

JUNK FOOD INJUNCTION

2008 WINTER EDITION



Message from the Editors

To coincide with the Olympic Games, both food advertisers and TV broadcasters took advantage of the public relations opportunities and visibility that this event provided. In this edition of *Junk Food Injunction* we describe McDonald's latest marketing campaign, and TV broadcasters new Healthy Lifestyle 'Live Life' Campaign which both use prominent sports figures to promote their messages. To challenge these food industry advertisements, a group of leading public health organisations, in association with former Olympians, released their own counter advertising.

Also in this edition we describe the outcome of a complaint made to the Australian Communications and Media Authority about a breach to the Children's Television Standards, and urge readers to nominate their best and worst food marketing campaigns for the Parents Jury Fame and Shame Advertising Awards. As always, there is also a healthy child-friendly recipe for you to try.

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PUBLIC HEALTH GROUPS BUGA UP FOOD INDUSTRY

In a campaign reminiscent of the late activist group Buga Up, who 'modified' tobacco and alcohol outdoor advertising in the 1970s and 80s as a display of their abhorrence of this advertising, a group of leading public health organisations have taken a stand against junk food advertising in the name of sport and the Olympic Games.

The Public Health Advocacy Institute of Western Australia, Australian Medical Association (WA), Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, Cancer Council (WA and NSW) and Diabetes WA have joined together with basketball legend and former Olympian Luc Longley and dual Olympic hockey gold medallist Jenn Morris to counter the message that junk food is essential to Olympic success.

"It's hard to describe how I felt after scoring the final goal in the final game in Sydney. The last thing I thought about was thickshakes, fries and burgers. Junior sport for me meant oranges. Junk food never crossed my mind. Not then, not at the Olympics - and not now."

Jenn Morris,
former Hockeyroo captain

As detailed in the article on page 2, *The Olympic Games: Promoting Sport, Nationalism and Fast Food?*, McDonalds released a media campaign during the Olympic Games which used prominent sporting figures to promote the consumption of fast foods. However, in counter advertising, which was placed in the Australian and West Australian newspapers earlier in August, Luc Longley and Jenn Morris challenge the claims that junk food is related to sporting performance, and emphasise the importance of a healthy diet.



love what I eat

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love my healthy food

As an elite athlete, my diet's really important to me. So the idea of eating fast food before or after an Olympic competition never entered my mind. Jumping for that hoop is hard enough without half a kilo of stodge weighing you down.

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Luc Longley, former basketball Olympian

THE OLYMPIC GAMES: PROMOTING SPORT, NATIONALISM AND FAST FOOD?

To coincide with the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, the food and advertising industries were quick to cash in on the spin off public relations and promotional opportunities. McDonald's fast food restaurants were a prime example of such a venture. As a major sponsor of the Olympic Games, McDonald's holds rights to the use of the iconic Olympic rings in their global marketing campaigns, exclusive sponsorship opportunities with national Olympic teams, and Official Restaurant Partner of the Olympic Games status, with four new outlets opened within the Olympic village to service athletes, staff and the media.

More locally, the Olympic Games saw five new burgers arrive at McDonald's stores as part of the 'Flavour of the Games' promotion, including The American, The Euro, The African, The Asian and The Australian, although these burgers are unlikely to resemble anything that athletes from these countries really consume.

Disappointingly a few athletes also climbed aboard Ronald McDonald's bandwagon, including women's cycling gold medallist Anna Meares and athletics champion Jane Flemming, proclaiming their consumption of chocolate sundaes and Big Macs as a 'treat' or 'reward'. While elite athletes may get away with consuming this type of food, the majority of people cannot.

We at the Cancer Council would like celebrities and sports figures of public standing to consider the consequences of their contracts with food companies which promote unhealthy food to children, and use their popularity to promote good health and nutrition, rather than legitimising the consumption of high fat, high sugar and high salt foods.

Water: it's Good for Kids and Good for Life

The NSW Health Department are currently running a social marketing campaign to promote children's consumption of water, and discourage their intake of sugary drinks, such as soft drink, fruit juices and cordial. The key message of this campaign, which will be promoted through mass media channels between July and September this year, is 'When it comes to thirst, drink water first', and aims to increase awareness and consumption of healthier beverages. Campaign promotional materials and further information are available on the Healthy Kids website www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au. Follow the link to the Good for Kids, Good for Life program.

Healthy Lifestyle Campaign Missing the Key

In a campaign keeping with the advertising industry's deployment of sports celebrities to promulgate unhealthy food products (see the above article: *The Olympic Games: Promoting Sport, Nationalism and Fast Food?*), TV broadcasters have launched a new campaign using prominent sporting figures to promote healthy lifestyles to children.

Broadcasters may deserve some commendation for this initiative, which promotes physical activity, fruit and vegetables, and responsible alcohol consumption. However, the conspicuous omission of recommendations to reduce children's consumption of junk food is disappointing, but not surprising seeing as junk food

marketers make up a substantial part of broadcasters' advertising revenue.

Also, in question is the broadcasters' motivation for this Healthy Lifestyle Campaign, which has been released to coincide with Free TV's (the industry body which represents commercial free-to-air television broadcasters) announcement for the review of their Code of Practice in the third quarter of this year. As this Code makes provisions relating to the timing and the content of advertisements to children, it is highly likely that this review will generate interest from individuals and organisations keen to restrict unhealthy TV food advertising to children, something that broadcasters would be eager to stave off.

