Motivating Consumers with Messages that Make Sense to Them:

Key Findings from the Latest Research
Learning Objectives

• Describe the unique qualitative and quantitative research methodology used to develop and measure effectiveness of consumer messaging with a diverse population.

• Name at least three messages that the research study indicated to have the greatest potential for motivating Americans to make eating and physical activity behavior changes.

• Identify how to access ready-made educational materials developed based on outcomes of this research.
Today’s Speakers

Wendy Reinhardt Kapsak, MS, RD

Lisa Medrow, RD, LD
Kids Eat Right Project Specialist
Dietary Guidelines Alliance
Mission

To provide positive, simple, consistent messages to help consumers achieve healthy, active lifestyles consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans.*

Since 1994
Common Goal of Alliance Members

• To provide consumers with concrete, practical ways to apply the *Dietary Guidelines* to *THEIR* lives
  • Healthy Eating
  • Physical Activity

• Desire to close the gap between what consumers *SAY* and what they *DO*
It’s All About You

Make healthy choices that fit your lifestyle so you can do the things you want to do.

**BE REALISTIC**
Make small changes overtime in what you eat and the level of activity you do. After all, small changes work better than giant leaps.

**BE ADVENTUROUS**
Expand your tastes to enjoy a variety of foods.

**BE SENSIBLE**
Enjoy all foods, just don’t over do it.

**BE ACTIVE**
Walk the dog, don’t just watch the dog walk.

**BE FLEXIBLE/BE BALANCED**
Balance what you eat and the physical activity you do over several days. No need to worry about just one meal or one day.
Dietary Guidelines Alliance Consumer Research

1995-1996: Qualitative Research on Positive Messaging and It’s All About You Core Messages

2001-2002: Qualitative Research on Portion Size

2004: Qualitative Research on Weight, Calories and Energy Balance; retested It’s All About You Core Messages

2010: Qualitative Research and Quantitative Message Testing on Energy Balance (Calories and Physical Activity), Portion Size, Nutrient-Rich Foods and Managing Higher-Calorie Food and Beverage Choices (in the context of calorie needs); retested It’s All About You Core Messages
Dietary Guidelines Alliance
2010 Consumer Research:
Motivating Families
to Lead a Healthier Lifestyle
in 2011 and Beyond
Mom is maxed (...and so is Dad)

Source: The NPD Group’s Annual Food For Thought Survey- 2010
2010 DGA Key Recommendations

• Balance calories with physical activity to manage weight.

• Consume more of certain foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fat-free and low-fat dairy products, and seafood, with nutrients that often come up short.

• Consume fewer foods with sodium (salt), saturated fats, \textit{trans} fats, cholesterol, added sugars, and refined grains.
Dietary Guidelines Alliance 2010 Research Objectives

- Gather parents’ familiarity with and gaps in knowledge regarding the core concepts of:
  
  | Achieving energy balance (contribution of calories in and out, including physical activity) | Recognizing the impact of portion size (amount of food and drink consumed) | Making nutrient-rich choices within the context of individual calorie needs | Enjoying higher-calorie foods within the context of individual calorie needs |

- Identify the behaviors, motivators and mindsets that lead to successful action among consumers as well as the perceived barriers that prevent consumers from being successful.

- Craft communications that *inspire action* among consumers.
Research Design

IDEATION FOR IDEA GENERATION

ETHNOGRAPHIES FOR A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF CURRENT BEHAVIOR

FOCUS GROUPS FOR A BROADER ASSESSMENT OF BEHAVIOR AND MESSAGES

WEB SURVEY AND MESSAGE TESTING FOR QUANTITATIVE EVALUATION

DEEPER UNDERSTANDING, OPTIMAL MESSAGES
Phase I Key Findings: In-home Ethnographies

Observe and understand consumer behavior as it relates to dietary choices and physical activity among “striver” and “succeeder” families.
Consumers’ Perceived Barriers to Being Healthy

