

## Nearly 3000 Transition Year Students attend HealthFest 2017

RDS Dublin 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017



**26<sup>th</sup> April 2017:** Nearly 3,000 secondary students and teachers from all over the country attended today's HealthFest event at the RDS in Dublin. Organised by the National Dairy Council and **safe**food, the free 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.

### 'Speaking in support of Healthfest 2017, Minister for Health Simon Harris said...'

*"Healthy eating and physical activity habits learned during teenage years are an important foundation for later life. I welcome the lively, accessible approach taken by Healthfest and I am happy to see that our new Food Pyramid, part of our Healthy Food for Life programme, is being promoted at this free event."*

This year's event proved to be an amazing day, there were Interactive sessions with the experts including leading fitness expert **Karl Henry, Orla Walsh**, a leading Irish independent dietitian, **Caroline O'Donovan**, a registered nutritionist working with the NDC and **Chef Adrian Martin** who demonstrated some of his favourite recipes from a box of 20 random ingredients. Special guest speaker, **Eoghan McDermott** of 2FM spoke about the importance of looking after your mental health and wellbeing.

**Eoghan said** *"I was delighted to be involved in a such a great event to promote positive mental health and sharing my thoughts and story with the students. The key to positive mental health is to surround yourself with good positive people, be kind to yourself, keep fit, eat well and share your thoughts with friends or family you trust. Finally find your passion in life and go for it"*

Transition Year provides young people 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. Healthfest is designed to advise students about feeling and looking their 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.

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.”

Fiona Gilligan, Director of Marketing and Communications, **safefood**.

*“We are delighted to support Healthfest again this year. The event has something for everyone with a range of interactive sessions, presentations, games and challenges promoting the benefits of a healthy diet and an active lifestyle. With exams around the corner, **safefood** has some top tips for students to stay energised by snack smartly, keeping hydrated and avoiding the temptation to reach for the energy drinks.”*

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. 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.

**Chief Executive of The National Dairy Council, Zoë Kavanagh** said *“We really enjoyed welcoming so many Transition Year students and teachers to the second year of Healthfest. The 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”.*

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