MOSQUITOES infected with a bacteria which prevents them from catching, and spreading, dengue fever have been approved for release in Australia's north.

World-first field trials can now get under way at two sites in Cairns and, if successful, be rolled out globally.

“We're hoping in the course of one wet season we should be able to take a study area and see the wolbachia (bacteria) invade the whole population of mosquitoes,” says Professor Scott O’Neill, from the University of Queensland.

“If it works it could be a sustainable low-cost approach to dengue control ... and more environmentally friendly than spraying lots of insecticides into the environment to kill the mosquitoes.”

AUSTRALIAN research has shown how spending too long on the couch is “doubly because a sedentary lifestyle not only encourages weight gain it curbs the body’s ability to burn off fat.

Scientists at the University of Sydney studied the calorie-burning capabilities of rats which had a daily regime of light exercise compared to those who did no exercise.

Those who exercised were shown to have improved metabolic processes, enabling them to burn energy even when at rest.

Associate Professor Frank Seebacher says a half-hour brisk walk daily would ensure the body's metabolism was working optimally.

A US-based study has found people with healthier diets who exercise more tend to consume more sports drinks, a product that can "undo" all that good work.

“Children and parents associate these drinks with a healthy lifestyle despite their increased amount of sugar and lack of nutritional value,” Dr Nalini Ranjit from the University of Texas School of Public Health, says.

Dr Ranjit says flavoured and sports drinks be reserved only for periods of extreme exercise and, otherwise, people should drink water to replenish lost fluids.

“Large amounts of sports beverages could undo the effects of all that exercise,” he says.