

Kids' TV Junk Food Ads Gone Wild!

Children's television network's show 76% more food commercials per hour than other networks –and most of them are for high-fat, high sugar foods according to a recent study published in the Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior.

By Rebecca Morley, MA



Researchers at the University of California Davis analyzed type and frequency of food advertising on Saturday morning and weekday afternoon TV. These researcher's wrote:

“Study after study has documented the adverse health effects of food advertising targeting children and adolescents.”

The food industry has been under pressure to reduce it's marketing of unhealthy foods to children as the evidence of childhood obesity has risen. The Council of Better Business Bureau's Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative, was established in 2006 as a voluntary self-regulation program for industry. But does industry self-regulation go far enough?

The authors suggest that children should be provided with media literacy programs as an antidote to the harmful effects of junk food advertising. For every nutrition based public service announcement there was a whopping 63 advertisements for foods that do not promote the health of our children.

“Such literacy training can help children and adolescents understand both the economic motivations behind food advertising and the strategies used by industry to increase desire for their products,”

Adolescent programming continues to be predominately for unhealthy foods. During programs targeted at young people such as music video programming advertisements were likely to be for fast food restaurants, accounting for 52.6 percent of food advertisements. Why do we allow advertising of foods and beverages that promote disease, not health? Doesn't it seem about time to tame the tube?

