

Study Identifies Factors Influencing Food Choice and Solutions for Eating More Healthfully; Canned Food Alliance

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PITTSBURGH, Sept. 5 /PRNewswire/ -- New research from Rutgers University confirms that America's diet is out of shape. The study, published in the July/Sept. issue of Topics in Clinical Nutrition summarized peer-reviewed research from 1996 to 2007 on Americans' dietary intake; food choice motivators, eating times and locations; and food preparation habits.

The purpose of the study, funded by the Canned Food Alliance, was to better understand why Americans eat the way they do and to provide recommendations for how Americans can achieve a healthier diet by identifying the behaviors and motivators that influence Americans' food consumption. The research showed that people are eating too much fat, calories, added sugar and sodium, and not enough important nutrients such as fiber, vitamin A and calcium. For example:

-- Americans are only getting 77% of the daily value recommended for

vitamin A, due in part for not consuming enough fruits, vegetables and milk.

-- Males and females ages 2-19 consume more than three times the daily

recommended amount of added sugar.

-- Fiber is in short supply with Americans meeting on average only 60% of

their daily requirement.

Meal habits and inadequate planning could be a factor of poor dietary intake. One-third of Americans decide what to make for dinner at the last minute and make dinner selections because they require little or no planning.

"People think that eating healthfully takes too much time, so they're reaching for fast food, takeout and other commercially prepared meals," says Carol Byrd-Bredbenner, Ph.D., RD, FADA, lead study researcher, Nutritional Sciences Department, Rutgers University. "By planning ahead and having a well-stocked kitchen and pantry, Americans could eat more healthfully without changing the busy lifestyles they lead."

Although nutrient-rich, diverse foods are available, consumers are still falling short of dietary recommendations. So as part of the study, a panel of food, culinary and nutrition experts received the research results and developed a list of recommendations for making mealtime decisions.

#### How to Achieve a Healthier Diet-What the Experts Say

- Make eating healthy a priority
- Engage in self discovery
- Know the value of a healthy diet
- Change slowly and permanently
- Engage in mindful eating
- Raise nutrient density and lower energy density
- Savor the flavors of food
- Make it easy to eat healthfully
- Retrain your palate
- Plan ahead
- Let food do its intended job
- Expand nutrition education to include food education
- Focus on portion size
- Schedule family meals and make them a priority
- Drop out of the clean plate club
- Use information from the media wisely
- Read and heed Nutrition Facts labels

Knowing that more than two-thirds of Americans aren't eating enough fruits and vegetables(1), canned food is one way to bridge the nutrient gap within our time-constrained lifestyles. Several university

studies confirmed that canned fruits and vegetables are just as nutritious as fresh and frozen(2), making them a convenient way for Americans to start eating more healthfully. Plus, canned foods are easy and accessible for everyone, everywhere, every day and play a crucial role in contributing to the nation's nutrition.

"We already know that canned food brings important nutrients to the table, but to confirm that Americans need convenient options is exciting news for the canned food industry," says Rich Tavoletti, executive director, the Canned Food Alliance. "Eating healthfully doesn't have to be hard, and we're glad these recommendations remind consumers healthy eating can be achieved by incorporating convenient and nutritious canned food into meal preparation."

For hundreds of easy and nutritious meals and tips for cooking with canned foods, visit [www.mealtime.org](http://www.mealtime.org). For complete study results contact Katie Calligaro, Ketchum, at 412-456-3596 or via e-mail at [katie.calligaro@ketchum.com](mailto:katie.calligaro@ketchum.com).

#### About the Canned Food Alliance

The Canned Food Alliance is a partnership of the American Iron and Steel Institute's Steel Packaging Council, the Can Manufacturers Institute, select food processors and affiliate members. The primary mission of the CFA is to serve as a resource for information on the nutrition, convenience, contemporary appeal and versatility of canned food. For hundreds of mealtime solutions, visit [www.mealtime.org](http://www.mealtime.org).

(1) U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention survey shows that

less than one third of American adults eat the amount of fruits and

vegetables the government recommends. USA TODAY, March 15, 2007.

(2) University of California, Davis study concludes that a diet that

includes a variety of fruits and vegetables delivered in any number of

forms -- canned, fresh and frozen -- is desirable. Journal of the

Science of Food and Agriculture, April 2007 and May 2007.

SOURCE Canned Food Alliance

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