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The National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners has announced a partnership with the National Honey Board to develop a honey education program aimed at parents. Recent findings have uncovered widespread confusion surrounding the age at which parents can introduce honey to young children.

The education efforts will focus on health professionals who deal directly with parents of infants and toddlers and will explain the benefits of honey and remind parents they can feed it to children after age 1.

According to NAPNAP President Cheri Barber, RN, DNP, CRNP, "it's important that healthcare professionals and families with young children understand the facts about honey." She said honey has been used for centuries to help soothe coughs, and with the recommended removal of over-the-counter cough medicines containing dextromethorphan for children under age 4, parents might wonder about alternative remedies such as honey.

The National Honey Board found confusion about honey earlier this year through focus groups and a nationally fielded online survey. Results indicated confusion about when to feed honey to young children, citing concerns such as allergens and bacteria.

Through their educational program, NAPNAP and the National Honey Board hope to make clear that parents can introduce honey to a child's diet after 12 months of age. Before 12 months, according to recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Academy of Pediatrics and other healthcare organizations, infants should not have honey and certain other foods because their gastrointestinal systems are immature, and thus vulnerable to contracting infant botulism if spores are present.

According to the research, more than half (57%) of the moms who responded erroneously thought children should be at least 2 years old before consuming honey. However, 82% of moms would be more likely to feed honey to their children close to their first birthdays if they received information from a trusted source, especially an educational handout from their pediatric healthcare provider's office.

Overall, according to a news release, moms expressed excitement about rediscovering honey and its uses as a culinary ingredient and as a natural cough remedy, and wanted to learn more about it.

"Our study showed that moms trust pediatricians and nurse practitioners the most to provide correct information about the age at which children can eat honey," said Catherine Barry, director of marketing for the National Honey Board. "This finding confirms that we have the ideal partnership with NAPNAP for this public information campaign."

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