

JUNK FOOD INJUNCTION

2007 AUTUMN EDITION



Message from the Editors

Thank you to everyone for your support of the first edition of Junk Food Injunction, issued in January. Your positive response to this newsletter indicates the growing concern within the general community and amongst health professionals about food marketing to children and its effect on childhood obesity.

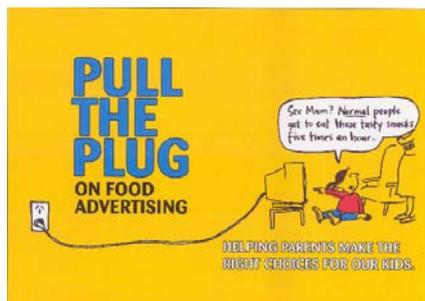
Just as there are many causes of obesity, including sociological, environmental and genetic factors, halting the current obesity epidemic will require many different interventions. Evidence has shown there is a direct link between food marketing and children's diets. Further, research assessing the cost effectiveness of obesity interventions has found that restricting unhealthy TV food advertising to children would provide the greatest impact on obesity at the lowest cost, when compared to other obesity interventions, such as school-based programs or surgery.

The relative cost effectiveness and growing evidence base concerning food advertising to children and obesity reinforces the need to advocate for changes in the food marketing environment. This edition of Junk Food Injunction outlines some of these advocacy efforts currently being undertaken by The Cancer Council NSW and ways in which you can be involved.

Pull the Plug on Food Advertising Campaign

This year the Australian Communications and Media Authority, the Federal Government body responsible for the regulation of TV advertising to children, is reviewing the Children's Television Standards. The Cancer Council, as part of The Coalition on Food Advertising to Children is calling for changes

to these regulations to reduce the current high levels of TV food advertising targeting children. The Coalition believes the new regulations should prohibit all TV food and beverage advertising during programs where children make up a significant proportion of the viewing audience. The promotion of healthy eating messages to children through non-commercial marketing would be excluded from these restrictions.



The Pull the Plug on Food Advertising campaign is a Coalition on Food Advertising to Children initiative to gain public support and mount a collective community voice for our regulation proposal for the Children Television Standards review. The campaign involves a petition, in the form of postcards, which will be used to lobby the Australian Communications and Media Authority and politicians, to ensure the new Children's Television Standards would be effective in preventing frequent and manipulative food advertising to children.

What can you do?

To sign the petition or for more information about the Pull the Plug on Food Advertising Campaign go to

<http://www.cancerCouncil.com.au/pulltheplug>

Remember, the more people that sign up to the campaign, the louder our voice will be, so please forward this information on to your friends and colleagues.

Kids in Cyberspace

Children are now seasoned Internet surfers, with up to 70 percent of under 15's having access to the Internet at home. The Internet is one of the fastest, and least regulated, emerging marketing tools, and is not subject to any restrictions or voluntary codes of practice. Even the most cautious parent may find it difficult to shield their child from the excessive marketing present on the vast array of Internet sites.

Internet marketers appear to have an endless range of advertising tools and techniques with which to bombard children with food and beverage brands. For example, brands can be incorporated into games (advergaming), viral marketing, educational material, downloads, and promotions, to name a few. Web sites also feature 'kid's clubs' areas that are designed to be particularly appealing to children. The cunning use of these marketing techniques ensures that children are immersed in the brand for extended periods, thereby increasing brand familiarity.

As food marketing on the Internet is largely unregulated, food marketers are able to make bold health claims that would normally not be allowed on TV or print media. For example, one Chupa Chups web site from the US claims that the vitamin C in their lolly pops prevents colds, helps maintain healthy blood vessels and can assist with wound healing! Interesting considering there is absolutely no vitamin C in this confectionery at all. There was no mention that they contain more than 80% sugar - surprise, surprise.

The Cancer Council NSW recognises that Internet food marketing can impact on children's food choices, and have identified it as an important research area. In a recent study conducted by The Cancer Council NSW, the food marketing on 119 food company websites and 197 popular children's entertainment websites were analysed. This research is the first of its kind in Australia.

