

HEALTH TODAY

Volume 72

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- Growing Health Bodies

Mark Your Calendars!

- The Next TE and LE Training call is March 12th, at 8:00 pm ET

No 'Kid'ding Around

The importance of our children's health and well-being is paramount. However, as stated in the 2nd paragraph of this national report, our kids are gaining weight at an alarming rate. Not only with the weight gain contributing to obesity, we are also seeing the development of Type II diabetes in children at an alarming rate.

This report is long and informative. I encourage all to read it from start to finish. In it, it talks about the benefits of supplement and of healthy snacking and having breakfast. The new all natural Kids Essentials provides an easy way for your children and teens to obtain the baseline of nutrients. As for breakfast – with the LE Protein Shake there is no excuse for your children to run out the door in the morning with out breakfast. And when they arrive home after school, let the make a LE Protein Shake “Smoothie” packed with fruit in the blender. It's fun, tasty, and nutritious!

With the health of children in sharp decline, the nutraceuticals industry is focusing its efforts on improving their nutritional needs in order to ensure a healthy future.

Data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES 2003-2004) indicates that 14% of two- to five-year-olds and 17% of children and adolescents ages 12 to 19 in the U.S. are overweight. Even more startling, the prevalence of overweight children and adolescents **has quadrupled and tripled**, respectively, in the last 30 years.

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In a recent study, researchers from the Saint Louis University School of Medicine and School of Public Health, and pharmacy benefit manager Express Scripts, found that America's "tweens" more than doubled their use of type 2 diabetes medications between 2002 and 2005. The study also found more children taking chronic medications for blood pressure, cholesterol, asthma, depression and diabetes.

"Children in the U.S. are certainly facing a number of serious health-related issues," said Mark Meskin, PhD, RD, professor and director, Didactic Program in Dietetics, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, CA. "These problems include **childhood obesity, early onset type II diabetes and dietary habits that may contribute to heart disease, cancer and other chronic diseases** that occur later in life."

Taking these issues into consideration, consumers are increasingly looking to maintain and improve their family's health and wellness through dietary habits, whether that includes functional foods and/or dietary supplements. In Mintel's August 2007 U.S. report on "Functional Beverages," some 45-50% survey respondents with children present in the household were purchasing both a functional food and drink.

Nutritional Report Card

The Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS), which is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Bethesda, MD, recently published a study in the October issue (07) of Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine entitled, "Dietary Supplement Use Among Infants, Children, and Adolescents in the United States, 1999-2002." According to Mary Frances Picciano, PhD, lead author of the study and senior nutrition research scientist at ODS, the purpose of the investigation was not only to determine the prevalence of dietary supplement usage, but also to reveal which nutrients the supplements provided to children. To do this, researchers analyzed NHANES data from 1999-2002, which included information on children from birth through 18 years of age.

Researchers found that nearly 32% or about one-third of U.S. children use dietary supplements, with the lowest use reported among infants younger than one year (12%) and teenagers 14- to 18-years-old (26%), and highest use among four- to eight-year-old children (49%). The type of supplement most commonly used was multivitamins and multi-minerals (18%). The leading supplemental nutrients consumed were found to be ascorbic acid (27%), retinol (26%), vitamin D (26%), calcium (21%) and iron (19%).

As Dr. Picciano points out, this analysis was a first phase study for ODS, which is working to further explore the nutrition habits of today's children. More specifically, ODS wants to find out if children are in fact obtaining nutrients that are low in their diets, or if they are supplementing diets that are already adequate in those nutrients. "We are now looking at total nutrient intakes," she said. "This would include nutritional intake from food, as well as nutritional intake from supplements to obtain total nutritional intake." Results of this investigation should be available sometime next year.

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When it comes to obtaining essential nutrients for children, Dr. Picciano emphasizes that a proper diet is the best source. “Guidelines for nutrient intake are spearheaded by the American Academy of Pediatrics,” said Dr. Picciano. “They recommend children should ideally be getting nutrients from food, but if they do not obtain them from food for whatever reason, then supplementation is suggested.” One nutrient that Dr. Picciano mentioned the organization has made special recommendations for is vitamin D, indicating the importance of supplementing vitamin D to breastfed infants, as well as to children if they are consuming less than 500 milliliters of milk per day. Other nutrients that the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends to promote optimal growth and development in children include fluoride, calcium and iron.

Adequate amounts of iron and calcium are particularly important to adolescents as their bodies undergo an intensive growth period. “According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, only 10% of girls and 25% of boys get the calcium they need in the tween years (ages 9-13) to build peak bone mass,” said Coni Francis, PhD, RD, senior manager of science, marketing and technical Services for GTC Nutrition, Golden, CO.

Dr. Francis went on to reference a July 2007 survey of parents of school-aged children that was conducted by Opinion Research Corporation for GTC Nutrition. “The survey found that the majority of parents—almost 60%—are in the dark when it comes to knowing how much calcium their kids need on a daily basis,” she said. “Furthermore, over 30% of the parents surveyed mistakenly believe their children need less than half of the daily recommended 1300 mg of calcium for kids aged nine years and older.”

