

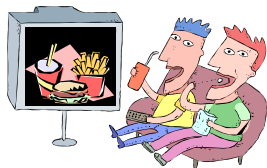
Smart Eating Makes the Grade!

TUNE IN TO MEDIA MESSAGING

Media's Influence on Food Choices

Did you know?

- ◆ Your child will be exposed to a food ad every 5 minutes while watching TV
- ◆ 34% of food ads are for candy and snacks
- ◆ 28% are for high sugar cereals
- ◆ 10% are for fast foods



The food industry spends billions of dollars every year on advertising. Marketers are very creative in using social appeal, popular TV and film characters, games and toys with brand logos to gain brand loyalty and to get you to buy their product.

What impact do ads have on your child's food choices?

Exposure to food ads has been linked to:

- ◆ an overall increase in calorie intake.
- ◆ overeating of fast food, candy, and soda.
- ◆ under eating of fruits and vegetables.

Children are influenced by media to make unhealthy choices which lead to increased health concerns such as diabetes, high blood pressure, increased tobacco and alcohol use, poor nutrition and obesity.

New Advertising Initiatives

The new Canadian Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative is a voluntary idea from Canada's leading food and beverage companies. This plan recommends to change advertising directed to children, to promote healthier food choices or to stop advertising to children at all.



Key Nutrition Points

- ◆ Make meal time, family time -- sit down together as a family to eat meals.
- ◆ Teach your children to cook -- involve them in deciding what to eat and have them help you prepare the meals to increase their interest in healthy eating.
- ◆ Promote healthy snacking -- keep healthy, on-hand options in the house.



Body Image and the Media

The media exposes children to food ads for junk food and fast food daily, yet the same media are influencing people to be thinner by using underweight models, actors/actresses.

The perceived ideal body image for women is getting thinner and thinner. Studies have shown that children who watch soaps and movies and read teen magazines have a stronger dislike of their body image.

What can you do to build and promote healthy self esteem and body image for your child?

- ◆ Be a role model -- eat well and be active!
- ◆ Educate yourself -- be positive in your own thoughts about weight and shape.
- ◆ Encourage physical activity.
- ◆ Value your child! Provide praise and encouragement to be themselves not based on how they look.
- ◆ Teach your child healthy ways to handle teasing and pressure.
- ◆ Provide a range of healthy food choices for meals and snacks.



Non-Media Family Activities

- ◆ Geocaching or a family treasure hunt
- ◆ Family game nights (board games, cards)
- ◆ Get outdoors! In winter go out tobogganing or skating. In summer, get out to the park, play catch, go on a nature hike.



The Bottom Line

Be aware of the messages given from watching advertisements, the internet, television and reading magazines and newspapers. Talk to your children about the messages to help them to make smart decisions for a healthy lifestyle.



Healthy Lunch Box

Family Game Night Snacks

- ◆ Fruit kabobs dipped in yogurt
- ◆ Raw veggies with low-fat dip
- ◆ Cheese and crackers
- ◆ Air-popped popcorn lightly buttered

Educational Resources to help YOU become Media Aware and Promote and Build Positive Body Image

www.media-awareness.ca - a website for teachers, parents and children to learn about media and how to critically analyze the media messages. Check out the game, "Co-Co's Adversmarts: An Interactive Unit on Food Marketing on the Web"

www.dietitians.ca - Dietitians of Canada website with educational games such as "Let's Make a Meal"

www.campaignforrealbeauty.com - Dove's worldwide campaign for real beauty and building positive self-esteem

Tips to Manage "Screen Time" in the Home

- ◆ Parents are the most important role model in their child's life, so take a look at your own media habits and change them if necessary.
- ◆ Encourage other choices of entertainment for children.... balance media use with sports, hobbies, reading, creative play and playing outdoors.
- ◆ Limit children's total media time (with entertainment media) to no more than 1-2 hours of quality programming per day.
- ◆ Get involved in your child's media - watch, play and listen with them. Take the time to use the media for interactive learning and discuss the inaccurate and unhealthy messages as well as the positive messages
- ◆ Keep television, internet-connected computers and gaming equipment out of your child's bedroom.

Dandy Freezer Pops

1 package of your favourite instant pudding mix
2 1/2 cups milk (375 mL)
Crushed or cut up fruit

Prep: 15 min. Freeze: 6 hrs. (10 - 12 servings)

1. Place 10 - 12 small paper cups in a 9 in. (23 cm) square baking pan.
2. Put in about 1 tsp. (5 mL) of prepared fruit into each cup.
3. Put the pudding mix and milk together in a bowl and whisk until smooth.
4. Spoon pudding mix into the cups.
5. Insert a wooden stick in the centre of the pudding.
6. Put the pan in the freezer for 6 hours.
7. Peel off paper cup and serve.

Tip: To add more flavour or color, you can add 2 tsp (10 mL) of any flavour of gelatin crystals.



Source: The Amazing Little Cookbook; Alberta Health and Wellness—Healthy U Initiative

