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Feeling Good with Fruits & Veggies: Moms Link What They Eat to How They Feel

New Strategies Show Moms it's Easy to Include More

Wilmington, Del. – Does Mom know best? She does when it comes to eating fruits and vegetables. According to a new survey of Moms, conducted by the Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH), over 90 percent of those questioned say it is important to include fruits and vegetables in their family meals, despite the fact that over half acknowledge that their families are eating too few. Furthermore, the new research shows that beyond the widely reported physical benefits, Moms are recognizing the positive emotional impact of eating more fruits and vegetables.

What Moms eat and how they feel directly correspond, according to the survey findings. When they experience positive emotions like happiness or contentment, a full 70 percent say they are most likely to eat healthy foods like fruits or vegetables. On the other hand, when they are feeling negative emotions like sadness or stress, almost half of Moms say they are most likely to eat sweets and almost a quarter turn to salty snack foods and heavy foods like cheeseburgers. The same goes for their state of mind after eating. Almost half feel guilty after eating too many sweets (46 percent) or salty snack foods (45 percent), while over half feel good about themselves after consuming a generous portion of fruits and vegetables and almost a third feel happy.

Feeding their kids fruits and vegetables also gives Moms a “feel good” boost. When they give their children fruits and vegetables, 96 percent of Moms said they feel like a “good mother.” However, practical issues often prevent them from acting on their best intentions. They point to a family of fussy eaters, or varying family preferences (64 percent), as the largest barrier to serving more fruits and vegetables. Their other concerns include fresh produce spoiling too quickly (57 percent) and the lack of fruit and vegetable varieties in restaurants (51 percent).

Because 90 percent of Americans consume fewer fruits and vegetables than the recommended daily amount, which ranges from 2 to 6 ½ cups each day, PBH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are introducing strategies and tips called Get Smart! Fruits & Veggies—More Matters. These helpful, practical, easy to use tactics are designed to help Moms add more fruits and vegetables to their family’s plate. Their unveiling commemorates March’s National Nutrition Month and the one year anniversary of Fruits & Veggies—More Matters, a national health initiative to encourage Americans to eat more fruits and vegetables.

The Get Smart! tips help Moms realize that introducing more fruits and vegetables into their families’ diet is easier than they think. For example, many Moms surveyed believe that only

fresh produce counts as a source of healthy nutrition, but frozen, canned, dried and 100 percent juice count as well. Says Elizabeth Pivonka, Ph.D., R.D., PBH President and CEO, “The Get Smart! strategies and tips are designed to show Moms that it’s easy to include more fruits and vegetables in meals and snacks by using canned, frozen, dried or 100% juice, in addition to fresh.”

Moms can find the Get Smart! tips on the Fruits & Veggies—More Matters Web site www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org. The tips focus on including fruits and vegetables “As You Shop,” “In Your Family Dinner,” and while “Eating on the Go.” Additional tips will be unveiled throughout the year. Get Smart! strategies will also be available in stores throughout the country.

The survey was conducted between January 18 and January 22, 2008 by OnSurvey. Survey respondents were a nationally representative sample of women between the ages of 24 and 41, all of whom had at least 1 child under 18 living in their household. 1,000 women responded to the online survey. In general, a sample of this size has a margin of error of +/- 3.1%.

Get Smart! Fruits & Veggies—More Matters is a project of Fruits & Veggies—More Matters, a national public health initiative launched in March 2007 by PBH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in cooperation with other partners including the American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association, and U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Get Smart! initiative is just one of many things being done to support Fruits & Veggies—More Matters. Other elements include the addition of an extensive new kids section to the Fruits & Veggies—More Matters Web site, a partnership “Crunch the Numbers” with Scholastics, and the awarding of “Retail Role Model” status to select retailers who are working creatively to encourage fruit and vegetable consumption among consumers.

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About Produce for Better Health Foundation

Produce for Better Health Foundation is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to lead the way to achieving increased daily consumption of fruits and vegetables by leveraging private industry resources, leveraging public sector resources, influencing policy makers, motivating key consumer influencers, and promoting fruits and vegetables directly to consumers. To learn more, visit www.pbhfoundation.org.

About the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is one of the 13 major operating components of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which is the principal agency in the United States government for protecting the health and safety of all Americans and for providing essential human services, especially for those people who are least able to help themselves. More information about Fruits & Veggies—More Matters is available online at www.cdc.gov.