

Rewards to be reaped from healthy challenge

Jamie First

Stonnington residents are being asked to ditch the sugar and absorb the H30 Challenge in the name of some sweet rewards.

VicHealth's latest initiative encourages people to swap soft drinks for water for 30 days and thereby help waistlines, wallets and overall wellbeing.

Dietitian and South Yarra resident Jenny Reimers said making the move was a simple and effective way to improve one's health.

"We're asking people to do the switch initially for 30 days, but we're hoping once they reap the benefits and have a bit more money in their pockets, they'll look to establish healthier habits in the long-term," Ms Reimers said.

The nutrition expert, who has been in the field for 11 years, said apart from reducing tooth decay, cutting out sugar-laden drinks would make a big difference in years to come.

"This might seem like a really small thing, but if it kick starts ... weight loss, the flow-on effects are really dramatic.

"You have a much lower risk of a range of health conditions, such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers."

She said although it might be a shock to some people's systems, the key to the challenge was persistence.

"When people commit, they'll find their tastebuds will start to refresh themselves about every 10 days.

"So if you can stick to it, even if it might be quite difficult, you will find at the end of 30 days, your tastebuds will be reset to a lower sugar beverage expectation."

Ms Reimers said she blamed society for the increase in fizzy drink consumption.

"We haven't always had sugary drinks as an everyday beverage. They used to be a bit more of a treat, but they've gradually worked their way into our cupboards.

"Our bodies have no nutritional need for them, so it's about breaking the habit."

She said there were alternatives for those who were struggling with the drink switch.

"There's always ways to make water a little bit more sexy.

"Choose plain mineral water and add some lime or lemon, or orange or berries. Otherwise, move to a diet soft drink as a step."

Ms Reimers said as a general guide, women should be consuming about 2L of fluids daily and men 2.5L.

“While you can meet that with cups of tea and coffee, what is best for your health is to drink water.”

With no set start date, the H30 Challenge can be embraced at any time. To sign up or for more information, visit h30challenge.com.au.