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## UNHEALTHY SNACKS HARM KIDS, DOCTORS WARN

Parents are being urged to make 2018 the year they drop chips, chocolate bars and sugary soft drinks from their children's daily diets.

AMA Queensland says regular consumption of high-calorie snacks is one reason for the childhood obesity epidemic which has led to one in four Queensland kids being classified as overweight or obese.

New government guidelines urging parents to restrict children to two snacks under 100 calories each day have caused controversy in the UK, but AMA Queensland President Dr Bill Boyd said parents should be aware of the damage caused by poor diet choices.

"We don't support banning specific foods and drinks, but parents need to accept responsibility for their children's health," Dr Boyd said.

"Kids love chips and chocolate bars but they should only be eaten as occasional treats and not be part of anyone's daily diet.

"The first priority of parents is to protect their children, not pander to them – so it's time to stock up on fresh fruit and ditch the chips."

Public Health England has just launched a major campaign aimed at parents of children under 11 years after research showed the average UK youngster eats three times too much sugar, half of which comes from unhealthy snacks and sugary drinks.

The organisation is advising parents to allow children aged five to 11 just two snacks of no more than 100 calories each per day, with small yoghurts, rice crackers and fruit recommended as alternatives to chips, chocolate bars and soft drinks.

Dr Boyd said the Public Health England guidelines were equally applicable in Australia.

"Australia is one of the most obese nations in the developed world," he said.

"Doctors have been raising the alarm about this issue for decades but the message still isn't getting through to many people.

"Parents who allow children to over-eat and gain a significant amount of weight are putting their health in jeopardy.

"Obesity causes heart disease, some cancers, type 2 diabetes, hypertension and musculo-skeletal problems. That is not a legacy any parent should leave to their child."

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