



2008 Children's Nutrition Survey Reveals Majority of U.S. Parents Unaware of DHA Benefits to Children's Health

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SANTA ANA, Calif., April 21 /PRNewswire/ – Stremicks Heritage Foods(TM) today announced the results of its 2008 Children's Nutrition Survey, which indicates that a majority of U.S. parents aren't aware of the critical benefits of DHA in the development of their children's heart, brain and eyes. The research, conducted by Harris Interactive, reveals that 68 percent of U.S. parents are not sure what omega-3 DHA does, and 59 percent of parents are not aware of the benefits of omega-3 DHA to their child's health.

Though nearly three in four (72%) of the survey respondents said that they make a conscious effort to include certain vitamins and nutrients such as vitamin C (55%) and calcium (53%) in their child's daily diet, only seven percent are consciously including omega-3 DHA. And while about one in five are aware of the importance of omega-3 DHA before (19%) and during pregnancy (22%), less than one in five recognize the importance of this nutrient to a newborn (18%) or infant (18%), and even fewer know that omega-3 DHA is especially important to the health of toddlers (16%) and preschool-aged children (14%).

DHA is an omega-3 fatty acid found throughout the body, with significant amounts found in the heart, retinas and brain, where it accounts for up to 20 percent of total brain mass. DHA is important for brain and eye development and function throughout the lifecycle, but is particularly important between birth and five years of age, when the brain increases approximately three-and-a-half times in mass, and DHA content increases from 1 gram to approximately 4.5 grams. DHA also is the primary structural fat in both the brain and retina, and ensures that cells in the brain, retina, heart and other parts of the nervous system develop and function properly.

“Our survey makes it clear that parents need to understand the importance of DHA, and how to easily get the nutrient into their children's diets to ensure optimal growth and development,” said Sam Stremick, Director of Sales and Marketing for Stremicks Heritage Foods. “Most American children consume less than optimal levels of DHA primarily because the foods that naturally contain DHA are organ meats and fatty fish, which are not generally liked by young children. In addition, picky and unbalanced eating habits, as well as food allergies make it difficult for parents to ensure their children are obtaining optimal levels of DHA.”

While the FDA does not have a regulation establishing a recommended daily intake for DHA, the agency has not objected to the use of 160mg as a daily value for DHA for children over four and adults. Many leading health authorities and pediatricians recommend 150 mg/day for children. The average U.S. child, ages from one to five years old, is shown to have DHA intakes ranging from only 20-30 mg/day.

“Including DHA in the diet is the most reliable way to ensure that sufficient amounts of DHA are available to support optimal growth and development,” notes Stremick. “Our DHA-fortified milk products help parents ensure their children are obtaining adequate amounts of DHA in their diets, with each eight ounce serving providing 32mg of DHA. As a family-owned food and beverage company, we’re proud to be able to offer our customers a great tasting, rBST-free milk that is also an excellent source of DHA.”

About Stremicks Heritage Foods

Stremicks Heritage Foods(TM) (Heritage), founded in 1990, manufactures, sells and distributes value-added, specialty beverage products on a regional and national scale. Headquartered in Santa Ana, Calif., the company operates in Santa Ana and Riverside, Calif.; Cedar City, Utah; Joplin, Missouri and Mexicali, Mexico. Heritage owns or licenses such well recognized brands as Heritage Milk with omega-3 DHA, Kern’s Beverages, Nes-quick, Rice Dream and Soy Dream, Heritage Organic Milk, Heritage Organic Milk with omega-3 DHA and 8th Continent Soy Milk. For more information, visit <http://www.StremicksHeritageFoods.com>.

About the Survey

Harris Interactive is a global leader in custom market research. This 2008 Children’s Nutrition Survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of Stremicks Heritage Foods between March 20-25, 2008 among 1,244 U.S. adults ages 18+ who are parents or legal guardians of children under the age of 18. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For complete methodology, including weighting variables, please contact Sharon Villanueva Scott at (323) 957-2745.

2008 Children’s Nutrition Survey Key Findings -- A majority of U.S. parents (68%) are not sure exactly what omega-3 DHA does. -- 59% of parents are not aware of the benefits of omega-3 DHA to their child’s health. -- Though nearly three in four (72%) make a conscious effort to include certain vitamins and nutrients such as vitamin C (55%) and calcium (53%) in their child’s daily diet, only 7% are consciously including omega-3 DHA. -- Parents are twice as likely to consider omega-3 fatty acids in general (15%) as they are to consider omega-3 DHA in particular (7%) for their child’s diet. -- Nearly two in three parents (63%) say they didn’t realize omega-3 DHA is a specific type of omega-3 fatty acid. -- Only about one in three parents (35%) is familiar with a variety of sources of omega-3 DHA. -- About one in five are aware of the importance of omega-3 DHA before (19%) and during pregnancy (22%). Less than one in five recognize the importance of this nutrient to a newborn (18%) or infant (18%). And even fewer know that omega-3 DHA is also important to the health of toddlers (16%) and preschool-aged children (14%). -- Not surprisingly, women are more likely than men to be aware of the benefits of omega-3 DHA at certain phases of development. -- Few parents report that their child regularly (at least twice a week) consumes natural sources of omega-3 DHA such as tuna (24%), salmon (7%) or flaxseed/flaxseed oil (4%). -- Only one in ten (10%) says their child regularly consumes omega-3 DHA fortified dairy products such as milk (5%) or eggs (7%). -- A majority of parents (72%) agree that it would be easier to ensure their child gets the recommended amount of omega-3 DHA if they didn’t have to try to get their child to eat foods like salmon and flaxseed oil. SOURCE Stremicks Heritage Foods.