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Contact:

Pat Kearney

(703) 841-1600

pmk@pmkassociates.com

Peanut Butter Dipping Helps Kids Eat More Veggies

Washington, DC, October 30, 2009 -- This week at the Obesity Society 27th Annual Meeting, new data was presented showing that adolescents deemed "vegetable resistant," who don't eat vegetables at all, significantly increased both the amount and variety of vegetables they ate when they were served with one of America's favorite foods -- peanut butter. Raw carrots, celery, and broccoli were provided either with or without peanut butter for dipping and those not provided peanut butter, did not improve vegetable intake.

"We measured what they ate and were excited to see that even those who reported not eating vegetables, who are the most challenging group, ate a greater variety of vegetables with the peanut butter," said Dr. Craig Johnston, Instructor at the Behavioral Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine, at the USDA-ARS Children's Nutrition Research Center in Houston, Texas who conducted the study.

Vegetable intake has been shown to be beneficial against the development of many chronic diseases, but consumption in adolescents is well below recommended levels and strategies to increase intake in adolescents are limited. Peanut butter was paired with vegetables in this study, because it is a nutrient-rich comfort food loved by kids and adults alike. In fact, it was well received and readily consumed by the students in this study all of whom are Mexican-American. The adolescents are part of a treatment group in a successful weight loss program in schools that is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS). Though some believe peanut butter would be associated with increased energy intake, the study has demonstrated significant weight loss that is maintained over time.

In the United States, over two-thirds of the nuts eaten are peanuts and peanut butter. Peanut butter provides over 15 key nutrients and is offered in Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) packages because of its protein, nutrient content, and affordability. Numerous studies have also shown that peanuts and peanut butter reduce the risk of chronic disease when eaten in small amounts daily and that they can help in weight management and keeping you satisfied.

Pairing vegetables with peanut butter is an effective, simple strategy for children and adolescents, which helps build positive eating habits and increases vegetable intake. Eating more vegetables with increased variety, by providing them with healthy, nutrient-rich foods like peanut butter may contribute to healthier lifestyles and chronic disease reduction.

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 <http://www.peanut-institute.org>

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