A Well-Schooled Diet

There is a long laundry list of barriers to eating a healthy diet. “Unfortunately health-related decisions often intersect with factors such as security, convenience, availability, cost and familiarity,” said Cal State’s Dr. Meskin. “People actually know what they should be eating, but they find it difficult to overcome these barriers.”

Recent federal initiatives have been working to overcome some of these obstacles, starting with educational institutions.

“We are on the cusp of a sea change regarding food and children,” commented Michael Neuwirth, senior director of public relations, The Dannon Co., White Plains, NY. “Schools are changing what foods they make available to children, and the guidelines for competitive foods sold in schools, developed by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, is a great example of this.”

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation is a partnership between the American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation, which is working to combat childhood obesity.

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The Alliance provides a four-pronged approach that works with schools, children, the food and beverage industries and healthcare insurers. The school initiative helps provide healthy school programs that improve access to nutritional foods and beverages. One of the Alliance's major goals is to halt the nationwide increase in childhood obesity by 2010, and reverse the trend by 2015.

As the call for healthier food options in schools rages on, many are starting to offer more nutritional breakfast and lunch options that include more fruits and veggies, involve less calories and sugar-based products, and offer fortified favorites like wheat pizza.

The good news is kids are more than willing to eat these healthier foods. In fact, a University of Minnesota study recently found that school lunch sales don't decline when healthier meals are served. The study, which appears in the December issue of the Review of Agricultural Economics, analyzed five years of data for 330 Minnesota public school districts. It looked at compliance with federal standards for calories, nutrients and fats.

Demand for On-The-Go Snacking

In order to meet energy needs, children should eat at least three meals a day, beginning with breakfast. Unfortunately, today's children seem to be in a rush just like their parents, and it's been shown that they eat everywhere but home. As a result, on-the-go products continue to be the trend based on the increase of out-of-home food consumption.

According to ADM's (Decatur, IL) "On-The-Go Nutrition for Children" study, preschool children eat out 18% of the time, and middle school children 26% of the time. About one in every three kids eats a fast-food meal every day—because of both their own extracurricular activities and the entire family's lifestyle. This situation typically increases as kids get older, because they are more likely to have opportunities and their own disposable income to eat more snacks and meals away from home. They also have more control over their food choices. The money in kids' pockets has nearly doubled every decade over the past 30 years, with a current average disposable income of \$91 per week.

Formulation Factors

Safety is a big concern when formulating products for children. With recent toys recalls for lead and other hazards, and a ban on medicine for children's colds, the nutraceuticals industry should tread lightly when it comes to children. Eric Anderson, brand manager, PL Thomas & Co., Morristown, NJ, said issues such as appropriate dose and any long-term implications of daily use need to be determined. "Parents must be vigilant in their selection of supplements, and nutraceutical marketers need to do the work to ensure what they're offering is safe for kids," he said.

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Other things to consider: children prefer smaller and softer food; they enjoy a variety of flavors, colors and shapes; and long term, portion control and 100-calorie snack packs will become commonplace in the kids market.

As pointed out by New Nutrition Business' "Kids Nutrition Report," "all-natural" and "free from" have become established as the key requirements for foods marketed to children. Similarly, messages that were once perceived as strictly allergy-related, such as "free from gluten," are also being sought by parents whose children have no allergies, but who want to be sure they are not taking any risks with what they give their children.

Kid-Specific Opportunities

For the future, as indicated by the "Kids Nutrition Report," immunity and digestion represent the most attractive targets in the children's health market. "The biggest opportunities lie in the related areas of digestion and immunity—the latter being a subject that market research consistently shows is 'top-of-mind' for parents of children aged one to six," the report states. Luckily science has proven that a healthy gut and an effective immune system are linked, which means that a product formulated to target one benefit might also be able to target another.

Quickly building momentum, probiotics have been found to benefit both immunity and digestion. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is another prevailing issue in the U.S., with millions of children getting diagnosed each year. A placebo-controlled study has revealed that Pycnogenol, an antioxidant plant extract from the bark of the French maritime pine tree created by Horphag Research and distributed in North America by Natural Health Science, Hoboken, NJ, reduces ADHD in children by balancing stress hormones, which lowers adrenaline and dopamine.

"ADHD is affecting the quality of life for so many children and their families," said Dr. Frank Schönlaue, director of scientific communications for Horphag Research and Natural Health Science. "It is imperative that science explore a natural means to provide expanded treatment options. We look forward to advancing this promising research." To read the entire article, go to:

<http://www.nutraingredients.com/news/ng.asp?n=82766&m=1NIE124&c=zmohtyqhwro>

Growing Healthy Bodies

You may or may not know this, but on the trueessentials.net website there are many articles, some research studies and others that I have written. Here is one about integrating your children into the kitchen, food preparation, grocery shopping and enjoying nutritious foods:

<http://www.trueessentials.net/PDF/kidsarticle.pdf>

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The next TE and LE Training Call is:

March 12th, 8:00p.m. Eastern

The dial-in number is (347) 534-1701.

The Listener PIN is 7022#.

Send in your questions, comments, and topics that you would like covered to
heather@fhtm.net

See you in Atlanta!

Keep well, active, and a Shakin!

Heather L., M.Sc.

