

## **On May 6, Celebration of the International No Diet Day No More Diets! Finding your Balance**

**Montréal, Québec, April 29, 2008** – No More Diets! Find your Balance. *Le Groupe d'action sur le poids ÉquiLibre* unveiled today the theme and agenda for the 2008 International No Diet Day (INDD) in Québec, before health professionals, members of the public and campaign partners.

On May 6, *ÉquiLibre* is inviting women of all ages to collectively reflect on the importance of diets and on our society's obsession with thinness. The organization wants to help women say no to the "scale dictatorship" and adopt healthy and balanced lifestyles. "Eating well and enjoying your food, being on the move as much as possible and taking time to experience life without worrying about your silhouette, that's a winning lifestyle!" explains Fannie Dagenais, dietitian and director of *ÉquiLibre*.

To mark the 2008 INDD, *ÉquiLibre* has developed a "turnkey" activity for various organizations, such as CLSCs, women's centers and schools, allowing them to offer workshops for women and girls in their regions. In addition, *ÉquiLibre* will provide them with an information tool as well as an awareness poster designed especially for the activity. No matter where you live in Québec, you can visit *ÉquiLibre's* Website at [www.equilibre.ca](http://www.equilibre.ca), where you will find 16 participating regions and close to 60 activities in which the public can take part.

### **Focusing on Mothers and Daughters No More Diets! Find your Balance**

Magazines which associate beauty with thinness through touched up images of women... Miracle diets that are both ineffective and dangerous... False beliefs around weight loss... On May 6, there will be a host of topics to reflect on.

"This year, *ÉquiLibre* has chosen to target women and their daughters, as excessive weight concerns can emerge at a young age and prevention is crucial, explains Fannie Dagenais. Fifty percent of adolescent girls skip meals in an effort to control their weight<sup>1</sup>. Others will start smoking or training excessively. Adolescent dieting is associated with anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. Also, the risk of such dissatisfaction still being present as young women reach adulthood is significant."

Besides the fact that close to one out of two women feels her weight has a negative impact on her image<sup>2</sup>, several statistics speak for themselves:

- Most Quebec women (73%) want to lose weight and 37% experience anxiety when they think about their weight<sup>2</sup>
- 70% of adolescent girls make efforts to control their weight<sup>3</sup>
- 39% of women who have used weight loss products or services became abnormally concerned with their weight before the age of 19; few of them can imagine their lives without having to control their weight<sup>4</sup>.

According to *ÉquiLibre*, excessive weight concern is as serious as obesity. It threatens the health and well being of women and girls, as much as being overweight does.

The partners of the 2008 Québec International No Diet Day are the *ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux*, the Dairy Farmers of Canada and the *Ordre professionnel des diététistes du Québec*.

### **A Few Words on International No Diet Day**

International No Diet Day was created in 1992 by Mary Evans Young, a British woman who wished to denounce, among other things, the inefficiency of weight loss diets and the dangers associated with the obsession with thinness. Each year, on May 6, this day is celebrated in several countries worldwide, including the United States, Australia, Norway, South Africa and Russia.

### **A Few Words on *ÉquiLibre***

*ÉquiLibre* has unique expertise in the areas of obesity, body image, obsession with thinness and excessive weight concerns. As a non-profit organization, its mission aims to promote the prevention and reduction of problems related to weight and body image within the population. For 20 years *ÉquiLibre* has been working with women concerned with their weight through various programs such as *Choisir de maigrir ?*, currently being offered in Québec CLSCs, and *Bien dans sa tête, bien dans sa peau*, which targets adolescents in schools. For more details, visit [www.equilibre.ca](http://www.equilibre.ca).

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### **References:**

- <sup>1</sup> Ledoux M, Mongeau L, Rivard M (2002). Poids et image corporelle dans *Enquête sociale et de santé auprès des enfants et des adolescents québécois 1999, chapitre 14*, Institut de la statistique du Québec, Gouvernement du Québec.
- <sup>2</sup> Dairy Farmers of Canada, Ipsos Reid Survey, 2008.
- <sup>3</sup> Santé Québec Investigation, 1998.
- <sup>4</sup> Association pour la santé publique du Québec, 2003.