

## Over 4,000 Transition Year Students and Teachers attend HealthFest 2016

Over 4,000 secondary students and teachers attended the inaugural HealthFest event in Citywest, Dublin today (26th April, 2016). Organised by the National Dairy Council and safefood, the event is the first of its kind for transition year students – a full day seminar designed to educate them about the importance of healthy eating and physical activity in a practical, engaging and fun environment.

Interactive sessions with experts including leading fitness expert Karl Henry; Paula Mee, a leading Irish independent dietitian; Caroline O'Donovan, a registered nutritionist working with the NDC; Nóra Ní Fhlannagáin, Performance Nutritionist for Age-Grade Rugby with the IRFU and nutrition advisor to a number of sports teams and squads; and Brendan Courtney, broadcaster, designer and entrepreneur. Multi medal winner & Olympian Derval O'Rourke was also on hand on the day to provide TY students with inspiration on how to maintain a focus on healthy eating and exercise during this busy life-stage.

The Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (INDI) joined NDC nutritionist Caroline O'Donovan at HealthFest 2016 to launch a new 'Nutrition & You' booklet written specifically for teenagers. Produced by the National Dairy Council (NDC) the free booklet covers clever eating choices, smart snacking, dietary guidelines, tackles frequent myths and includes exercise tips for teenagers. The free NDC & INDI booklet is available online at [www.ndc.ie/publications](http://www.ndc.ie/publications) – enquiries to [info@ndc.ie](mailto:info@ndc.ie).

Safefood presented their sugary drinks exhibition; where students were challenged to guess the sugar content of some popular drinks. There were a few surprises as safefood's label survey found that many fruit drinks contain as much sugar as 'fizzy drinks'. For example, a 200ml serving of a popular[i] juice drink contained as much sugar as the equivalent serving of well-known fizzy soft drinks[ii].

Celebrity TV chef Brian McDermott ran cookery demonstrations showing students how to easily prepare healthy versatile snacks and lunches to keep teenagers fuelled for the long day at school. Activities during the day ranged from fun exercises such as how to milk a cow, to interactive Zumba dance sessions, musical chairs and fitness grip tests.

### **KARL HENRY FIRST ON HIS FEET**

Personal trainer Karl Henry, fitness expert and broadcaster, was the first on his feet with a lively presentation on physical activity and health. "Fitness is not about vanity and it's not about fads, because gimmicks simply don't last," said Karl, speaking about "60 Minutes a Day, Every Day."

Regular activity can have a very positive impact on how you feel about yourself," said Karl. "It's about improving your energy and motivation. It's about the fun and camaraderie if you do group or team based activities. It's about how good you feel with each achievement along the way. But most of all it's about the real difference this can make to your health now and in the future. This is a meaningful decision each of you should make for yourself."

## **SMART SNACKING, HEALTHY HABITS & CLEVER CHOICES**

“Teenagers in particular are exposed to a lot of misinformation and conflicting dietary advice from sources such as the internet, friends or unqualified commentators,” said expert dietitian Paula Mee. “Remember that dieting should not compromise your nutrition”.

“It is far better to try to be smart about how much you are eating, why you are eating and what you eat,” said Ms. Mee. “Learning to think for yourself and making smart choices about snacks and food is a hugely important life-skill. If you eat badly, there can be short and long term consequences which are not good; if you make smart food choices, there can be benefits. It's up to you,” said Paula Mee. “You don't have to eat a perfect diet all of the time to be healthy. It's what you eat consistently, over time that matters.”

## **TAKE FIVE! TEEN YEARS CRITICAL FOR GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT OF OUR SKELETON**

NDC nutritionist Caroline O'Donovan said that the teenage years, during the transition from childhood to adulthood is a critical time for the growth and development of our skeleton.

Ms. O'Donovan said that dairy foods such as milk, yogurt and cheese are among the best sources of dietary calcium while also providing protein and phosphorus. Due to this package of nutrients, the Department of Health guidelines recommend five servings per day from the 'milk, yogurt and cheese' food group for those aged 9-18 years, with 3 servings daily recommended for all other age groups. Examples of a serving include a 200ml glass of milk; a 125ml pot of yogurt or a 25g piece of hard cheese, with the versatility of these foods allowing them to be easily enjoyed across a variety of meals and snacks.

## **FUELLING YOUR BODY FOR SPORT**

Nóra Ní Fhlannagáin, BSc(Hons) RD MSc, Performance Nutritionist for Age-Grade Rugby with the IRFU delivered a presentation on fuelling your body for sport - “No Quick Fix.” She outlined the principles of performance nutrition, focussing on the message of Carbs2Go; Protein2Grow and highlighting that dairy products such as milk can be a handy, nutritious option for those involved in sport.

