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Cheerios® Partners with Dr. Travis Stork and WomenHeart During National Cholesterol Education Month

Maintaining a Healthy Diet May Help Improve Cholesterol Levels for Heart Health

MINNEAPOLIS (September 27, 2011) – As the No. 1 killer in America, cardiovascular disease affects one in three people in the U.S. – approximately 81 million Americans.¹ One of the major risk factors for heart disease is high blood cholesterol, which may be lowered by making smart food choices. To help educate people on simple ways to reduce cholesterol, Cheerios® has joined forces with Dr. Travis Stork, ER physician and host of “The Doctors,” during National Cholesterol Education Month.

A new study by the American Heart Association predicts that the staggering number of people with heart disease will increase to 116 million people, or 40.5 percent of Americans, by 2030.²

“Heart disease runs in my family so I understand first-hand the role that genetics play in cholesterol and overall health,” said Dr. Stork. “While family history is certainly important, lifestyle has an impact, as well. Maintaining a healthy diet is one of the simplest, most effective things people can do to improve their heart health.”

Risk of heart disease can be modified by dietary patterns, including eating a diet low in saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol. While it’s important to eat a heart healthy diet overall, there are a few foods that most Americans are already familiar with that may help lower cholesterol levels, including:

- Oats because they contain beta glucan (e.g., Cheerios cereal, oatmeal)³
- Foods with added plant sterols⁴

The soluble fiber in oats, known as beta glucan, has been shown to help lower cholesterol. Beta glucan helps to rid the body of some LDL or “bad” cholesterol, and it can be found in familiar foods such as Cheerios cereal or oatmeal. Beta glucan acts like a sponge in the digestive tract to soak up cholesterol while helping to naturally remove it from the body.

“When doctors tell patients that they have high cholesterol, they often receive information about the many things they *cannot* or *should not* do and eat,” said Susan J. Crockett, PhD, RD, FADA and leader of the General Mills Bell Institute. “We think it’s important to empower and encourage people with the things they *can* do that may help lower their cholesterol. Through our partnership with Dr. Stork, we want to arm people with tips on simple steps

¹ Roger VL, Go AS, Lloyd-Jones DM, et al. Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2011 Update A Report From the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2011:e18-e209.

² Heidenreich PA, Trogon JG, Khavjou OA, et al. Forecasting the Future of Cardiovascular Disease in the United States: A Policy Statement from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. Published online ahead of print January 24, 2011 American Heart Association 2011 Report “Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics”

³ Three grams of soluble fiber daily from whole grain oat foods, like Cheerios, in a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease. Cheerios has 1 gram per serving.

⁴ Foods containing at least 0.65 grams per serving of plant sterol esters, eaten twice a day with meals for a daily total intake of at least 1.3 grams, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease.

they can make for their heart health and we're using National Cholesterol Education Month as a platform to inspire people to make simple changes.”

As part of Cheerios ongoing commitment to helping Americans lower cholesterol and take care of their hearts, Cheerios is donating \$200,000 to WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease, the nation's only patient centered organization dedicated to helping women live healthier lives through heart health advocacy and community education. The organization's outreach programs, education campaigns and support networks reach thousands of women across the country. Cheerios' donation will help WomenHeart to continue to be a valuable source for the information women need for the prevention and treatment of heart disease.

Cheerios cereal is low in saturated fat, naturally cholesterol free and made with whole grain. Three grams of soluble fiber daily from whole grain oat foods, like Cheerios, in a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease. Cheerios cereal provides 1 gram per serving. For more information on how Cheerios may help lower cholesterol, please visit [Cheerios.com](http://www.cheerios.com).

About Cheerios

Cheerios, America's No. 1 cereal franchise, debuted in 1941 as Cheerioats. The nation's first ready-to-eat oat cereal has since become one of the most trusted and recognized brands in America. In fact, one of every eight boxes of cereal sold in America is a box of Cheerios. General Mills' popular franchise includes Cheerios, Honey Nut Cheerios, Multi Grain Cheerios, Frosted Cheerios, Apple Cinnamon Cheerios, Fruity Cheerios, Cheerios Crunch, Yogurt Burst Cheerios, Banana Nut Cheerios, Cinnamon Burst Cheerios and Chocolate Cheerios. For more information, go to www.cheerios.com.

About General Mills

One of the world's leading food companies, General Mills operates in more than 100 countries and markets more than 100 consumer brands, including Cheerios, Häagen-Dazs, Nature Valley, Betty Crocker, Pillsbury, Green Giant, Old El Paso, Progresso, Yoplait, Cascadian Farm, Muir Glen, and more. Headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA, General Mills had fiscal 2011 global net sales of US \$16.1 billion, including the company's \$1.2 billion proportionate share of joint venture net sales.

About WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease

WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease is the nation's only patient centered organization serving the 42 million American women living with or at risk for heart disease – the leading cause of death in women. WomenHeart is solely devoted to advancing women's heart health through advocacy, community education, and the nation's only patient support network for women living with heart disease. WomenHeart is both a coalition and a community of thousands of members nationwide, including women heart patients and their families, physicians, and health advocates, all committed to helping women live longer, healthier lives. Visit www.womenheart.org.

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