

Fast Start: Summary of results

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Fast Start is a partial meal replacement program with a supportive online platform that is offered as part of the CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet. The recommendation for Fast Start is to transition to a healthy balanced diet, that is the Total Wellbeing Diet (TWD), after 3 weeks of the 12-week program.

Membership profile

- **Membership numbers:** Over the past decade, 204,306 members have joined the CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet (TWD) program.
- **Fast Start participation:** Since its launch, 10,364 members have opted into Fast Start, representing 27% of memberships since January 2023 (the launch of Fast Start).
- **Starter/Stayers:** “Stayers” are defined as members who complete 12 weeks of the program and have a weight in the system at the start and end of the program. 45% (n=4,645/10,364) of members opting for Fast Start were classified as Stayers compared to 41% (n=79,891/114,051) for TWD.
- **Gender distribution:** Most members (82%) of the TWD program and Fast Start were female.
- **Age groups:** Overall, 88% of all members were aged between 31 and 70 years. Proportionately more members who opted for Fast Start were aged 51-70 years (45% vs 42% for TWD) and conversely a higher proportion of people choosing TWD were aged 31-50 years (45% vs 43%).
- **Weight and BMI:** The average starting weight across all members was 91.7kg and starting BMI 32.7. One third (32%) of all members were overweight and 62% obese when they started the program (94% overweight or obese). Members who opted into Fast Start were, on average, 2.7kg heavier and more likely to be obese than those who joined TWD (68% vs 61%).
- **Socioeconomic status:** Members were relatively evenly distributed across socioeconomic quintiles, although members who opted for Fast Start were less likely than TWD members to be in the lowest quintile (i.e. of most disadvantage) (15% for Fast Start vs 20% for TWD).

Transition from Fast Start to the CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet

- The recommendation for Fast Start is to transition to TWD after 3 weeks (on day 22). However, members can manually transition between Fast Start and TWD at any time within the 12-weeks.
- Most members (81%) transitioned from Fast Start to TWD after 3 weeks, as recommended. The remaining members (19%) switched between Fast Start and TWD 4-5 times within 12 weeks. On average, these members transitioned to TWD for the first time 4 days after the recommendation (day 26), and for the last time about 2 weeks after the recommendation, meaning they were no longer doing Fast Start from, on average, day 36 onwards.

Weight loss success

- **Program completion:** 41% of all members (n=84,547/204,306) completed the 12-week program (“Stayers”). For TWD, 41% of members were categorised as Stayers and for Fast Start it was slightly higher at 45%.
- **12-week weight loss for Stayers:** Among those who completed the 12-week program (n=84,547), 97% lost weight with an average loss of 5.7kg (6.2% of their starting weight). Among Fast Start members, 98% had lost weight at 12-weeks and these members had a slightly higher average weight loss of 7.0kg (7.4% of starting weight) over 12 weeks (vs TWD 5.7kg; 6.2%, Figure 1).
- **Initial weight loss:** Fast Start members lost 0.8kg more in the first three weeks compared to TWD members (3.6kg vs. 2.8kg).
- **Continued weight loss success:** Fast Start members consistently lost more weight than TWD members at each time point examined. The average weight loss of Fast Start members at week 3 was 3.6kg (3.8%), at week 12 was 7.0kg (7.4%) and at week 24 was 7.6kg (8.0%). For TWD members the weight loss at equivalent time points was 2.8kg (3.0%), 5.6kg (6.1%) and 6.3kg (6.7%).