“Recovering well following exercise is essential in order to perform at your best during your next training session or match. Milk contains a natural carbohydrate (lactose) which assists in refuelling energy stores; and is additionally rich in protein which aids muscle growth and repair. Milk also naturally provides a range of vitamins and minerals important for health such as calcium, iodine, phosphorus, potassium and B vitamins. Because of these nutritional components of milk, research is expanding to indicate this beneficial role for milk in the area of post-exercise recovery,” said Ms Ní Fhlannagáin.

## INSPIRATION FOR LIFE

Broadcaster, designer and entrepreneur Brendan Courtney spoke at HealthFest about his experiences through the world of fashion and business and how self-esteem and self-belief are critical to achieving your life goals.

“Transition Year provides you with the skills to make a smooth transition between a highly structured environment up to Junior Cert, towards the more independent self-directed learning required for the final senior Senior Cycle at school,” said Brendan. In his presentation on Inspiration for Life, Brendan spoke about feeling and looking your best from the inside out, making that first impression and above all, enjoying the ups and downs in life and turning them into positive learning experiences.

Chief Executive of the National Dairy Council, Zoë Kavanagh said “We were delighted to welcome so many Transition Year students and teachers to the inaugural HealthFest event. Demand for the event has been exceptional, demonstrating that there is an appetite amongst teachers and teens for credible information about healthy eating and physical activity when delivered in an engaging format”.

Paul Gibbons, Chair of safefood’s Advisory board said “Healthfest 2016 provided a great opportunity to promote the benefits and importance of a healthy diet and active lifestyle. The event had something for everyone with a range of interactive sessions, presentations and exhibitions. As we move into exam season safefood have top tips to help with preparation covering what to eat, how to snack smartly and the importance of keeping hydrated.”

ENDS

For further information please contact Cathy Curran, Communications Manager, National Dairy Council, [ccurran@ndc.ie](mailto:ccurran@ndc.ie) Tel: 01 290 2518 or 086 8777 664

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Further information about the Safefood report on energy drinks is available at

<http://www.safefood.eu/News/2016/safefood-report-into-Energy-Drinks-released.aspx>

Editorial Footnote:

### **Meet the Experts – HealthFest 2016**

**Karl Henry**, fitness expert and broadcaster is one of Ireland's most recognised and leading personal trainers and is the name that is synonymous with training in Ireland. Karl has a BSc(hons) in Sports Management from University College Dublin, as well as two personal training qualifications A.C.E and A.A.B.S. He founded Karl Henry Personal Training in 2004 and is responsible for creating some of the most famous physiques in fashion, music, politics and industry. Karl's weekly health column is featured in The Irish Independent every Monday and he also writes for the Weekender Magazine every Saturday. He has appeared on the Panel on RTE 2, The Newstalk Breakfast Show, The Daily Show, The Afternoon Show, as well as numerous other TV shows.

**Paula Mee** is one of Ireland's leading independent dietitians who has worked with TV3 (Doctors in the House) and RTÉ (Health Squad). Paula, who also writes for the Irish Times Health Supplement on Tuesdays, is a co-author of 'Your Middle Years, Love Them, Live Them, Own Them,' published in Spring, 2016.

**Caroline O'Donovan** is a registered nutritionist and currently works with The National Dairy Council. Having studied Nutritional Sciences in University College Cork, she has since been a valued member of the NDC team for over five years and has gained extensive experience in communicating dairy nutrition messages to various audiences across a number of platforms. Caroline is currently studying a Masters in Exercise and Nutrition from the University of Chester which compliments not only her work but also her personal interest in running as she regularly taking part in 10k charity races.

**Nóra Ní Fhlannagáin** is Performance Nutritionist for Age-Grade Rugby with the IRFU, with a focus on developing nutrition education tools for young rugby players. Additionally, she is currently providing nutrition support to the Galway Senior Hurling Team, Irish Women's XV Rugby Squad and athletes from the Irish Track Cycling team. Nóra, who understands that a healthy body underpins all great sporting performances, is passionate about promoting nutrition and exercise in a fun and engaging way.

**Brendan Courtney** is a broadcaster, designer and entrepreneur. After a very successful career as a TV format creator, he spearheaded the return of the BBC's "The Clothes Show" which he produced and presented for 3 seasons. He has hosted The Clothes Show Live for the past 10 years. He has co-written two No.1 books on style and fashion with Sonya Lennon and in 2013 they launched their women's wear clothes label "Lennon Courtney".