



**For Immediate Release**

**Can Canada Blaze the Trail in Reducing the Obesity Epidemic?  
New Policy Directions on Obesity in Canada:  
*An international call for action***

**Toronto, Ontario, October 21, 2005** – The Canadian Council of Food and Nutrition will host a multi-sectoral summit today, which will bring together high profile international leaders in industry, government and healthcare. The goal of this multi-national discussion is to identify policy gaps and possibilities, while addressing current obesity trends and problematic socio-economic behavioural issues fuelling childhood obesity.

“Obesity is not a new issue in our society, and we know it will take a coordinated effort from industry and government to address it,” says Dr. Rena Mendelson, Professor of Nutrition at Ryerson University and Chair of the Board. Dr. Mendelson points out that, “Policy on this issue needs to continue to advance as health problems affected by poor nutrition are growing, obesity rates continue to rise among all age-groups, and the prevalence of obesity related diseases is greater today than ever before.”

Canadian policies on food and nutrition will also be contrasted with international policies that are proving to be effective, such as the New Zealand Food Accord. Cliff Tasman-Jones, Medical and Scientific Director of the New Zealand Nutrition Foundation, reports that “the food industry in New Zealand encourages all sectors to create commercially successful products and services that will make a positive contribution to the health of all New Zealanders.” As a result of proactive policy, the food industry, restaurateurs and advertisers, are volunteering to work together to help combat obesity.

**About the Canadian Council of Food and Nutrition**

The Canadian Council of Food and Nutrition is a new organization with a rich history of over 25 years of evidence based nutrition communication and advocacy work in Canada. It was created from a union of mandates of The National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) and the Canadian Food Information Council (CFIC) in 2004. CCFN is a national, non-profit organization which acts as a vehicle for advancing the nutritional health and well being of Canadians by championing evidence-based solutions to key nutritional concerns affecting the health of Canadians, and promoting public understanding of food and nutrition issues.

If you would like more information about The Canadian Council of Food and Nutrition, visit our website at [www.ccfn.ca](http://www.ccfn.ca) or email [info@ccfn.ca](mailto:info@ccfn.ca).

## **Obesity in Canada**

Obesity is an epidemic that continues to grow steadily in Canada. The prevalence of obese Canadians has more than doubled between 1985 and 1998. A dramatic increase in childhood obesity has also occurred in Canada throughout the past decade. A major concern regarding childhood obesity is that obese children will likely become obese adults, facing a greater risk of obesity related diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.

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