

UK Mums Face Diet Reality Gap

Submitted by: GCI London

Thursday, 29 April 2004

74% of UK mums are unsure about what represents a balanced diet*, according to new research released this week by family baker Warburtons. When questioned, 82% believed they knew enough about nutrition, yet only 26% could correctly identify what makes up a daily balanced diet.

Could it be that the weekly celebrity slimming recommendations and constant new diet crazes like Atkins may be affecting the judgement of mums across the UK? Is the age of the diet fad overkill upon us?

Particular confusion surrounds the importance of starchy foods as part of a balanced diet. Almost half of all mums (48%) believed that starchy foods should make up a quarter or less of our diet overall. The reality is that we need about a third of our diet to come from starchy foods, preferably wholegrain, for a balanced approach and meals should be based on these starchy foods.

Worryingly three out of five mums didn't know that fatty and sugary foods should not make up more than about a twelfth of our suggested daily eating pattern. With obesity an increasing concern in this country, understanding exactly what makes a balanced diet has never been more important.

When mums were asked to consider what they thought would give their children the best start to the day, huge importance was placed on breakfast cereals (86%). In light of the recent Which magazine investigation into breakfast cereals**, mums should consider cereal choices carefully as although some provide an excellent start to the day, others are high in salt and sugar. Worryingly an alternative healthy recommendation, such as toast with a topping, was recognised by only 2% of mums as being a good start to the day.

"What 'diet' really means is 'balanced eating pattern', including breakfast, and mums shouldn't be swayed by the ever increasing number of alternative diet suggestions around," said dietitian Sian Porter.

This is especially true for mums whose children are about to undertake SATs. The importance of a good start to the day is supported by a wealth of research including the recent study from Wesnes et al (2003)*** showing that eating breakfast can help school children's concentration and memory over the morning.

The research has been undertaken as part of Warburtons National Bread Week (26th April to 2nd May 2004) to help improve consumer understanding of healthy eating. For more information about how you can put bread at the heart of healthy eating, visit www.warburtons.co.uk/nbw.

- Ends -

Notes to Editors:

- The research was undertaken during March 2004 on behalf of Warburtons by independent market research company, Fiona Whitehead Research, using a sample of 1069 mums across the UK
- Warburtons has been listed number nine in the top 100 grocery brands beating the likes of Ariel, Bernard Matthews and Pampers.

- Warburtons is the UK's leading independent bakery and was established in a grocery shop in Bolton in 1876 by Thomas Warburton. Today the business is actively run by the fifth generation of the Warburton family – Brett, Jonathan and Ross.
- With eleven bakeries around the country, the company serves customers as far apart as the Shetland Islands in the north right down to the north bank of the River Thames in the south.
- Warburtons produces over two million loaves, rolls and crumpets every day and in the UK we eat the equivalent of nine million large loaves of bread on a daily basis.
- For local stockists please call the Warburtons Freephone Customer Careline on 0800 243 684.

* According to the Food Standard Agency's 'Balance of Good Health' chart

** 'Cereal Offenders' published by the Consumers' Association, 31 March 2004

*** Wesnes K et al (2003. Breakfast reduces declines in attention and memory over the morning in schoolchildren. *Appetite*; 41:329-331

For further press information please contact:

Jo Buchan / Caroline Trout, GCI London

T: 020 7072 4000 / Email: jbuchan@gciuk.com / ctrout@gciuk.com

Date: April 2004