

Meat-free Mondays could curb Scotland's growing obesity crisis

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Credit: Heriot-Watt University

A Heriot-Watt academic has concluded that introducing meat-free Mondays to school dinners—could help Scotland's growing obesity crisis.

Meat-Free Monday was established in 2009 by singer Paul McCartney and his daughters Stella and Mary.

Now all primary pupils in Edinburgh are due to participate in the healthy-eating campaign.

The local authority, is the first in Scotland to drop [meat](#) from its Council-run lunch menus every Monday, joining others across England and Northern Ireland, as well as schools as far afield as Brazil, South Korea and USA.

Professor Michael Schweizer, a biochemistry academic, is fully supporting the plans and suggests it should be rolled out across Scotland.

Prof Schweizer said: "It sounds like a good idea. A vegetarian diet describes an eating pattern that excludes meat, poultry and fish from the diet.

"This is a small step in the right direction that could have a positive impact on reducing obesity in the longer term."

Recent figures from the Scottish Government suggest 14 per cent of children aged 2 to 15 were at risk of obesity in 2016, with a further 15 per cent at risk of overweight.

Since 1998, the proportion of children aged two to 15 at risk of overweight, including obesity, has fluctuated between 28 per cent and 33 per cent and was 29 per cent in 2016.

Prof Schweizer concluded: "Obesity is a growing problem in Scotland, and this initiative certainly introduces wholesome, healthy foods to a child's diet.

"When it comes to nutrition starting them off on the right foot, at an early age, is the best thing you can do to introduce them to a healthy [diet](#).

"If this was rolled out across Scotland, it would certainly help in the fight against [obesity](#)."

The Meat-free Monday campaign aims to raise awareness of the impact eating meat has on the environment, climate change and natural resources in addition to the health benefits of having at least one meat free day each week.

Provided by Heriot-Watt University

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