Channel 10 Found in Breach of Children's Television Standards, But Too Little, Too Late

The Australian Communications and Media Authority found Channel 10 (Melbourne) breached the Children's Television Standards, the regulations governing TV food advertising to children. However, the regulator's response to this breach comes almost two years after the TV advertisement in subject was aired, and without penalty to the broadcaster or the food advertiser.

Nestle Milo cereal was recently found to be in breach of the Children's Television Standards clause which states that food advertisements containing premium offers, including toys and giveaways, must refer to these offers as incidental to the food product being advertised. That is, more emphasis must be placed on the food product than the premium offer. In this Milo cereal advertisement, the promotion of a premium offer, a CD-ROM, was found to be more than incidental to the food product. Despite this finding, the regulator has taken no enforcement action against the broadcaster, rendering this outcome a mere slap over the wrist with a feather for Channel 10.

In our submission to the Children's Television Standards review, the Coalition on Food Advertising to Children (CFAC),

called for improvements to the way complaints against TV food advertisements can be made, and how these complaints are handled. Specifically, we recommended:

- Allowing consumer complaints to be made via email or over the telephone, so that complaints can be made at the time of advertisement broadcast
- The introduction of a toll-free number for consumers to submit telephone complaints
- Providing clear and easily accessible guidelines for making complaints
- Consolidating all the provisions relating to food advertising to children within the Children's Television Standards so that complaints are dealt with by a single point of contact
- Ensuring the burden of proof is with the advertiser rather than with the person or organisation complaining about the advertisement.

The current lag time between the time complaints are made and the outcome of these complaints is far too long, and effectively renders the complaints process futile, as TV advertisement campaigns are long since over and children have already been exposed to the harmful effects of a particular advertisement.

The regulator handling of this complaint is disappointing: it has taken far too long to resolve and sets a precedent for broadcasters to breach the current Children's Television Standards without rebuke.

PARENTS JURY FAME AND SHAME ADVERTISING AWARDS: CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Parents Jury have expanded their annual advertising awards, to be held on 8th October, to incorporate the many different forms of marketing that food companies use to target children.

This year the advertising award categories include:

- The Shame Award for **Smoke and Mirrors** – for advertisements that use half-truths and misleading claims to make a product appear healthier.
- The Shame Award for the **Techno Hack** – for marketing to children using new media, such as the Internet and SMS messaging.
- The Shame Award for **Pester Power** – for using premium offers and promotional characters to encourage children to pester their parents for unhealthy food.

- The Shame Award for the **School Food Bully** – for invading the school environment to target unhealthy food marketing at children.
- The Fame Award for **Parent's Choice** –for the marketing campaign that promotes healthy eating and lifestyles to children.

What can you Do?

Nominations for each of these award categories are open NOW! To vote for what you think are the best and worst food marketing campaigns visit www.parentsjury.com.au to register as a member and place your nominations.

REAL KIDS' FOOD: Healthy Recipes

Baked fish and chips

Serves 4



Ingredients:

750g sweet potato, peeled, cut into wedges
250g desiree potatoes, unpeeled, cut into wedges
1 egg
2 tbs low fat milk
2 tbs plain flour
¾ cup wholegrain wheat or corn flake crumbs
600g boneless firm white fish fillets, in 1½ cm-thick slices
Olive oil spray

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 220°C. Line two large baking trays with non-stick baking paper. Spread wedges in a single layer on one tray and spray with oil. Bake 25 minutes on the top shelf.
2. Meanwhile, whisk egg and milk. Place flour and crumbs in two separate dishes. Coat fish in flour, followed by the egg and then crumbs. Place on the second lined tray. Spray with oil.
3. Place the fish on the oven's lower shelf. Bake for 10-15 minutes or until fish is tender and chips are golden.
4. Serve with a garden salad.

Source: Fresh Living - September 2004 , Page 10

Top 10 Tips for Consuming Healthier Beverages

- 1 Pack a bottle filled with tap water whenever you go out. This will avoid impulse purchases of sugary drinks when your child is thirsty. Try using a water bottle that will appeal to children, such as one that is brightly coloured or attach fun stickers.
- 2 Avoid temptation and don't keep sugary drinks in the house. Only buy sugary drinks occasionally or for special occasions.
- 3 When your child does have sugary drinks, serve these in small glasses and dilute with tap water.
- 4 For variety, try adding a slice of orange, lemon or lime to a jug of cold tap water.
- 5 To make the process of switching to healthy drinks easier, gradually dilute sugary drinks until they can be replaced by tap water.
- 6 Tap water is the best beverage option as it is cheap, accessible and contains fluoride for dental health. It is also better for the environment as less energy is used in its production and there is no packaging.
- 7 Soda water and plain mineral water contain no sugar and can be given as an alternative to tap water for variety.
- 8 Milk should also be offered, and is an important source of calcium, protein and other vitamins and minerals. Reduced fat milks should be offered to children over the age of two years. Before this time full cream milk should be given.
- 9 Offer whole fruit rather than fruit juice.
- 10 In hot weather, put a frozen water bottle in your children's lunch box.

In a nutshell

- A group of leading public health organisations joined forces with former Olympians Luc Longley and Jenn Morris to challenge food industry advertising that associates junk food with sporting success.
- Prominent sports figures seem to be the 'flavour of the month' when it comes to working with food advertisers to promote unhealthy food, and linking with TV broadcasters to deflect attention away from the issue of unhealthy food marketing to children.
- While the Australian Communications and Media Authority have found Nestle's Milo Cereal TV advertisement to be in breach of the Children's Television Standards, this outcome comes two years after the advertisement went to air and no enforcement action will be taken against the broadcaster.
- The Parents Jury Advertising Awards are now open for nominations. Visit www.parentsjury.com.au to have your say.