

# Providing food to patients in primary care settings may aid weight loss

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Providing food as an intervention to patients in GP and community clinics may help support weight loss a Griffith University study has found.

Led by Associate Professor Lauren Ball from Menzies Health Institute Queensland, the researchers undertook a review of all studies designed to elicit weight loss by directly providing food or supplements in primary care settings.

"Primary care is recognized as the ideal setting to promote healthy eating of people and communities. There is no other place that has greater reach to communities, including [vulnerable populations](#), migrants and Indigenous Australians," Associate Professor Ball said.

"There are increasing calls for primary care services to expand what they do, and patients highly value discussions about diet during consultations, but many health professions report significant barriers to providing nutrition care including insufficient nutrition knowledge, low nutrition self-efficacy and competing priorities in consultations."

The researchers analyzed four studies with a total of 476 adults. Two of the studies utilized meal replacement products, another provided [green tea](#) and Vitamin E supplementation and one study used a farmers' market hosted at a primary care clinic. Interventions ranged from four to 13 weeks.

"The diversity in the interventions shows there are a range of ways to support patients by giving food," Associate Professor Ball said.

"In all of the studies, some early indications of success were apparent, such as weight loss or improving a health outcome such as waist circumference, blood pressure or insulin level.

"This study provides examples of how initiatives could be designed, but we still need further high-quality research to determine whether the cost of providing food is worth the benefit in improved outcomes."

"Providing food to patients in [primary care](#) to induce [weight loss](#): A systematic literature review" is published in *BMJ Nutrition, Prevention and Health*.

**More information:** Lauren Ball et al. Providing food to patients in primary care to induce weight loss: a systematic literature review, *BMJ Nutrition, Prevention & Health* (2021). [DOI: 10.1136/bmjnph-2020-000195](#)

Provided by Griffith University

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