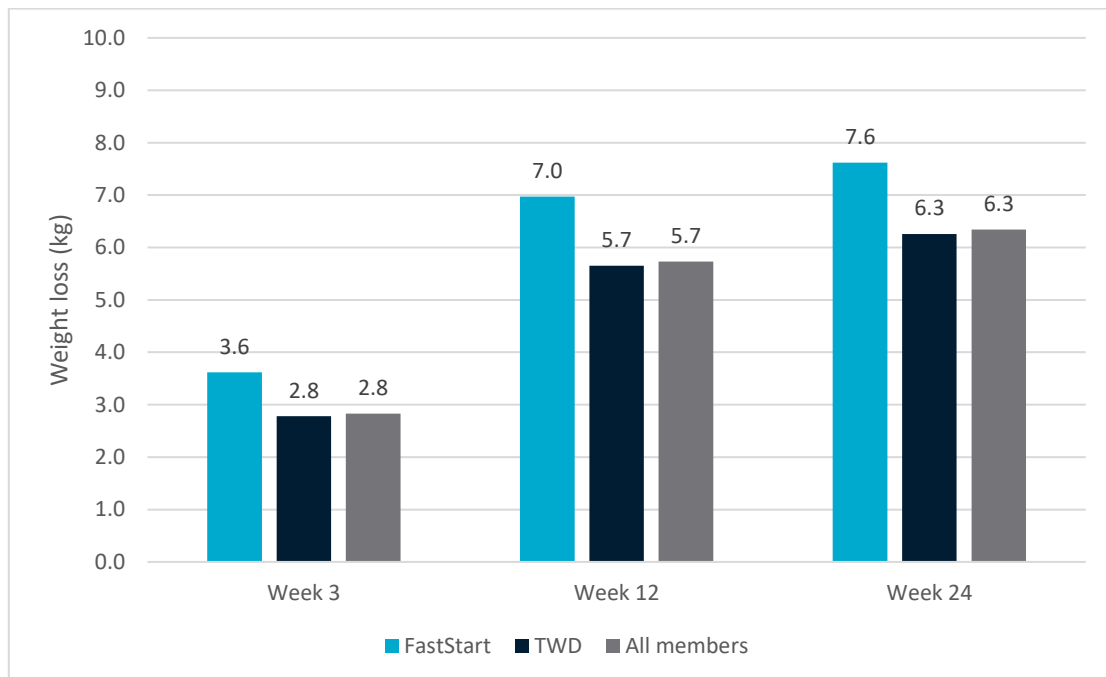


Figure 1. Average weight loss in 3, 12 and 24 weeks

- **Weight loss by demographic characteristics:** On TWD and Fast Start, males lost more weight than females. After 12 weeks, males lost an average of 8.9kg on Fast Start compared to females who lost 6.5kg. The weight loss results by age group were mixed. On Fast Start, it appeared that younger adults lost more weight than the oldest adult age group, which was different to the pattern observed for TWD, where older adults tended to lose more weight (Table 1).

Table 1. Weight loss by demographic characteristics

Weight loss (in kg)	Fast Start			TWD			All		
	Wk3	Wk12	Wk24	Wk3	Wk12	Wk24	Wk3	Wk12	Wk24
Total	3.6	7.0	7.6	2.8	5.7	6.3	2.8	5.7	6.3
Gender									
Female	3.3	6.5	7.3	2.6	5.2	5.8	2.6	5.3	5.9
Male	4.8	8.9	9.4	3.7	7.6	8.3	3.8	7.6	8.4
Age group									
18-30 years	3.8	7.2	7.7	2.7	5.3	5.5	2.8	5.4	5.6
31-50 years	3.6	6.8	7.3	2.8	5.5	5.8	2.9	5.6	5.9
51-70 years	3.6	7.1	7.8	2.8	5.8	6.7	2.8	5.9	6.7
71 years+	3.3	6.4	7.5	2.6	5.6	6.7	2.6	5.7	6.8
Socioeconomic status									
1: Lowest	7.0	13.1	18.9	3.5	8.7	9.3	3.7	9.0	9.8
2	3.6	13.4	19.1	3.3	8.9	9.6	3.3	9.2	10.1
3	5.1	12.3	13.0	3.3	8.7	10.6	3.4	8.9	10.7
4	4.9	12.2	15.6	3.4	8.5	10.2	3.5	8.7	10.5
5: Highest	5.4	14.6	13.3	3.4	8.9	11.5	3.5	9.2	11.6

Achieving clinically significant weight loss

- **Clinical benchmarks:** Among all members, 62% of program Stayers lost 5% or more of their starting body weight at 12 weeks, and 14% of members lost 10% or more.
- **Fast Start advantage:** Members who opted for and finished Fast Start were more likely to achieve these benchmarks. 75% of Fast Start members who finished the program lost 5% or more of their starting body weight at 12 weeks, and 22% lost 10% or more of their starting body weight, compared to 61% and 14% respectively in 12 weeks for those on the TWD program (Figure 2).

