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That flat, slim look is really fattening

JANE HARPER

FLAT screen televisions are proving a fat lot of good to the region's health, a new study has shown.

Deakin University's Professor David Crawford says the falling cost of flashy flat screen TVs is sending the kilos soaring.

"The number of televisions in households will soon be more than the number of people living in them and this is coming about as flat screens become cheaper," Prof Crawford said.

"The other growth surge unfortunately is around people's waistlines."

Prof Crawford, director of the Centre for Physical Activity and Nutrition, said the World Cup was a prime example of the problem, with more than 140,000 new televisions sold in the lead up to Australia's first opening game against Germany.

"There's an irony in that," he said. "People were buying the new televisions to watch some of the fittest athletes in the world but, in turn, these televisions could be contributing to their own reduced fitness levels."

Sales of televisions larger than 40 inches (102cm) re-

corded 75 per cent growth in the past year.

Matthew Sun, owner of Better Electricals in Pakington St, said local sales were brisk.

"Flat screens are very popular in Geelong in general," he said. "Sales have been increasing as new models come out."

Susan Parker, health promotion officer for Barwon Health, said it was vital people learned to turn the TV set off, and for parents especially to encourage children to get exercise.

"It's hard for parents to know how to get children off TV and on to something else,"

she said.

"But even things like eating together as a family rather than in front of the TV is a start.

"It's crucial that we are more active."



Too much TV can be unhealthy.