



Getting kids to choose the healthy life

Jennifer Bennett

A RECENT report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare suggested that while the nation's children were on the whole getting healthier, there are still concerns that many kids are eating poorly and leading inactive, unhealthy lives.

Jordan Swibel, 10, of Dover Heights, is not one of these children. He runs in Centennial Park almost every afternoon, hopes to one day play soccer for Australia, and leads an active life. But regular sport and exercise is still no guarantee that you're healthy and he has recently changed his eating habits and activity patterns with help from Susie Burrell, a dietician who works at The Stadium Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Centre at Moore Park.

"We just wanted to make sure he was making good nutritional choices," Jordan's mother Debbie said. "He's working at such a level in his sport he needed to marry it to his nutrition."

The key word is choices. Jordan makes his own when it comes to his food, selecting from

a range of items Ms Burrell has said he can eat, from breakfast cereals to chocolate bars.

Ms Burrell cuts out excessive packaged snack food, sweetened drinks, and ensures her chargers eat breakfast. She's also a believer in a balanced lunch box, dropping carbohydrate-heavy foods in favour of protein.

"I think it's had a great effect on Jordan," Ms Swibel said. "He knows how to make healthy choices. He embraced it. He lost some weight, he's got more energy."

For his part, Jordan says he's likely to take the message about balanced and healthy eating through his life.

"It's helped a lot, given me more energy," he said. "I'm having smaller portions than I was and I'm eating healthier."

On top of Jordan's improved eating habits are his afternoon runs, which he's building up to 45 minutes – the same length of time as a soccer match.

"I feel much better when I run," Jordan said. "If I've had a bad day at school, everything goes, and I feel better."



Jordan Swibel stretches in Centennial Park.

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