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# NUTRITION NEWS

UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
cal<sup>fresh</sup> Nutrition Education



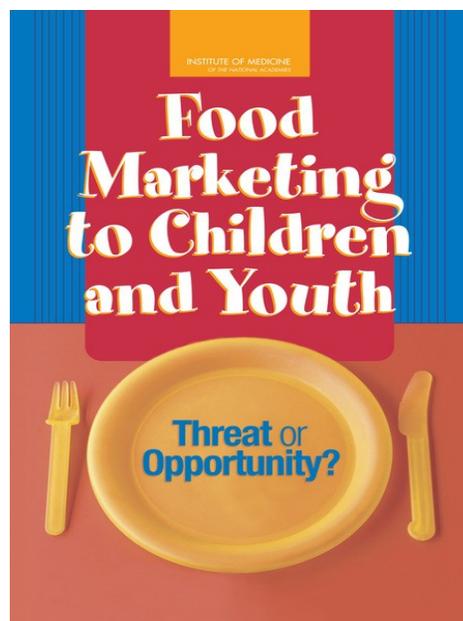
## FOOD MARKETING TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH: THREAT OR OPPORTUNITY?

The food industry spends \$1.8 billion per year in the United States on marketing targeted to young people. The majority of these ads are for unhealthy product, high in calories, sugar, fat and/or sodium.

On television, the average U.S. child sees approximately 13 food commercials every day, or 4,700 a year; and teens see more than 16 per day, or 5,900 in a year. The food products advertised most extensively include high-sugar breakfast cereals, fast food and other restaurants, candy and sugary drinks. Children see about one ad per week for healthy foods, such as fruits and vegetables and bottled water. Food marketing has a direct and powerful impact on young people's food preference and eating behaviors and negatively influences their diet, weight and health.

How marketing influences children and youth is the focus of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) report,

*Food Marketing to Children and Youth: Threat or Opportunity?* The report provides the most comprehensive review to date of

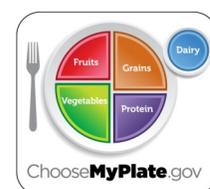


the scientific evidence on the influence of food marketing on diets and diet-related health of children and youth. The study was requested by Congress and sponsored by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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## MARKETING TO YOUTH (CONTINUED)

The report finds that food and beverage marketing practices puts children's long-term health at risk. To help children develop healthy eating habits, the goal would be to reduce their intake of high-calorie, low-nutrient snacks, fast foods, and sweetened drinks, which make up a high proportion of the products marketed to them.

Other conclusions from the IOM report:

- Food and beverage companies, restaurants, and marketers have underutilized the potential to devote creativity and resources in promoting food, beverages, and meals that support healthful diets for children and youth.
- Achieving healthful diets for children and youth will require continued, multi-sector, and integrated efforts that include industry leadership and initiative.

The report provides recommendations for different segments of society to guide the development of effective marketing and advertising strategies that promote healthier foods, beverages, and meal options to children and youth.

### Recommendations for Schools:

If schools and parents are to remain the strongest allies working to promote and advance the interests of American children and youth, the school environment must be fully devoted to preparing students for healthful lifelong dietary patterns.

State and local educational authorities, with support from parents, health authorities, and other stakeholders, should educate about and promote healthful diets for children and youth in all aspects of the school environment (e.g., commercial sponsorships, meals and snacks, curriculum).



As teachers, you can continue to do your part by creating a healthy classroom:

- **Be a Role Model**—Talk to your students about the food and drink choices you make and let them see you being physically active. *Kids are more apt to adopt new behaviors when they see them modeled.*
- **Choose Non-food Items for Class Reward Programs**—Candy and other sweets can undermine children's healthy food choices. *Providing food based on performance or behavior also connects food to mood.*
- **Avoid Selling Foods for Class Fund Raisers**—When choosing fundraisers, promote fitness (such as a run or walkathon) or service (such as a car wash or recycling). *Promoting fitness or service provides double benefits to students.*
- **Keep the Class Active**—Instead of sitting at tables all day, have students move to a group circle for discussions or set up stations of rotating activities so students must move between tables. *Physical activity is good for the body and brain.*

Source: *My Amazing Body*

# CREATING COMMERCIALS FOR HEALTHY FOODS

This activity teaches students to critically examine commercials and identify the underlying messages they convey. Students are given the opportunity to express their creativity by working in small groups to create a commercial for their favorite fruit or vegetable.

## Activity

1. Ask students what is advertising? *Message through the media to promote goods and services.*
2. Discuss advertising techniques. Ask students to describe examples of ads they have seen that use the techniques. Cut ads out of magazines that illustrate—status, peer approval, being popular, physical attraction, and testimonials. Have students identify the advertising techniques used in the samples that you cut out.
3. Divide the class into groups. Ask each group to pick a fruit or vegetable to use for their commercial.
4. Ask the students to discuss as a group benefits to eating their fruit or vegetable. Have one student be the recorder.
5. Remind them to use advertising techniques discussed earlier.
6. Ask the youth to create a 30 second commercial to perform as a skit.
7. Have each group perform the commercial for the class.
8. Ask students to discuss the observations they made about the different techniques used by each group to sell their food.

## Advertising Techniques

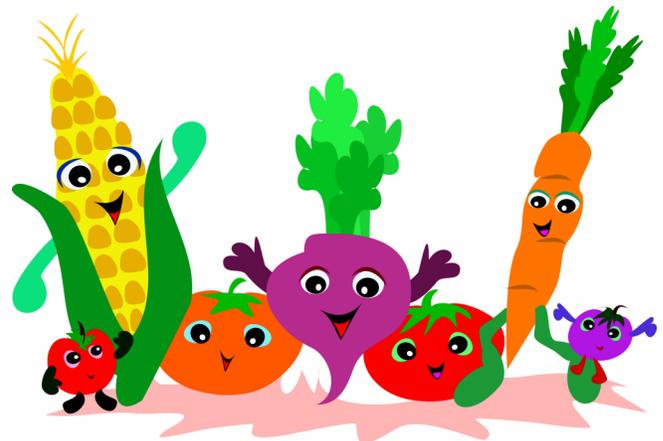
**Status:** Using the product will make you successful.

**Peer approval, being popular:** Using the product will make you popular.

**Celebrity endorsement:** Using the product will make you resemble the celebrity in the ad.

**Physical attraction:** Using the product will make you more attractive.

**Testimonial:** Ordinary people like the product; so you should, too.



## Alternate Activity

Instead of a commercial, have each group create a package for their fruit/vegetable.

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## Happy Healthy Me...Moving, Munching & Reading Around MyPlate for 4 to 6 Years Olds

Combines stories and literacy with nutrition education.

## Eating Healthy from Farm to Fork...Promoting School Wellness

A nutrition education curriculum that makes the connection between local food systems, garden-based learning, school food service, and the establishment of healthy habits. (K-2nd Grade)

## My Amazing Body - 1st Grade

## Good for Me and You - 2nd Grade

## It's My Choice...Eat Right! Be Active! - 3rd Grade

These curricula promote healthy eating and physical activity. Children will gain skills to practice appropriate healthy behaviors.

## Nutrition to Grow On

A garden-enhanced nutrition education curriculum. Objectives: 1) Teach the importance of making healthful food choices; and 2) improve children's preference for fruits and vegetables by giving them an opportunity to work with the land and grow their own produce. (4th-6th Grade)

## Eatfit

A computer-based highly interactive nutrition and fitness program for middle and high school adolescents.

## Jump Start

These cross-curricular lessons encourage high school students to eat healthy, keep moving and take action in their community.

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County Director

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