truck drivers](#) were satisfied with the interventions developed and implemented during the project.

"There were also positive health outcomes for drivers," she said.

"For example there was an 18 per cent increase in the number of drivers who reported making lifestyle changes to improve their health (20 per cent pre-intervention to 38 per cent post-intervention).

"There was also an increase in the number of drivers self-reporting their health as 'good' and 'excellent'.

"Truckies were also better informed of the Australian nutrition guideline recommendations for fruit and vegetables and drivers were also

increasing their daily intake of fruit and vegetables."

Provided by Queensland University of Technology

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