The first rule (of parenting) to break here is 'don't play with your food'. Any way you can find to make the chocolate treat INTO a toy will be a positive step!

KidPulse: Marketing to Kids Newsletter

This research indicated that the above marketing techniques are frequently used to market food products to children on the Internet. While there were some references for healthy foods, the vast majority of food references were for unhealthy products. This highlights the need for further research and advocacy relating to Internet marketing, to better protect children from this form of marketing exploitation.



Watch out for these Internet marketing strategies

Advergaming: incorporating a branded product into a game, for example using the product character as the game character. Fantasy, fun and colours are used in the game to make it visually appealing and capture children's attention. The gaming experience will ensure children can later recall the food brand.

Viral marketing: a way to encourage children to spread the food company's message among their peers via online games, emails with an invitation to visit the website, e-cards and online chat rooms.

Kids' Clubs: allow companies to form relationships with children by offering a range of additional benefits.

Downloads: a range of branded items can be downloaded free of charge from websites such as screensavers, wallpapers, desktop items and games. They provide the opportunity for marketers to ensure that the child is exposed to the brand beyond the Internet.

Promotions: including give-aways, competitions, sample offers and rebates, are frequently used by food companies to create a perception of increased brand value.

CFAC Briefing Paper

The Coalition on Food Advertising to Children has just released the 2nd edition of its briefing paper: *Children's Health or Corporate Wealth? The case for banning television food advertising to children.*

This is a comprehensive report discussing many important aspects relating to food marketing to children.

If you wish to receive a hard copy of the briefing paper, please contact Bridget Kelly (see over for contact details). Alternatively, an electronic version can be viewed at http://www.chdf.org.au/i-cms_file?page=664/CFAC_BriefingPaper_Jan07.pdf

Kids Eat Food Marketers' Words

In Australia, magazine advertising income from the food industry ranks second only to TV. Magazines currently have no specific regulations that guide marketing to children and very little research has been done to determine the extent of this issue in Australia.

There seems to be an almost infinite array of magazines available, with one to suit every occasion and individual. Some magazines, such as Disney Princess, are targeted towards children as young as two years of age. The readership of children's magazines is high, with some reaching as much as 26 percent of the child population, making this media attractive to food marketers. Magazines are also often shared between children generating peer discussion, a form of viral marketing.

Marketing techniques used in magazines are similar to those seen in other media, such as TV and the Internet. Food products may be part of a direct advertisement by a food company or more shrewdly marketed through their association with popular cartoon characters and celebrities, their incorporation in competitions and promotions, inclusion in games and puzzles, used in recipes or referred to in the main text or editorial sections of the magazines. Magazines can also be used as a platform to encourage children to visit other types of media, such as a food company's Internet web site, where children will be further exposed to the product.

Magazine food marketing to children is a key research area for The Cancer Council NSW. In a recent study conducted by The Cancer Council NSW, six-months of issues of 16 popular children's magazines were assessed for their food marketing content (76 magazines). Both branded food references (for example Coco Pops cereal) and unbranded food references (for example breakfast cereal) were considered.

Overall, it was found that the marketing of unhealthy food is rampant in children's magazines. When coupled with high readership rates and food marketer's capacity to underhandedly market these products to children, such as by including their product in games and recipes, magazines can be made a potent marketing tool. The current lack of marketing regulations allows this magazine food marketing to go unchecked. This research has been the first of its kind both in Australia and internationally, and highlights the need for more attention and the introduction of marketing regulations in this area.

“K-Zone readers pack a lot in - computer games, watching movies, playing sport and heaps more. They also have the “pester power” - influencing their parent's purchases

AARDS Media and Production Guide (2004)



Children spend much of their leisure time in sedentary pursuits

McDonald's House: philanthropy or publicity?

