



For Immediate Release

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Better Bodies, Better Diets in Hispanic Kids Who Eat Peanuts

Bankok, Thailand, October 8, 2009 --New research presented today at the International Congress of Nutrition in Bankok, Thailand shows that Mexican-American children who eat peanuts and peanut butter are significantly less likely to be overweight and they take in more nutrients. For the first time it is clear that high-risk Hispanic children may benefit health by making simple dietary changes for prevention of obesity and disease.

Sixty percent of the children who ate peanuts were normal weight versus 64% of the kids who did not eat peanuts. The peanut eaters took in higher levels of several key nutrients, including magnesium, vitamin E, iron, folic acid, and vitamin B6. An added benefit – the peanut eaters had significantly lower total and bad LDL cholesterol.

Dr. Craig Johnston, Instructor at the Behavioral Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine, who oversees the USDA-funded study, which is conducted at the USDA-ARS Children's Nutrition Research Center in Houston, Texas said, "It may seem counterintuitive too look the intake of a higher fat food related to weight, but the data on peanuts are consistent over various population groups."

USDA data have shown that women and children who eat peanuts and peanut butter have lower BMIs and take in more "hard to get" nutrients. In a human weight loss study that fed peanuts, peanut butter, and peanut oil, subjects lost weight and reduced blood cholesterol, improving their risk heart disease.

Close to 40% of children today are overweight or obese, and severe childhood obesity (>99th percentile) has increased more than 70% over 15 years. Mexican-Americans have the highest prevalence for overweight, which puts them at risk for multiple health problems. While peanuts and peanut butter are seen as American comfort foods, it has been shown that their acceptability crosses over into other cultures.

Choosing a handful of peanuts (about 1 ounce) or a large spoonful of peanut butter (1 tablespoon) as a healthy snack or to add to meals not only tastes good, but also is an affordable easy way to put a checkmark on preventative health.

The Peanut Institute is a non-profit organization that supports nutrition research and develops educational programs to encourage healthful lifestyles. Learn more about peanuts and health at www.peanut-institute.org

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