

Young and restless shed kilos

GRANT MCARTHUR

THEY may drive their parents and teachers up the wall, but restless children are burning more energy and avoiding unhealthy weight gain than their peers who sit still.

A world-first Victorian study has found children who constantly wriggle while undertaking sedentary activities, such as colouring in or watching TV, burn off an extra 3kg over the course of a year while changing position.

Deakin University researchers found a huge difference in the fidgeting habits of children, with some swapping between sitting, standing, lying down and kneeling up to 53 times in 65 minutes, while others have only 11 "posture transitions" in the same time.

While the energy expended during each wriggle may be tiny, lead researcher Dr Katherine Downing said the flow-on impacts could help prevent unhealthy weight gain.

"These fidgeting changes in

Perhaps we shouldn't be stopping those young kids from fidgeting

DR KATHERINE DOWNING

posture do actually have a significant impact on energy expenditure, so perhaps we shouldn't be stopping those

young kids from fidgeting so much," she said. "If kids are naturally fidgeting, maybe that's just their way of burning off the extra energy and it will help them concentrate.

I am a little bit worried about the impact on teachers – but it is not so much about the fidgeting, but encouraging teachers to get children up and moving more. Even if we just get them to stand up ... every 20-30 minutes – we might have a significant impact on the energy expenditure."

The study of 40 children aged from four to six saw each asked to complete sedentary activities in a room specially set up to measure energy expenditure by analysing their oxygen consumption and carbon dioxide exhalation, while the Deakin team tracked movements.

The results published today in the journal *PLOS ONE* show children moved more while undertaking interactive activities like drawing or playing with toys than when involved

in passive pastimes like watching TV.

Dr Downing said the difference between the relaxed and active state of skeletal muscle was thought to be crucial.

"If children are spending roughly 10 hours a day sitting then that impact could be about 3kg a year which, for a 20kg child, is about 15 per cent of their body weight," she said.

"We know habits that are formed for sitting and physical activity all track from early childhood."

Subsidy to help fight leukaemia

THE Leukaemia Foundation will provide transport and accommodation to South Australian children and young adults needing revolutionary blood cancer treatment in Melbourne.

Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt yesterday said CAR-T therapy would be subsidised through Medicare, significantly reducing treatment costs for about 30 paediatric and young adult patients affected by acute lymphoblastic leukaemia each year.

"It is our priority to ensure all Australians living with a blood cancer have support and equal access to the innovative treatment they need to improve their quality of life and ultimately survive their blood cancer," Leukaemia Foundation chief executive Bill Petch said.

"We want to make sure that all Australians have equal access to this procedure, whether they live in a metropolitan city or rural town, anywhere in Australia."

CAR-T therapy involves removing a patient's immune cells and genetically re-engineering them before infusing them back into the body to hunt and destroy cancer cells.

It is currently available at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Melbourne.



ARTISTIC FLAVOUR: Elizabeth Willing will explore links between wine and art during a residency in Adelaide.

Picture: DAVID KELLY/MUSEUM OF BRISBANE

Drawing out the art of a good wine

CLARE PEDDIE

TURNING wine into art that messes with your senses will be part of a world-first experiment at Urrbrae this year.

The Australian Wine Research Institute will host artist Elizabeth Willing, 30, of Bris-

bane, for a 12-week residency sponsored by the Adelaide-based Australian Network for Art and Technology (ANAT).

Willing is looking forward to working with the institute's sensory lab from May 27.

"You know when you talk about wine and it's got certain

flavour attributes, that sort of data will be translated through the creative process," she said.

"Maybe they'll be turned into colours, or shapes or textural effects and then those will be used as materials to create, maybe painting, maybe drawing, maybe video work."

ANAT director Vicki Sowry said the wine/art residency would break new ground.

"It's the world's first time that an artist has gone to work with a national wine institute around sensory and flavour research, as far as we are aware," she said.



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