

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

**NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA**

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## **Extreme weather and its impact on diabetes sufferers**

Climate change scientists are predicting increases in extreme weather events such as cold snaps and heatwaves in the future.

Sudden exposure to hot or cold climates change causes adjustments to the circulation that maintain a steady body temperature.

But people living with chronic conditions, such as type 2 diabetes, may be less able to regulate their body temperature when faced with extreme temperature changes

Sibella King, a UTAS School of Human Life Sciences researcher, said it is known that these circulatory adjustments caused by temperature change have a big impact on heart function and blood pressure.

Her new study is investigating the association between exposure to environmental temperature and humidity variations and health consequences for people with type 2 diabetes.

“We think there may be a link between these cardiovascular effects and the peaks in numbers of heart attacks and strokes seen world-wide during winter, and during extreme weather events like cold snaps and heatwaves,” she said.

“At the moment, there is very little information on what effects sudden climate change will have on the cardiovascular function of people living with type 2 diabetes.”

Launceston resident Gary Clay has recently joined the study. Mr Clay, 47, has type 2 diabetes and after reaching a peak weight of 106kg, has recently turned his life around after being told by his doctors that if he continued with his current lifestyle, he would have only five years to live.

Mr Clay said it was a real wake up call for him, so he embarked on a very strict regime of diet and exercise.

“It was a real struggle, but as the weeks went by I lost heaps of weight. All up I've lost close to 18kg so far.

“My reasoning for volunteering for this study was so that I could find out more about my health and to strive for more weight loss and maintenance.

“I'm determined not to let myself get to the way I was six months ago; unhealthy, unhappy and very unfit,” he said.

“I believe Sibella's study will assist all diabetes sufferers and aid in the understanding of diabetes.”

Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes. Its causes are partly genetic but unhealthy lifestyles are also a strong factor. It is managed with diet and exercise and also medications, including insulin, when necessary.

**To be involved in this study:**

You will need to be over 18 years of age and have stable type 2 diabetes (no insulin use). Please contact **Sibella King on: (03) 6324 3688 or email: [Sibella.King@utas.edu.au](mailto:Sibella.King@utas.edu.au)** for more information. During the study, participants will undergo height and weight, blood pressure and body temperature measurements and have blood collected by trained university researchers.

All study participants will gain information about their blood pressure, heart and nervous system function, and also their blood sugar and cholesterol status. Additionally, at the end of the study participants are eligible to participate in a **FREE** “lifestyle make-over” program, run by accredited Exercise Physiologists and Dieticians, including exercise and nutritional counselling, a take-home exercise prescription and the opportunity to attend exercise classes at UTAS.

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