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What's News in this Issue

Just in time for Back to School: Focus on Childhood Nutrition

- ✓ Healthy Choices Can Be Encouraged Not Forced
- ✓ Strong Bones Need More Than Just Calcium!
- ✓ Breakfast Really Is "The Most Important Meal of the Day"
- ✓ Kids "Go" For Healthy Choices
- ✓ 1st Step to Good Health: Limit Soft Drinks (including one school's story)

Also in this issue:

Tip Sheet: 33 Terrifically Tasty Snack Ideas

Healthy Choices Can Be Encouraged Not Forced

According to recent research, parenting-styles may affect children's food choices. More than 200 African-American and Hispanic parents of children participating in Head Start completed a questionnaire that assessed family food choices as they related to two feeding styles: Authoritative (encouraging) and Authoritarian (controlling). The encouraging style included behaviors such as reasoning and giving choices, and was associated with offering more fruits and vegetables; more attempts to get children to eat fruits, vegetables and dairy; and an increase in children's dairy and vegetable intake. In contrast, the controlling style included behaviors such as restricting certain foods and forcing children to eat other foods and was associated with offering fewer fruits and vegetables and a decrease in children's vegetable intake. The authors suggest that parents who use an encouraging feeding style may have more success helping children to enjoy a variety of healthy food.

Patrick H, et al. The benefits of authoritative feeding style: Caregiver feeding styles and children's food consumption patterns. *Appetite*. 2005; 44: 243-249.



Strong Bones Need More Than Just Calcium

New research confirms that children need more than calcium for strong bones. In this study, 52 children of healthy weight were tracked from age two to eight; those with the highest bone density had diets high in protein, phosphorous, vitamin K, magnesium, zinc and iron. Such evidence emphasizes the need for children to eat a variety of nutrient-rich foods. Milk is naturally rich in calcium, protein, phosphorous and magnesium, making it the ideal food for strong bones.

Bounds W, et al. The relationship of dietary and lifestyle factors to bone mineral indexes in children. *Journal of the American Dietetics Association*. 2005; 105: 735-741.

Breakfast Really is “The Most Important Meal of the Day”

Researchers reviewed 47 studies to determine if there is any truth to the saying, “Breakfast is the most important meal of the day.” The research review revealed that breakfast consumers are more likely to have better overall diet quality. Breakfast provides a number of nutrients essential to children’s growth and development that were not provided at other meals throughout the day. For instance, a breakfast of cereal with milk provided more fiber and calcium than other meals. Although children who ate breakfast consumed more calories, they were less likely to be overweight than children who didn’t eat breakfast. In addition, children who ate breakfast had better academic performance and school attendance and less tardiness. As for parents, the research showed that those who ate breakfast had children who ate breakfast, emphasizing the influence parents have on their children’s eating behaviors. The authors advocate a healthful breakfast for all children consisting of high-fiber whole grains, fruit and dairy foods.

Rampersaud, G et al. Breakfast habits, nutritional status, body weight and academic performance in children and adolescents. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. 2005; 105: 743-760.

Kids “Go” For Healthy Choices

In the first study of its kind, researchers were able to show that a lowfat diet is safe for children eight years of age and older and that children will make healthy choices with help from their families and health professionals. The three-year Dietary Intervention Study in Children (DISC) studied the effects of a lowfat diet on growth and development in 663 children ages 8-10 years old with elevated blood cholesterol levels. This paper reports how the children’s eating patterns changed as a result of being part of the study. The participants in the intervention group were taught a system of categorizing foods into “Go,” “Slow” and “Whoa” foods. Intake of “Whoa” foods (higher calorie foods from all food groups) decreased by 0.2 – 0.3 servings per day after 3 years compared to the control group. The study showed that after participating in the education program, the kids made more than a third of their choices from the heart-healthy “Go” group which included nonfat and 1 percent dairy foods, fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean meat. The “Go” versus “Whoa” system is now being used in the “We Can!” (Ways to Enhance Children’s Activity & Nutrition) youth obesity-prevention initiative coordinated by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). For more information visit www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/index.htm.

Van Horn, L et al. Children’s adaptations to a fat-reduced diet: The Dietary Intervention Study in Children (DISC). *Pediatrics*. 2005; 115: 1723-1733.

First Step to Good Health: Limit Soft Drinks

The American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health considers school the second most important environment for child development. Thus, the availability of soft drinks at all school levels is believed to have a great impact on child health. In an editorial in the *Journal of Pediatrics*, Robert Murray, Director of the Borden Center for Nutrition and Wellness at the Ohio State University Children's Hospital contends that children who choose soft drinks in place of milk take in less protein, calcium, zinc, vitamins A and C. In addition, he notes research that shows that for each soft drink consumed daily a child's risk of obesity increases by 60 percent (Ludwig). Although experts agree that obesity is a multi-factorial problem, curbing the availability of soft drinks in schools is a simple change to make to improve the health of students everywhere. As children return to school, parents and community health professionals are encouraged to work with school officials to make healthy beverages like water and lowfat milk more available for students.

Here's how one school district in Michigan is taking action to implement the Michigan Action for Healthy Kids' healthy food and beverage policy which was adopted by the State Board of Education in 2004:

Implementing recommendations of the school's health committee, the Fowlerville Community school district eliminated all sales of French fries and soft drinks during school hours without negatively affecting the school's finances. Adopting a Local Wellness Policy will lead to more positive changes, including reducing the use of food as reward and adding more physical activity programs. The district is also applying for fruit and vegetable grants for elementary buildings.

Action for Healthy Kids is a public-private partnership of 43 national organizations and government agencies that provides leadership and support to the teams of educators, administrators, health professionals and community leaders in each state. These teams work at the state, district and school level to improve children's health and readiness to learn by advancing the cause of more physical activity and health food options in schools.

Murray R, et al. Are soft drinks a scapegoat for childhood obesity? *Journal of Pediatrics*. 2005; 146(5): 586-590.

Ludwig DS, et al. Relation between consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks and childhood obesity: a prospective, observational analysis. *Lancet*. 2001; 357: 505-508.

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United Dairy Industry of Michigan is a local affiliate of the National Dairy Council. The National Dairy Council® was founded in 1915 and conducts nutrition education and nutrition research programs through national, state and regional Dairy Council organizations, on behalf of America's dairy farmers.

To schedule an interview, call Karen Giles-Smith, United Dairy Industry of Michigan, 517-349-8480 x227.

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