

Dr Michael Mosley tucks into our diet for his new series Australia's Health Revolution

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Dr Michael Mosley. Credit: Supplied by SBS.

Nearly a decade after he managed to reverse his own type 2 diabetes, Dr Michael Mosley has decided to put his body on the line again.

When it came to putting a group of West Australians through a health challenge for his latest TV project, Mosley decided to immerse himself in the average Aussie diet — with its heavy dose of ultra-processed foods — to determine how dangerous it actually is. “Initially, it was curiously enjoyable and then I started feeling the effects and would get grumpy and hungry all of the time,” Mosley recalls. “At the same time I was thinking it was bad, I was wondering where I could get more because of the addictive nature of it.”

The experiment was part of the new series, Australia’s Health Revolution with Dr Michael Mosley, which addresses our fastest-growing chronic disease: type 2 diabetes.

The creator of the hugely popular, The Fast Diet, Mosley underwent two weeks of hotel quarantine before teaming up with exercise physiologist Ray Kelly to guide a group of eight West Australians through drastic diet and lifestyle adjustments, rather than medicine, in an attempt to reverse the effects of pre-diabetes and type 2 diabetes.

While the Brit once shared the view of many around the world that our sun-soaked lifestyles and apparent healthy eating habits meant we were faring well in the health statistics, every day nearly 200 Australians are diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.

“You have the fifth highest rates of obesity in the world,” he says over video call from his home in the UK. “There are plenty of lean, healthy and fit people jogging on the beach, but then there are also other people who are not.”

Although he decided to act in solidarity with the group, Mosley says there was some trepidation on his part at first. “In 2012, I managed to get rid of it (diabetes) but have also felt it is always there lurking and that if I let myself go again, it would re-emerge,” he admits. However, he was shocked by how quickly his blood sugar levels and blood pressure changed.

“I suspected it would go downhill reasonably fast but I was surprised,” he continues. “Even the medical team I was working with were surprised what a rapid impact it had.”



Dr Michael Mosley and Ray Kelly. Credit: Supplied by SBS.

Shockingly, nearly 50 per cent of the average Australian diet consists of ultra-processed foods. “It is those things like hot dogs, cereals, frozen dinners and all that bright-coloured stuff that comes out of a packet,” Mosley explains.

It is a diet familiar to those who signed up to the series, including Pilbara-based sisters Lyn and Marion Cheedy.

“Most have a family history and most are aware what can happen...they have seen the consequences and (that’s) why I think they were so keen to take part,” Mosley says.

Over two months, all were placed on a low-calorie, low-carbohydrate diet that pushed their bodies into ketosis — a metabolic state in which the body burns fat for energy instead of sugar — and depending on their level of mobility, they were also prescribed exercise regimens.

As part of the series, Mosley and Kelly also headed over to Canberra to speak to politicians about the health crisis.

After seeing the positive repercussions following the introduction of a sugar tax in other countries Mosley says that is the first step to reversing the rates.

“We know from the war on tobacco what helped—when the tax went up and a ban was placed on advertising and smoking in public places—so just telling people it was bad didn’t make a difference, and the same is true of ultra-processed foods,” he says.

Making such a massive lifestyle change in such a short period of time is a task not lost on 64-year-old Mosley. However, he says he hopes the series offers a sense of optimism surrounding a condition so many sufferers have been told is irreversible. “If you are already at risk, it will give you an incentive (to try this yourself),” he says.

“For me, it isn’t about looking good in a bikini or trunks, it is about health. For years, we have been told it is a progressive and irreversible decision and to just take medication whereas now we are saying we can actually do something.”

Australia's Health Revolution with Dr Michael Mosley starts tomorrow at 7.30pm on SBS.

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