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# Media Release

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Monday 19 June 2006

## DIETITIANS DEBATE HOT NUTRITION ISSUES

Is surgery the answer for obesity? Hype or hypersensitivity: what are the facts about food allergy? How can dietitians help children with HIV? And, why do people lose weight on low-carb diets?

These questions, along with other HOT nutrition topics, are all being discussed at the British Dietetic Association's Annual Conference, in London from 20-22<sup>nd</sup> June. Among the speakers discussing a wide range of current issues, relating to food and health, will be representatives from the government, industry, academia and the NHS.

### Conference 'light bites'

#### **HIV – trends in nutrition**

In the UK, over 70,000 people have been diagnosed with HIV. HIV is known to be associated with a number of opportunistic infections as well as complications, some of which may arise from treatment, including abnormal cholesterol levels, diabetes and low bone-mineral density. In addition, weight loss and wasting, which are known to have significant clinical implications, are common features in people with HIV. Specialist HIV dietitian, Vivian Pribram, from Kings College Hospitals NHS Trust, will address some of these issues, while Lisa Cooke, of Bristol Royal Hospital for Children, will be focusing on the nutritional care of the child with HIV, with an emphasis on issues relating to monitoring normal growth and development.

#### **Scratching for the facts on allergy**

Estimates suggest that 3- 8% of children and 1-4% of adults experience food hypersensitivity, although it is commonly perceived that the prevalence is much higher. Foods which have been identified as the most likely to produce a hypersensitive reaction include milk, egg, fish, peanuts, tree nuts as well as some cereals, fruits and vegetables. Dietitians play a key role in the diagnosis and management of food allergy, and specialist allergy dietitian Isabel Skypala, from the Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Trust, will give the low-down on the facts about allergy.

#### **Obesity – is surgery the answer?**

Currently, the rates of obesity in the UK are alarming. Based on the Framingham Heart Study, it is estimated that risk of death increases by 1% per ONE POUND overweight for 30 – 42 year-olds and by 2% per one pound overweight for those aged 50 – 62 years. Recommendations for a range of surgical approaches in obesity, including gastric bypass and laparoscopic band techniques, will be presented by Stephen Pollard, Consultant Surgeon at St James University Hospital, Leeds, who will be speaking in detail about current opinion on surgery for obesity.

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**Low-carb diets and weight loss – how and why?**

Weight-loss diets with a very low content of carbohydrate have become very popular in recent years and have been shown to result, for many, in a rapid initial weight loss. Rebecca Hiscutt, from the University of Surrey, will be presenting findings from her research study investigating the rate and composition of early low-carbohydrate diet-induced weight loss to establish whether water loss is the main reason for the sudden reduction in weight.

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## **Notes to Editors**

1. The British Dietetic Association Awards Conference will be held at The International Hotel in London, Docklands, on 20th – 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2006.
2. The conference programme is available at [www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com). Journalists wanting more information, or to arrange interviews with speakers, should contact Dr Frankie Phillips on 01626 362474 or 07908 712277. Email: [pr@bda.uk.com](mailto:pr@bda.uk.com)
3. A small number of press passes are available for those wishing to attend the conference.
4. The British Dietetic Association, founded in 1936, is the professional association for registered dietitians in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It is the nation's largest organisation of food and nutrition professionals with over 5,000 members. About two-thirds of members are employed in the National Health Service. The remaining members work in education, industry, research, sport settings or freelance.

Registered dietitians hold the only legally-recognisable graduate qualification in nutrition and dietetics. They are experts in interpreting and translating the science of nutrition into practical ways of promoting nutritional well-being, disease treatment and the prevention of nutrition-related problems. Their advice is sound and based on current scientific evidence.

Registration, awarded by the Health Professionals Council, is an indication that a dietitian is fit to practise and is working within an agreed statement of conduct.

For further details about the British Dietetic Association, please visit our website: [www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com)

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Get into Healthy Habits**

[www.bdaweightwise.com](http://www.bdaweightwise.com)

[www.teenweightwise.com](http://www.teenweightwise.com)