



Child Obesity Management, Education & Research Program

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Koala Clinic

For Parents & Families

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Research

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Welcome to the KOALA Healthy Lifestyle Clinic and Program

About the Clinic

The KOALA Healthy Lifestyle Clinic is for children ages 6-10 years who are *overweight* (Body Mass Index >85th centile but <95th centile) or *obese* (body Mass Index >95th centile) and who do not have any complications related to their obesity. After the first visit, families will come in for three to five follow-up visits within a year and 2 monthly visits (about 4) in between with their General Practitioner (GP). **The KOALA Clinic is not a weight loss clinic.** Our aim is to help identify barriers that may be keeping children and families from maintaining a healthy weight and living a healthy lifestyle.

The goal of the clinic assessment and pilot program is to evaluate the effectiveness of a 52 week change in a Lifestyle ("[Eat Well Be Active](#)") and [Triple P \(Positive Parenting Program\)](#) that will be delivered by [Scouts QLD](#) and various key partners, including the [South East Area Alliance of General Practice](#) and from the [University of Queensland](#), the [Parenting and Family Support Centre](#), [The Schools of Human Movement Studies](#) and [Health and Rehabilitation Sciences](#) and the [Institute for Molecular Biosciences](#).

Though our primary goal is to determine if the KOALA Healthy Lifestyle Program can help your child and family to make changes for a healthier and happier lives, the program also asks you to participate in important research, so that we can understand better how to manage children and families with obesity from all the different aspects, including nutritional, behavioural, physical activity and movement, genetic and physiological.

As such your child and family may be selected by random to participate in one of two arms of the 12 month pilot program. Though one arm of the program requires a greater commitment from the family in terms of time, we believe that children and families in the whole study will be benefit by learning about how to change their lives to be healthier and more active.

It is very important that if you decide to participate that you make a commitment to the program for the whole 12 months, as we wish with you to learn how best to run this new program, so that we can improve it with your help and feedback.

As the program is based upon many previous studies and programs in Australia and overseas that have shown success in helping families who have weight problems, we are hopeful that the KOALA Healthy Lifestyle Program will also be successful. This is why your help is so important as you consider whether to share this journey with our KOALA Healthy Lifestyle Team.

At the end of the 12 months we will provide you and your child a full report of your child's participation in this program, including all tests and outcomes, as well as eventually a full report of the benefits of the program for the whole group of children and families we wish to enroll (about 150 children).

After this it is hoped that more funding will be obtained so that we can continue the program indefinitely for more children, so if you wish, your child may continue to being involved in the KOALA Healthy Lifestyle Program and help spread the message about what a healthier lifestyle can do to improve a child and family's life.

If during the initial assessment we discover that your child already has one of the 6 serious complications* of obesity, your child will be referred on to the KOALA Medical Clinic for appropriate follow-up.

If you are interested in participating in the KOALA Healthy Lifestyle Program or have questions about appointments, please visit our KOALA Healthy Lifestyle Program website or email our KOALA Co-ordinator Ms. Denise Mitchell at denise.mitchell@mater.org.au or ring on 07-3840-2757.

For more information you can also download our KOALA Healthy Lifestyle Family Information Sheet.

Complications of Child Obesity include

- **Pre-diabetes and Type 2 Diabetes** (high blood sugar or high insulin levels causing insulin resistance - this is usually found on an oral glucose tolerance test)
- **Obstructive Sleep Apnea** (breathing problems during sleep which causes lack of oxygen and affects your metabolism, heart and brain function)
- **Dyslipidemia** (high cholesterol, low HDL, the "good" cholesterol and high LDL, the "Bad" Cholesterol that predisposes to atherosclerosis and coronary heart disease)
- **Hypertension** (high blood pressure that can damage the heart, brain and kidneys)
- **Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease** (Fatty liver can cause long-term damage and chronic liver disease)

Children may need to have laboratory tests to confirm these illnesses. Please talk with your child's GP to learn more about these weight-related complications.

How we know if a child is obese.

Obesity means an excess amount of body fat. Clinicians use the body mass index (BMI) as a way to identify children and adolescents who are obese or at risk for becoming obese. BMI is a calculation that uses a child's height and weight to estimate how much body fat he or she has. Clinicians will use BMI to determine how appropriate a child's weight is for a certain height and age.

After BMI is calculated for children and teens, the BMI number is plotted on the [CDC BMI-for-age growth charts \(for either girls or boys\)](#) to obtain a percentile ranking. Percentiles are a way of showing how a child's measurements compare with kids the same age and sex. For example, if a child has a BMI in the 85th percentile, 84% of kids who are the same age and same sex have a lower BMI.

The KOALA Healthy Lifestyle Clinic uses the following weight categories:

| Weight Category | Percentile Range for age and sex |
|-----------------|---|
| Overweight | 85 th to less than the 95 th percentile |
| Obese | Equal to or greater than the 95 th percentile |

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