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PNCPS Releases Results of ‘Tween Eating Habits Survey

Shares Inside Look at What Kids Eat Today...Really

YAKIMA, Wash. (July 24, 2003)—For the past several years, the Pacific Northwest Canned Pear Service (PNCPS) has closely watched the eating habits and trends of America’s youth, especially ‘Twins, kids ages 6 to 12. What they’ve noticed is the alarming new tendency to be both overweight and inactive.

Because lifetime eating habits are often formed during the ‘Tween years, the PNCPS launched a focus group study and subsequent report, *What a Tween Eats: Up Close with Today’s American Kids* to help understand what exactly kids are eating today and how to provide this group of Gen Y’ers with healthy eating messages they’ll understand *and* listen to.

To accomplish this, the “Tween Team” elicited the help of a Southern California ‘Tween and her friends in her fifth- and sixth-grade class. The Team spent a day in early spring with this group of 24 kids during which they discussed eating habits, attitudes toward food, the importance of adding fruits to a balanced diet as well as exercise and shopping habits.

What they found was this:

- 88 percent of the kids surveyed usually eat snacks after school with 41 percent of them regularly chowing down chips and cookies while only 11 percent selected fruit of any type
- Nearly all of the students (94 percent) made their own snacks

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EATING SURVEY RESULTS RELEASED

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- 70 percent of the ‘Tweens surveyed helped their parents make out the weekly grocery list
- In a typical day, 64 percent of these ‘Tweens say they eat four to five servings of fruit, while 58 percent eat 2 to 3 servings with the most popular being (in order) strawberries, bananas, apples, watermelon, grapes, oranges, peaches, cantaloupe, cherries, pears, applesauce
- When asked what would make them eat more fruit everyday, the answers ranged from the silly to the serious, including “parents saying I need to”; “threatening to make brother share my room”; “if it’s the only food available”
- More than half (58 percent) of the ‘Tweens surveyed say that they worry about their weight or how their body looks
- 70 percent of the kids surveyed purchase lunch from the school cafeteria one to two times per week, leaving three to four days for parents to influence what goes on the plate

Conclusions

‘Tweens are, indeed, interested in how they look and what they eat on a daily basis. They’ll eat things that are easy to make or reach and the food must taste good. If good foods are available for their lunches, they’ll bring them to school *and* eat them!

For parents and caretakers, this seemingly simple insight offers a real-world opportunity for helping kids simultaneously maintain a healthy weight and a nourished body. Adults may be surprised, but by simply providing kids with the best choices to match *their* behaviors, the health message has a better chance of getting through (and sticking).

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EATING SURVEY RESULTS RELEASED

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Tips for Parents

“Best choices” include:

- Providing a nourishing breakfast that’s tasty, healthy snacks that are convenient, satisfying and nutritious lunch foods and dinner served at the table (not in front of the TV or at the computer).
- Limit choices to healthier options whenever possible, such as canned or fresh fruit instead of chips or snack bars.
- Have portable foods available such as breakfast wraps, pear waffle tacos, quesadillas or cereal bars
- Place items within easy reach!
- Don’t force kids to eat a certain food. Power struggles aren’t limited to clothing, friends and curfew.

For an electronic copy of the *What a ‘Tween Eats: Up Close with Today’s American Kids*, log onto www.eatcannedpears.com. Hard copies are available from The Londre Company, Inc., 323-851-8230 x 102.

PNCPS was formed to keep consumers updated with information about canned pears as well as raise awareness of the benefit and easy use of canned pears. For tasty recipes, nutritional information or to sign up for a free quarterly e-newsletter, log on to www.eatcannedpears.com.

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