Fast food giant McDonald's uses many techniques to generate favourable public relations to help portray a positive public image, not least of these being their association with McDonald's House Charities.

Contrary to what the name implies, McDonald's House Charities is not owned or operated by the McDonald's Corporation, rather it is supported by businesses, community groups and individuals. As outlined in McDonald's House Charities 2005 annual report, of the \$6.1 million revenue generated by McDonald's House Charities, McDonald's Corporation Australia contributed up to 60 percent. However, of this contribution, \$1.2 million came from public support through in-store money tins, and \$1 million came from the sale of Big Macs.

Direct contributions from the McDonalds Corporation's own pocket is relatively small. The McDonalds Corporation generates invaluable publicity through this charity, all with a relatively small financial commitment. Moreover, the irony of selling huge quantities of high fat, salt and sugar food to children and their families, to generate fundraising to support sick children is not lost on the authors.

In a nutshell

- Make your voice heard and help to ensure more effective regulations for TV food advertising to children; sign up with the Pull the Plug on Food Advertising Campaign.
- Unhealthy food marketing to children in popular magazines and web sites is widespread and currently goes unchecked.
- Get your copy of the latest CFAC briefing paper and keep up to date with the latest news and research.

REAL KIDS' FOOD: Healthy Recipes

HEALTHY HAMBURGERS

SERVES 6!

Ingredients:

350g lean minced beef
1 carrot, large, grated
2 medium zucchini, grated
1 green apple, large, cored and grated
3 slices wholemeal bread, made into crumbs
2 tablespoons parsley, chopped
1 teaspoon mixed dried herbs
1 egg, beaten
1 tablespoon olive oil

To assemble:

1 onion, large, sliced
6 hamburger buns
2 tablespoons grainy mustard
2 tomatoes, sliced
6 small lettuce leaves
6 slices canned beetroot

Method:

1. Combine beef, carrot, zucchini, apple, breadcrumbs, parsley, herbs and egg.
2. Form into 6 patties. Grill or barbecue using moderate heat, for about 5 to 6 minutes on each side.
3. While burgers are cooking, heat oil and cook onion, stirring several times.
4. Split and toast buns. Spread top half of each with mustard.
5. Assemble burgers by placing a lettuce leaf on one half of each hamburger bun, adding a burger patty, onions, sliced tomatoes and beetroot.
6. Top with remaining half of bun.

Note: A good hamburger makes a balanced meal. It's hard to buy good burgers but easy to make them at home.

Top 10 Tips To Advocate For Changes In The Food Marketing Environment

1. Make your voice heard. Sign up with the Pull the Plug on Food Advertising Campaign (<http://www.cancercouncil.com.au/pulltheplug>)
2. Help make the Pull the Plug on Food Advertising Campaign more effective, tell your family, friends and colleagues about this initiative and get them to sign up too.
3. Become a member of the Parents Jury. This is a web-based forum for parents who wish to improve the food and physical activity environments for children in Australia (visit The Parents Jury website: <http://www.parentsjury.org.au>).
4. Write a letter to your local Member of Parliament or the Federal Health Minister to express your concerns about food marketing to children (visit the Coalition on Food Advertising to Children website for further information: <http://www.chdf.org.au>).
5. If you see a TV advertisement that you think breaches the Children's Television Standards speak out about it (both the Parents Jury and The Coalition on Food Advertising to Children websites have further information about these regulations and how to complain).
6. Make informed choices about healthy foods for kids, visit the new CHOICE website <http://www.choicefoodforkids.com.au>
7. Inform others about food marketing issues, forward Junk Food Injunction to your personal networks.
8. Raise the issue in the community, photocopy fact sheets, fliers and relevant information and post them on your workplace notice board, children's school, at your local shopping centre, community health centre or sporting club.
9. Join your child's school Parents & Citizens committee to voice your concerns about food marketing to children within schools, such as fundraising activities, vending machines and school canteens.
10. Apply pressure to local children's sporting associations to prevent sport sponsorship by unhealthy food companies.

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