



Food Marketing and Kids

Marketing is a big business. Food companies spend a lot of money trying to get kids to buy their products. Children are a major target of marketing because they have money to spend, they can nag their parents to buy things and they will continue to buy things when they grow up. Most foods and drinks advertised to kids are unhealthy and this puts kids at risk of heart disease, diabetes and other illnesses. Food marketing is everywhere and kids are bombarded with marketing all day, every day. Movies, video games, websites, smart phone apps and team sponsorships are some of the ways foods are advertised to kids. Marketing happens at home, in school, while shopping and even at the local rink or pool.

What can parents, schools and communities do?

- Limit the amount of time kids spend with smart phones, computers, TV's, and tablets to no more than 2 hours a day.
- Eat meals together as a family most nights of the week. Turn off the TV, computer, and cellphones. Enjoy time together.
- Work with your school and local community to stop food marketing in their buildings by not having food company logos, brand names or characters on posters, signs, sports equipment or vending machines.
- Use non-food prizes such as trinkets or free swim or skating passes rather than “fast food” coupons.
- Work with businesses close to schools, ice rinks and pools to stop marketing unhealthy foods and drinks to kids.

Parents are doing what they can to keep their kids healthy, but eliminating marketing to kids is something that needs to be addressed by schools and communities too.

References:

Heart and Stroke Foundation. The kids are not alright. How the food and beverage industry is marketing our children and youth to death. 2017 Report on the Health of Canadians.2017. Available from: <http://www.heartandstroke.ca/-/media/pdf-files/canada/2017-heart-month/heartandstroke-reportonhealth2017.ashx?la=en&hash=1D4354193C46A235D2A657230FE2EB29DC6F34C8>

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