Taste
Time
Money
Access
Knowledge
Admitted laziness
Motivation
Harmony

2010, Dietary Guidelines Alliance
Consumers’ Perceived Catalysts to Being Healthy

Overall physical and mental health
Exposure to information
Education at school
Wholistic view of diet

Belief in making the time
“It’s A Family Affair”
Phase II Key Findings: Focus Groups Among Parents in “Striver Families”

Further explore behaviors, barriers and catalysts and gather initial reaction to draft messages on core concepts
High-level learnings that have implications for effective messaging

*Parents know a lot less about some concepts than we might have anticipated*

*Parents have more pressing issues to deal with than eating healthy & exercising*

*Parents do not appreciate the fact that their long-term health is at risk*
Calorie knowledge is weak.

**Calories IN** - Some have a fairly good grasp of what they are, but don’t believe they are important to track, with some being more focused on other components such as carbohydrates or fats.

**Calories OUT** - There is no understanding of how many calories are used up throughout the day or for specific activities, and no desire to keep track of calories burned.

“I just don’t know what the calorie is and what it does to you.” Oakland

“Do all foods have calories?” Birmingham

“No one ever taught us about calories.” Birmingham

“Well maybe we can count how much we are taking, but how will we know how much we are burning?” Birmingham
Though many parents are not active, their children are active.

Parents feel that being involved in physical activity is good for kids – even if it contributes to hectic family life and actually may impact the healthfulness of the food the family buys and eats.

Several parents mention social benefits for their kids of being on a team, like confidence and making friends.

“Playing on a team makes your kids involved, makes them develop social skills.” Birmingham

“My kids’ karate, it’s a good ego boost, discipline and self confidence.” Oakland

Parents recognize that kids are doing less “unstructured” activity like playing outside, riding bikes, and more organized activity like dance and sports teams.

2010, Dietary Guidelines Alliance
Portion size is not top of mind for many parents.

No one ever taught them how to do it

Lack of discipline/control

Never had reason to pay attention

Hard to measure for home-cooked meals

Lack of discipline/control

Never had reason to pay attention

Hard to measure for home-cooked meals

Reasons for ignoring portion size

Restaurants have distorted portion size

"If you go to a restaurant and order something, they give you way too much."

Don’t want to waste food

"You’re full, but I don’t want to waste the food, so you might as well just eat it."

Taught by their parents to “clean their plate”

"I always hear my parents in the back of my head saying ‘finish your plate.’"

"Not knowing what the right amount is."

"If I really like it I’ll have a little bit more."
Defining nutrient-rich foods and beverages

Most are receptive to this concept but do not think of foods and beverages as being “rich” in terms of nutrients per calorie.

“Sweet potatoes are supposed to have the highest amount of vitamins in them.” - Baltimore

“My kids just love broccoli and blueberries and strawberries, so we have lots of that in the house. We mostly base our shopping on what our kids will eat.” - Baltimore

2010, Dietary Guidelines Alliance
A place for higher-calorie foods: The struggle continues... with some perceived hurdles.

1. Stress, time, and trade-offs

2. Perception that higher-calorie foods are better-tasting

3. Emotional desire to eat foods that are comforting and indulgent

2010, Dietary Guidelines Alliance
Parents are reluctant to be the “bad guys” with their children.

Family dynamics play a large role in the decisions parents make about food and physical activity. Leading by example and being a role model are important goals for parents, but they have a hard time doing this and enforcing rules around food and beverages.

- They do not want to be like their parents.
- They do not want to listen to their children complain.
- They do not see their children enough.
Planning ahead can help parents stay on track.

Successful families are also **flexible**, realizing that a busy day may come up unexpectedly.

“My daughter helps me with the menu, and if it gets crazy I will skip to one of the easier meals.”  Birmingham Group

“I’d like to make a better plan [for] the meals and exercise routine in the week and shop accordingly.”  Baltimore Group

2010, Dietary Guidelines Alliance
Phase III Key Findings: Quantitative Web Survey and Message Testing among Parents of Children Ages 2-17 Years

Validate qualitative insights and quantify receptivity to specific messages among parents (in general) and key subpopulations
Paying attention to total calories in any one meal or snack seems daunting, while incorporating nutrient-rich foods and portion control are seen to be easier to do on a regular basis.

