

Children's Health Update

Healthful Eating Made Easier

(NAPSA)—Here's news that should put a smile on the faces of many parents: Research shows a happy emoticon on the label can help get kids to eat foods that are good for them.

After all, successful marketing tactics aimed at children generally include bright colors, cute packaging and smiling, familiar cartoon characters. Now, University of Phoenix School of Advanced Studies University Research Chair Greg Privitera, Ph.D., says the same idea can be used to reduce childhood obesity—which has been labeled an epidemic in the U.S. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 17 percent (or 12.7 million) of children and adolescents are obese.

The Risks

Children who are obese have a greater chance of:

- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol
- cardiovascular disease
- type 2 diabetes
- sleep apnea
- asthma
- joint problems
- fatty liver disease
- gallstones
- heartburn
- depression
- behavioral problems
- low self-esteem.

An Answer

Basing his research, published in the *International Journal of Child Health and Nutrition and Appetite*, on evidence that ecological factors are most predictive of obesity among children, Dr. Privitera and his colleagues showed children aged 3 to 11 years old emolabels, or emotional correlates of health (that is, healthy=happy, unhealthy=sad).

The results? A significant proportion of children in the preliteracy and the early literacy grades



Children are more likely to choose healthy foods that are labeled with positive and happy emoticons.

identified healthy and unhealthy foods using emoticons, and then used them to specifically make healthy food choices. Emolabeling effectively influenced food choices even more than labeling for taste.

For this work, Dr. Privitera won the 2015 Early Career Professional Award from the American Psychological Association.

What To Do Now

While waiting for Dr. Privitera's research to be put into practice, consider these five steps:

1. Keep kids active—at least 60 minutes of moderate physical activity most days.
2. Serve reasonably sized portions.
3. Provide plenty of fruits and vegetables.
4. Drink plenty of water and avoid artificially sweetened drinks.
5. Limit consumption of sugar and saturated fat.

Learn More

University of Phoenix offers evening classes, flexible scheduling, continuous enrollment, a universitywide academic social network, online classes, a digital library and computer simulations.

Faculty members have both real-world and academic experience, so students can use what they learn in class the very next day they're at work.

For further facts on the study and the school, go to www.phoenix.edu.