



October 6, 2020

CONTACT: Violet Batcha

violetbatcha@gmail.com

Cell: (315) 262-5990

PRESS RELEASE

JOINED BY REAL FOOD ADVOCATE CHEF DOMINIQUE CRENN NONPROFIT EAT REAL ISSUES ALERT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF NUTRITION IN THE BATTLE AGAINST COVID-19

RICHMOND, CA. – As the COVID-19 crisis continues, hunger in America is at an all-time high. The COVID-19 pandemic is a national emergency that has taken a tragic toll on public health, impacting more than 7.4 million Americans, including the President of the United States.

Today, nonprofit Eat REAL issued the first in a series of public health alerts to share insights on COVID-19. Joined by Real Food Advocate Chef Dominique Crenn, the co-authors' Dr. Robert Lustig, Eat REAL Chief Science Officer, and Nora LaTorre, CEO of Eat REAL, draw the connection between the underlying conditions that exacerbate COVID-19 and processed food-related disease. The term "process food-related disease" relates to diseases like type 2 diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and high blood pressure.

The analysis shows how our processed food system is putting our health spans and life spans in jeopardy during COVID-19 and beyond. It reveals the vast majority of COVID-19 complications and deaths have underlying processed food-related diseases. Eat REAL calls for nutrition to become a top national priority in the fight against COVID-19 and for people to double down on eating real foods this fall.

"Real food has the amazing ability to heal and nourish our bodies," said the first female chef in the U.S. to receive three Michelin stars and James Beard Award winner Chef Dominique Crenn. "It is important now, more than ever, to focus on our health and be conscious about protecting ourselves from disease," she added.

The Eat REAL Alert underscores that the majority of underlying conditions associated with COVID-19 death and complications are linked to processed-food related disease. In fact, 81% of COVID-19 deaths in New York have occurred in people with at least one processed food-related disease comorbidity, a trend seen in COVID-19 patients around the world.



“Government advice has been confusing and woefully inadequate during this pandemic,” said Dr. Robert Lustig, co-author. “The CDC and NIH must update their guidance and make sure Americans know that in addition to hand washing, social distancing, and wearing masks, good nutrition is essential in the fight against COVID-19.”

The Alert explains how processed food spikes insulin and blood glucose levels, as well as inflammation, which alters the immune response and increases the risk of a more severe COVID-19 infection. It also points out that chronic metabolic disease, of which obesity is a key marker, is a primary risk factor for COVID-19 complications and deaths. Eat REAL calls for the government to increase funding for real food access and emergency relief that supports nutrition during the pandemic.

“This Alert is a wake-up call for parents and policymakers,” said Nora LaTorre, Eat REAL CEO and co-author of the Alert. “We need to support food security in COVID-19 relief efforts and invest in school lunch for all to provide healthier meals to children during this ongoing crisis,” she added.

The Alert, which reviewed public health data and studies on COVID-19, also provides an action guide for parents with advice on how to switch from processed food to healthier, real food options.

"Increasing access to healthy, nutritious, and delicious food is one of the best ways we can create a brighter future for the world," said Chef Dominique Crenn. "Eat REAL serves a critical mission to spread the word about real food as a key in improving and sustaining public health.”

#####

About Eat REAL

Eat REAL® is a 501(c) (3) Public Health nonprofit organization based in Richmond, California. Eat REAL is dedicated to transforming food in K-12 schools, creating a healthier next generation and planet. Launched in 2012, Eat REALCertified is a nutrition and sustainability best practices certification program working with school district food service leaders to raise the bar and make food in schools more nutritious and sustainable. More information can be found at www.eatreal.org.