

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Delta Dental of Arizona
5656 West Talavi Blvd
Glendale, AZ 85306

Contact: Linda Schmidt
Director of Marketing
lschmidt@deltadentalaz.com
Direct Phone: 602-588-3629

School Lunch Packs a Sugar Punch ***Simple School Lunch Makeover Can Bring Sugar Under Control***

Glendale, AZ (September 22, 2008) -- You wouldn't send your children to school with a lunchbox full of candy bars, but you might be packing almost as much sugar when you send them off with some of the popular lunch time classics. Considering that most children brush their teeth in the morning and again before bed, the sugar they put in their mouths at lunch time could stay in there for a while, and that worries some dentists.

“When you start adding up the sugars found in some of the most common lunch items, you might be shocked,” says Dr. Mehlem., DDS, a dental consultant for Delta Dental of Arizona. “Making a few simple changes can lower the sugar count, which is ultimately better for their bodies and their oral health.”

Take, for example, the classic peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Toss in a box of raisins, a small container of applesauce and a single-serve carton of chocolate milk. While it sounds pretty healthy and balanced, the sugar total clocks in at a whopping 98 grams. An average candy bar contains about 25 grams of sugar.

Without making drastic changes, you can give your children's lunches a sugar makeover.

Look for natural peanut butter (made without added sugar) and low or no added sugar jelly. Replace the white bread with whole wheat bread, and the regular applesauce with natural applesauce. Consider skipping the raisins -- in addition to their high sugar content, their stickiness can hold sugars against children's teeth for prolonged periods of time. Swap the raisins for some mini carrots, and the chocolate milk for white milk. The new total? A more tooth-tolerable 31 grams of sugar.

It's easy to find alternatives to a number of other lunchbox standards. A tube of yogurt is a good option for boosting calcium with only 10 grams of sugar. Even better is a piece of string cheese, which also offers calcium but with zero grams of sugar. A fruit roll-up style snack has half the amount of sugar (7 grams) as fruit snacks in a pouch (14 grams). For a special treat, replace three chocolate, crème-filled cookies (at 13 grams of sugar), with three vanilla wafer cookies (4 grams of sugar).

If not removed by brushing or other means, sugars in the mouth can contribute to tooth decay and cavities. Naturally occurring bacteria in the human mouth form a colorless, sticky film called



News Release

plaque. Cavity-causing organisms within plaque feed on sugar and turn it into acid. This acid attacks tooth enamel and leads to tooth decay.

“Products and brands can vary greatly in sugar content, so it’s important to read the nutrition labels on the foods you’re buying,” says Dr. Mehlem. “A healthy and nutritious diet, paired with good oral hygiene at home and preventive care visits to the dentist can all go a long way toward protecting children against tooth decay.”

About Delta Dental of Arizona

Delta Dental of Arizona is the leading dental benefits provider in Arizona with the largest network of 2,900 dentists, servicing more than 4,500 locations and representing more than 80 percent of all dentists throughout the state. Passionate about oral health and its importance to generations of families, Delta Dental of Arizona has worked for more than 35 years to improve oral health by emphasizing preventative care and making dental coverage accessible for a wide variety of employers, groups and individuals. Delta Dental of Arizona now offers DeltaVision, group vision benefits. Now quality dental and vision benefits are both available from a single, trusted source. For more information about Delta Dental of Arizona, please visit the website at www.deltadentalaz.com.

###