

Tuesday, 14 December 2021

## Public Statement: Prohibition Order – Mr Norman Low

The Health and Community Service Complaints Commissioner Associate Professor Grant Davies has issued a [prohibition order](#) against Mr Norman Low, a personal trainer.

The HCSCC received complaints from consumers about diet and nutrition plans provided to them by Mr Low. The decision to issue the order, which commenced today, follows an investigation by the HCSCC which found, on the balance of probabilities, Mr Low:

- falsely claimed he is an Accredited Practising Dietitian;
- provided inappropriate and unsafe plans to consumers which were fundamentally flawed, not backed by science, inappropriate, unsafe and were not developed by a dietitian.

These actions amassed to multiple breaches of the [Code of Conduct for Certain Health Care Workers](#).

Mr Low, [who was prohibited on an interim basis](#), is now permanently prohibited from claiming he is an Accredited Practising Dietitian and providing nutritional advice to any person in excess of basic healthy eating information and nationally endorsed nutritional standards and guidelines.

As part of its investigation, the HCSCC provided two of Mr Low's diet and nutrition plans to an independent accredited dietitian and sought their professional advice.

In relation to the first plan the dietitian found, in part:

- the energy and macronutrient breakdown was not appropriate for the goals or the health of the consumer;
- it is likely that if the consumer followed the plan, they would not only not lose any weight but in fact potentially gain 0.5-1kg per week;
- if the consumer followed the plan for 12 weeks, there would likely be a significant decline in the nutrient status of some major micronutrients;
- with the level of training and the restricted diet, the consumer was of great risk to developing iron deficiency and potentially anaemia if the plan was followed for more than a month;
- the plan recommended supplements without any scientific basis;
- the plan may have put the client and others at risk of nutrient deficiencies, hormonal dysfunctions and disordered eating patterns;
- there was no clinical or scientific validity to the foods, recommendations or supplements.

With respect to the second plan the dietitian found, in part:

- it lacked any scientific basis;
- prescribed meals were significantly below the person's required energy, protein and carbohydrate requirements which could impact exercise performance, physical health and wellbeing as well as be detrimental to nutrient stores;
- if followed for 12 weeks, there would likely be a significant decline in the nutrient status of some major micronutrients;
- recommended doses of fish oil and vitamin C could result in poor tolerance, blood thinning and gastric reflux. The recommendation appeared to be made without any prior screening, being extremely poor and dangerous practice;
- prescribed 9.25L of water per day, being extreme and potentially having a very detrimental effect on cardiac function and in some cases, leading to sudden cardiac arrest;
- recommended that all oral medications be stopped during the plan, being a medically unethical, illegal and inappropriate recommendation; and
- there was no clinical or scientific validity to the foods, recommendations or supplements.

Furthermore, the dietitian advised the suggested amount of water and cessation of medications as prescribed could have life threatening consequences. They also commented that an individual following the plan who was not supported by a dietitian, regularly assessed and provided any appropriate transition plan at the end of the diet, would likely rebound weight due to severe restrictions, impact on their psychological approach to food and may also create gastric distress and metabolic change to liver function.

Associate Professor Davies said Mr Low posed an unacceptable risk to the health or safety of members of the South Australian public in providing dietary and nutrition services.

"These plans are dangerous and are not based in science," he emphasised.

"It appears they were not tailored for a consumer's individual needs and the evidence shows they put the people following them at serious risk.

"Mr Low's assertion that he was an accredited dietitian was blatantly false and misrepresented his expertise.

"To protect the public, I have issued this order and I strongly recommend anyone still using these plans to consult an accredited dietitian."

Mr Low is still able to offer personal training, provided he does not breach the terms of the order.