Dietitians Australia

Dietitians: If more people could access us, we could stop type-2 diabetes before it even starts

Dietitians Australia continues to urge the Federal Government to enable funding for Australians at risk of chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes, to access earlier and more frequent support from accredited practising dietitians through Medicare.

The renewed call comes during National Diabetes Week 2025, with the peak body demanding a more proactive, preventive and early intervention approach towards nutrition support for those who are showing early signs or are at risk of diabetes.

“Type 2 diabetes accounts for 85 per cent of all diabetes cases in Australia, and evidence shows that up to 58 per cent of these cases can be prevented or delayed through changes to behaviour, including improved dietary habits,” Dietitians Australia President Dr Fiona Willer said.

“Yet for many Australians, timely access to personalised nutrition support provided by a dietitian remains out of reach.

“Currently, Australians are only eligible for very limited Medicare subsidised support after a chronic condition such as type-2 diabetes is diagnosed, a model that falls woefully short of

what is needed for the prevention and early management of diet-related disease.

“This deprives Australians of the opportunity to change the course of their health journey early and leads many to experience far more serious health outcomes in the future.

“Improving dietary quality by increasing intake of fruits, vegetables, legumes and wholegrains while reducing foods high in salt, sugar and saturated fat, is fundamental to preventing type 2 diabetes.

“With an overwhelming amount of nutrition misinformation and disinformation online, it is vital that Australians can access evidence-based information, advice and therapy through accredited practising dietitians who are recognised experts in the dietary management of health and disease.

“By limiting access to dietitians, we are limiting the opportunity to stop diet-related diseases like type 2 diabetes before they even start.

Dietitians Australia is calling on the Federal Government to:
• Urgently expand Medicare subsidised access to dietitians for people at risk of developing type 2 diabetes and increase Chronic Disease Management (CDM) Medicare sessions to a minimum of 12 for those with a diagnosis
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• Invest in a national, coordinated nutrition strategy for health-supporting food environments and systems transformation

“There are gleaming recommendations that underpin these calls in the Parliamentary Inquiry in Diabetes Mellitus 2024 final report, just waiting to be acted upon by this Government.
“There is a clear path forward, and we are beckoning the Government to now take decisive action on diabetes care in this country.

“When it comes to making sense of diet and nutrition information and turning that knowledge into lasting behavioural change, accredited practising dietitians are the people with years of clinical training that can be harnessed to support Australians.

“Dietitians must be embedded at the frontline of prevention, early intervention, treatment and long-term management of diabetes and chronic disease.

“We have advocated for this urgent need for years, and we will continue to push relentlessly until it becomes a reality.

For media enquiries and interviews, contact our Media Manager Amy Phillips on 0409 661 920.

Note to Editors: Dietitians Australia is the leading voice in nutrition and dietetics, representing dietitians nationally and advocating for healthier communities. Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) is the only national credential recognised by the Australian Government as the quality standard for nutrition and dietetics services in Australia.