

CANADIANS MAY NOT BE AS HEALTHY AS THEY THINK

~ Misperceptions about personal eating and exercise habits may be putting Canadians at risk for chronic disease ~

Toronto, ON (April 7, 2008) – Spring is in the air, and instead of cleaning the house, a new survey shows Canadians should be thinking about sprucing up their daily routine. The survey, conducted on behalf of the Canadian Diabetes Association, shows Canadians may not be as healthy as they think, and could be leaving themselves at risk for chronic diseases, such as type 2 diabetes.

The survey reveals a gap between Canadians' knowledge about healthy lifestyle behaviours and their willingness to adopt such behaviours. While Canadians recognize a healthy lifestyle as attributable to several factors – including physical exercise (97 per cent), healthy eating (95 per cent), and reducing stress (93 per cent) – they are not putting this knowledge into action. Disturbingly, fewer than four-in-ten Canadians (37 per cent) said the threat of a serious illness would motivate them to adopt a healthier lifestyle.

“The good news is that a majority of Canadians would be more motivated to make healthy changes by learning the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, rather than the risks of an unhealthy lifestyle,” says Sharon Zeiler, Senior Manager, Nutrition Initiatives and Strategies, Canadian Diabetes Association. “It’s time for Canadians to take a serious look at their habits and determine where they can improve; small changes to diet and exercise today can mean a healthier future for themselves and their families.”

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

According to the survey, Canadians understand the importance of eating well for overall health, with more than half (52 per cent) acknowledging that they should eat five to 10 servings of vegetables and fruits (as listed in *Canada's Food Guide*) each day. However, only one-in-five (22 per cent) are actually getting this many servings.

Interestingly, more than a quarter of Canadians think their diet is as healthy as it needs to be. Of those who thought they could improve their diet, lack of willpower and lack of time were the top two reasons for not doing so.

MOVE IT OR LOSE IT

The survey reveals that Canadians believe it's necessary to have an average of 20 minutes of exercise, at least five days per week, as opposed to the 30 to 60 minutes as recommended by *Canada's Physical Activity Guide*. However, when asked about their personal fitness habits, less than one-third (27 per cent) of Canadians are meeting the goal of five days per week.

Although Canadians know what it takes to be fit and healthy, most are not willing to increase the amount of activity they are currently doing. Nearly one-in-five Canadians say they are already doing everything they can, and another 20 per cent claim they are too busy to get more exercise.

PREVENTING CHRONIC DISEASE

“Eating healthy and getting physical activity every day are an important part of staying healthy and preventing chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes,” says Zeiler. “Canadians have some of the knowledge they need about healthy lifestyle behaviours – and now is the time to take action.” Here are five easy tips that can help Canadians spring into action with a healthier lifestyle:

1. ***Eat Smart*** – Following *Canada's Food Guide* for healthy eating is a sure-fire way to ensure you're getting the necessary amount of vegetables, fruit, grains and other healthy foods that you need.
2. ***Get a Move On*** – Regular physical activity can help lower blood glucose levels, promote weight loss, reduce stress and enhance your overall level of fitness and health.
3. ***Stress Less*** – Try to avoid stressful situations as much as possible, and take time for activities that help you relax.
4. ***Ask for Help*** – Visit your doctor or dietician and ask how you can improve your health through simple lifestyle modifications.
5. ***Go Beyond the Basics***– Visit diabetes.ca to access the Canadian Diabetes Association's new *Beyond the Basics* resource – a tool that can help you get on track to implement healthy lifestyle behaviours and prevent chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The national on-line survey was conducted by Environics research group, on behalf of the Canadian Diabetes Association. The survey was designed to explore current lifestyle behaviours, awareness of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, motivations and barriers to healthy lifestyles, as well as the impact of living with diabetes on perceptions of healthy lifestyle behaviours. Two thousand, three hundred and fifty-seven (2,357) adult Canadians (aged 18 and older) participated in the survey between January 21 and February 2, 2008. The survey was funded through an unrestricted educational grant provided by Novo Nordisk Canada.

ABOUT THE CANADIAN DIABETES ASSOCIATION

The Canadian Diabetes Association works in communities across the country to promote the health of Canadians and eliminate diabetes through our strong nationwide network of volunteers, employees, healthcare professionals, researchers, partners and supporters. In the struggle against this global epidemic, our expertise is recognized around the world. The Canadian Diabetes Association: setting the world standard. To learn more, visit diabetes.ca or call 1-800-BANTING (226-8464).

ABOUT NOVO NORDISK CANADA INC.

Novo Nordisk is a healthcare company and a world leader in diabetes care and biopharmaceuticals. Novo Nordisk manufactures and markets pharmaceutical products and services that make a significant difference to patients, the medical profession and society. Novo Nordisk's business is driven by the Triple Bottom Line: a commitment to economic success, environmental soundness, and social responsibility to employees and customers. For more information, visit www.novonordisk.ca.

A b-roll will be available via satellite at the following times:

Insert b-roll coordinates

For more information or to book an interview, please contact:

Jennifer Goode/Jaclyn Crawford

Edelman

416-979-1120 ext. 230/344

jennifer.goode@edelman.com/jaclyn.crawford@edelman.com