### EASE OF APPLYING CORE AREAS (n=1000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranked #1 to 5 where 1 is the easiest:</th>
<th>Ranked #1</th>
<th>Ranked #1 or 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serving foods and beverages that are nutrient-rich (such as whole grains, lean meats, low-fat dairy and fruits and vegetables) more often.</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying attention to the <strong>amount</strong> of foods and beverages served and eaten during any one meal or snack.</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making an effort to <strong>balance</strong> the amount of food and beverages your family eats and drinks with their level of activity.</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Managing higher calorie</strong> food and beverage choices in a way that does not affect your family’s weight.</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying attention to the <strong>total calories</strong> your family gets from foods and beverages during any one meal or snack.</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q16. Please rank the following things in terms of how easy they are (or would be) for your family to do on a regular basis. Please rank these from 1 to 5, where 1 is the easiest.
There is not one core behavior that a majority of parents are consistently applying. Parents report being most successful selecting nutrient-rich foods and beverages.

**CURRENTLY CONDUCTING CORE AREAS**

(n=1000)

- Selecting nutrient rich foods/beverages: 41% doing, 51% not doing, 9% not trying
- Paying attention to portion size: 32% doing consistently, 54% doing, 14% not doing
- Attempting energy balance (calories in and out): 26% doing, 56% not doing, 17% not trying
- Including higher calorie foods/drinks successfully: 20% doing, 58% doing, 22% not doing
- Paying attention to calories per meal/snack: 14% doing, 48% doing, 39% not doing

Q61-65. Is your family currently doing any of the following?
For each of the core areas, parents went through the following three-step process to assess messaging.

1. **Believability**
   - How would you rate each of the following messages in terms of being believable?

2. **Motivation Ranking**
   - Please rank the following messages in terms of how likely they would be to motivate you to...

3. **Actual Impact of Top Message**
   - FOR TOP RATED MESSAGE ONLY: Thinking about your daily routine, how likely is it that this message would actually get you to...

2010, Dietary Guidelines Alliance
Know your number.
Learning how many calories you should consume in a day is a critical first step in managing your weight.

Calories count.
Calories are like a budget – you can only eat so many in a day. Spend wisely by choosing lower-calorie, nutrient-rich foods most of the time to help manage your weight.

Fun stuff counts as exercise!
Get active with the family whether it’s soccer in the backyard, dancing to music or taking a walk in your neighborhood.

Take charge of your weight.
Balancing the calories you eat and drink with the calories you burn through physical activity puts you in control.

Small steps = big changes.
Serve smaller portions to help curb calories and keep your weight on the right track.

Base your plate on nutrient-rich foods that offer beneficial nutrients and fewer calories.
Choose fruits and vegetables, whole and enriched grains, lean meats, beans and nuts, and low-fat and fat-free dairy foods more often.

You are an important role model for your children.
Show your family how to savor their favorite higher-calorie foods and beverages by enjoying smaller portions together.
The grocery store and health professional’s office are top-rated sources for information related to the core concepts tested.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(n=1000)</th>
<th>Grocery store</th>
<th>Health-care provider’s office</th>
<th>Restaurant</th>
<th>Internet</th>
<th>TV</th>
<th>Gym</th>
<th>Mobile phone</th>
<th>Materials from school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The relationship between <strong>calories</strong> and weight</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The amount</strong> you and your kids should be eating and drinking</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting more <strong>nutrient-rich</strong> foods and beverages into your family’s diet</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitting <strong>higher calorie</strong> foods and beverages into your family’s diet in a sensible way</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How balancing the amount your family eats and drinks with their level of activity improves health</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**= High  = Low**

