

Media Release

Senseless deaths advance the need for a rethink on weight loss techniques.

Young Australian women's seemingly inexorable desire to possess a slim toned body continues to fuel an explosion in fast and sometimes dangerous weight loss techniques. The weight loss industry is big business, which attracts new methods all the time. But after the recent deaths of a number of young Australian women, isn't the time now right for other young people to hear about the safe scientifically proven alternatives.

Let's quickly revisit a couple of these fatal incidents.

- Marie Malone, a healthy 19-year old girl collapses and dies of heart failure three weeks after she starts taking a so-called appetite suppressant and weight loss drug, Reductil. In 2006, the Adverse Drug Reactions Committee said sibutramine – Reductil's chemical name – "was a moderately plausible explanation" for Marie's death. This is thought to be the first tragic death of a young woman linked to weight loss drugs in Australia. Marie's father described his daughter as weighing 75kg and standing 1.7m tall. This means she had a Body Mass Index of just 25, which is hardly a serious health problem. Her father explained, "She was athletic and strong. She didn't have hardening of the arteries. She wasn't obese, and she didn't have a faulty heart valve. But at that age you're self-conscious and she was very self-conscious about her weight."
- The Coroner is now investigating the death in early 2007 of Lauren James; a healthy 26-year old woman who died three days after receiving cosmetic surgery to remove fat. Lauren had liposuction on both thighs and buttocks at a day surgery centre in Melbourne. After experiencing bleeding and pain over the weekend immediately after the surgery, she complained on the Monday morning to the centre's medical director, but then died later that day. Her brother explained, "She was extraordinarily beautiful, both inside and outside. Lauren cared more for others than herself."

In both of these fatal cases, the families are now calling for immediate action, to protect against any further young Australian women suffering a similar fate.

Nicholas Arthur, a nutritionist and director of healthy lifestyle and healthy weight loss program, Appetite Right™ says, "We need to protect the interests of young Australian's from unsavoury weight loss techniques. In light of these tragic circumstances it's time we all made more of an attempt to promote safe healthy lifestyle alternatives for our young people."

"Scientific findings confirm what most people probably already know; to live a healthier life and lose healthy amounts of weight you must change your thinking. Attaining healthier bodies and successful weight management are about making the correct lifestyle decisions. Your health is not going to change if you rely on fast, risky strategies to lose weight."

"To achieve success, you need to eat healthy foods in moderation and participate in regular sensible exercise. You must become aware of the role eating plays in your life, and learn how to use positive thinking and behavioural coping strategies to manage your eating and your weight."

"Approaches like Appetite Right™, give people the opportunity to participate in scientifically proven healthy lifestyle and weight loss programs that will help deliver them a better chance at a healthier future. People needing to lose weight should look to these safe, proven techniques to make lifestyle improvements."

For further comment, or information on the Appetite Right™ program please contact:

Nicholas Arthur BA, GradDip Human Nutrition, Master Human Nutrition
1300 307 646 or appetiteright@bigpond.com

Dimitra Arthur B Eco (Hon), MBus, GradDip Psychological Studies, PostGradDip Psychology
1300 307 646 or appetiteright@bigpond.com