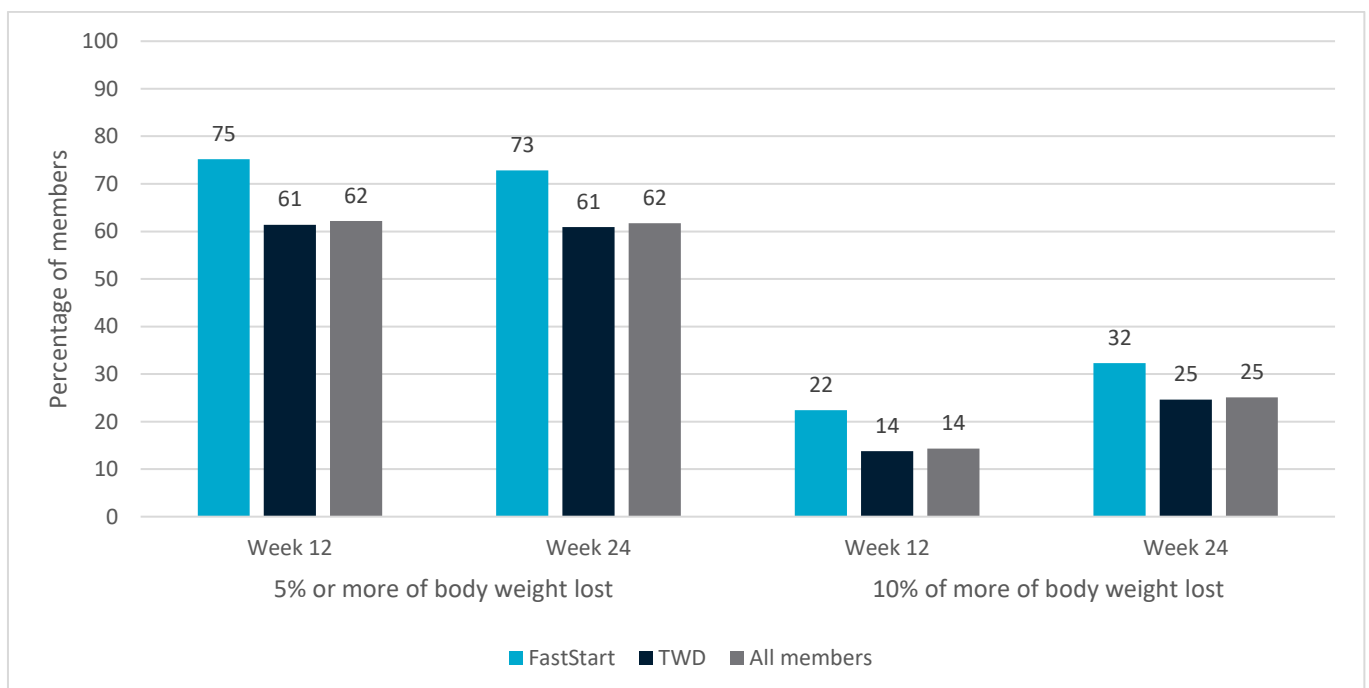


Figure 2. Percentage of members losing 5% or 10% or more of their body weight

Reducing the risk of obesity

- **Reduced obesity risk:** Among all TWD members who started the program as obese, 26% were no longer classified as obese after 12 weeks, and 28% no longer obese after 24 weeks.
- **Fast Start impact:** For members who opted for Fast Start, 28% were no longer classified as obese at 12 weeks and 31% no longer classified as obese at 24 weeks (compared to 25% and 27% for TWD members).
- **Weight loss extremes:** The most successful members lost 11kg over 12 weeks (11% of their starting body weight) and 13kg at 24 weeks (13% of their starting body weight). Interestingly, this weight loss result was similar for both those on Fast Start and TWD, and the pattern of weight loss was consistent as well, with similar average weight losses reported at weeks 3, 12 and 24 in this most successful group. It is important to note that the most successful members tended to be heavier when commencing the program (>10kg heavier) and had a higher starting BMI than other members.

Citation: Baird, D., and Hendrie, G. (2024) Fast Start: Summary of results. CSIRO, Australia.