Q56-60. Where do you think you would be most likely to pay attention to information about each of the following things? (SELECT ONE)  

*2010, Dietary Guidelines Alliance*
Key Takeaways

• **There is a calorie disconnect among consumers.** This includes:
  - Recognition that calories count when it comes to weight
  - Estimation of individual calorie needs
  - Calorie expenditure – how it works and what amount certain activities burn
  - Achieving a balance of food and physical activity choices and behaviors

• **Establishing “calorie-consciousness”** among parents is important, yet calorie-counting may be confusing and overwhelming. **Knowing your personal calorie number** is a critical first step; it also provides choices in context to assess labels.

• Parents may stay committed to consistent physical activity if the benefit to their kids’ future is clear and may help them multi-task – “Family” time is “active” time and...FUN TIME!

2010, Dietary Guidelines Alliance
Key Takeaways

- **We cannot assume families know even the basics**, including nutrient-rich items and portion size. “Making it a family affair” moves us from being passive to participatory. Planning and preparation are now active learning opportunities and also …Family time.

- Grocery stores, in particular, as well as health professional offices and restaurants ranked high as places where consumers would want to receive this information. These venues provide **endless opportunities**.

- **Consumer insights are critical** to developing consumer-friendly language, materials, and approaches to food, nutrition, fitness and health education. Consistency and consideration of individual or family-specific needs are clear, consumer-driven communication directives.
Thank You!
For More Information:


Kids Eat Right Toolkits

Healthy Breakfast. Everywhere You Go.
Presentations for elementary, middle, high school students and adults

Healthy Snacking. In a Nutshell.
Presentations for adults, adult athletes, parents, teachers/schools, coaches, elementary students, teens, teen athletes, and worksites

Family Champions. One Change at a Time.
Three interactive parent workshops including cooking activities. Available in English and Spanish!

Presentations for teens and adults

NEW! Myth Busters. For Parents.
Presentation for parents

Join: Kidseatright.org/volunteer
Promote: Kidseatright.org
Myth Busters.

What every parent needs to know about nutrition and physical activity.
Myth # 1
It’s impossible to know how many calories I need and even if I did, it’s too hard to keep track.

Myth # 2
I don’t have time to exercise.

Myth # 3
A clean plate is a happy plate.
Myth # 4
My kids won’t eat that.

Myth # 5
A balanced diet is eating $\frac{1}{2}$ healthy foods and $\frac{1}{2}$ not-so-healthy foods.
Myth # 1:
It’s impossible to know how many calories I need and even if I did, it’s too hard to keep track.

Myth Buster:
You can Know Your Number!

Learning how many calories you should consume in a day is a critical first step in managing your weight.
Pop Quiz: Who needs more calories? How much more?

Know Your Number

- 24 year old man
- 6 feet tall
- weighs 200 pounds
- exercises heavily most days

Calorie needs: 4,041

Calorie needs: 2,500
Know Your Number

www.choosemyplate.gov

Use the Super Tracker
To Create Your Profile
Myth #2: I don’t have time to exercise.

Myth Buster:

Fun Stuff Counts

Get active with the family whether it’s soccer in the backyard, dancing to music or taking a walk in your neighborhood.

The American College of Sports Medicine is a great resource for exercise guidelines www.ACSM.org
Small Steps = Big Changes

Pop Quiz: Which meal has the most calories? How much more?

376 calories

Smaller, but plenty big enough. You won’t go hungry with this choice!

2,380 calories
Letting Go of Healthy Eating Myths!

1. Know Your Number
2. Fun Stuff Counts
3. Small Steps = Big Changes
4. Be a Role Model for Your Children
5. Base Your Plate on Nutrient Rich Foods
Use the Myth Busters Toolkit:

- PTA/PTO meetings
- Grocery stores
- Worksite wellness
- School staff
- Food Banks
- WIC
- YMCA
Join: www.kidseatright.org/volunteer

and access the new Myth Buster toolkit and other quality nutrition education presentations and resources!
Questions?

Thank you!