

## **Dutch Heart Foundation and KNVB to get children to exercise more.**

*Play Fitter programme launches with events, ambassadors and a YouTube channel*

**Zeist, 6 June 2017 - Children need more exercise, and that's why the Dutch Heart Foundation and KNVB (Royal Dutch Soccer Association) have launched Play Fitter. Play Fitter is an exercise programme for schoolchildren. Various Play Fitter ambassadors, including Tim Douwsma (photo), joined children in performing the first Play Fitter exercises today. The Play Fitter YouTube channel was also officially launched, along with explanations of the nature of the Play Fitter programme and why it's so important for children, teens and young adults to exercise more. Play Fitter will coincide with WEURO2017; the Women's Football European Cup, which will be hosted by the Netherlands this year.**

With the help of 9 ambassadors, the Dutch Heart Foundation and KNVB will not only inspire children to exercise more, but will actually get them moving too. Each ambassador has recorded an exercise using the Play Fitter ball, and you can visit [youtube.com/SpeeljeFit](https://www.youtube.com/SpeeljeFit) to try them out for yourself. The ambassadors are well-known (freestyle) footballers, OranjeLeeuwinnen (Orange Lionesses), YouTube heroes, presenters & singers; a selection of athletic individuals who are all sources of inspiration for children and believe it is important for children to lead healthy lives with sufficient exercise. The ambassadors' exercises can be found on YouTube, as well as in the Play Fitter booklet, which will be distributed to children through schools, events and media. Play Fitter will also organise numerous activities at schools throughout the country and in the WEURO2017 host cities.

### **Children need more exercise**

Play Fitter revolves around getting children to experience how easy and fun exercise and football are. The **importance** of exercise is also highlighted for parents and teachers in particular. Exercise is of great importance, as:

- More than three out of four children under the age of 12 in the Netherlands do not get enough exercise for a healthy lifestyle.
- One child out of seven under the age of 13 in the Netherlands is overweight.
- Teaching the components of a healthy lifestyle at an early age is the best way to prepare children to lead a healthy life when they grow up, greatly diminishing the risk of cardiovascular diseases and other illnesses.

David Verschoor, Head of Public, Donors and Volunteers at the Dutch Heart Foundation: *"Children with a healthy diet, who get enough exercise and do not smoke have a lower chance of developing cardiovascular diseases later on in life. Many young people, however, do not lead a healthy lifestyle, coupled with an hour of exercise every day. With the help of our ambassadors, we want to show that exercise is fun. Instead of seeing social media channels as a bad influence, keeping young people behind the screen rather than getting them to exercise, we have embraced these channels."* The YouTube channel is a central component of Play Fitter, and its ambassadors include OranjeLeeuwinnen and footballers Jackie Groenen, Shanice van de Sanden, Tessel Middag, Ryan Koolwijk and Soufiane Touzani; singers/presenters Elindo Avastia and Tim Douwsma, as well as famous YouTubers such as Nanne Meijer and LuckyGraaf.

### **OranjeLeeuwinnen and WEURO2017**

Play Fitter was initiated by UEFA and the World Heart Federation and is a component of a long-term partnership between the Dutch Heart Foundation and KNVB geared towards promoting exercise and fun in sports, as well as realising healthy, smoke-free sports grounds. Play Fitter is not only ideal for this partnership, but is also part of the run-up to WEURO2017, the Women's Football European Cup, which will be hosted by the Netherlands this year. Accordingly, the OranjeLeeuwinnen are Play Fitter ambassadors, the fan zones in the host cities will feature Play Fitter activities and the Play Fitter booklet will also include the WEURO 2017 fixture list and a

poster of the OranjeLeeuwinnen. At the Play Fitter kick-off, the OranjeLeeuwinnen donated €1,000 to the Dutch Heart Foundation.

Marc Nipius, MVO programme manager at KNVB: *“Women's EURO 2017 in the Netherlands will mean a great summer of football for a lot of people, and will make an extra special contribution to getting children to exercise more. The OranjeLeeuwinnen are an example for loads of young girls and boys on the pitch, so it goes without saying that they also put in an effort off the pitch to get more children to experience the joy of sports. Our partnership with the Dutch Heart Foundation for this campaign is a perfect match with our mission to promote a healthy lifestyle for children.”*