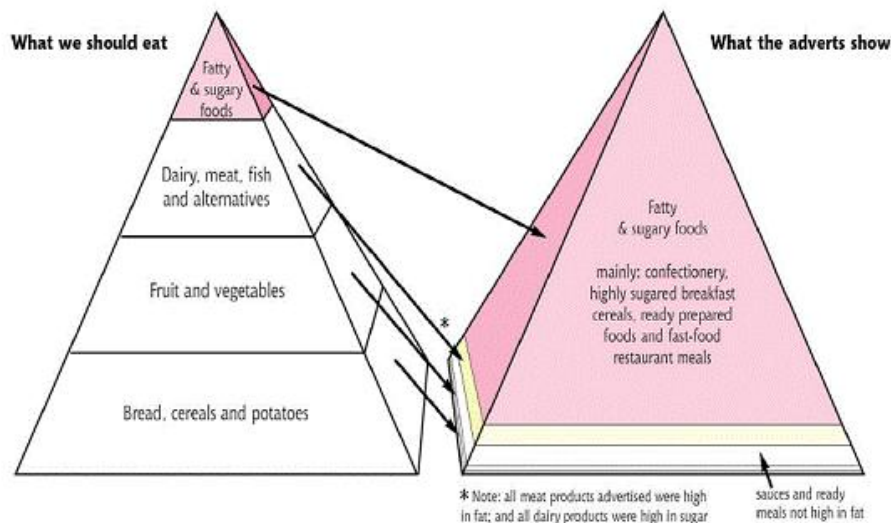




## The environment is not supporting healthy choices



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The 'Food Pyramid' guide (left) shows recommended proportions of food groups for a healthy diet. The dark shaded area shows the fatty and sugary foods that should be 'eaten sparingly' (infrequently and in small amounts). In contrast, the pattern of children's TV advertising (right) distorts the Food Pyramid into unhealthy proportions.

IACFO (2003). *Broadcasting Bad Health*. (Dalmeny K, Hanna E, Lobstein T, eds). London: International Association of Consumer Food Organizations, July 2003. Retrieved on February 14, 2007 from: [http://www.foodcomm.org.uk/Broadcasting\\_bad\\_health.pdf](http://www.foodcomm.org.uk/Broadcasting_bad_health.pdf)

### *The Extent, Nature and Effects of Food Promotion to Children: A Review of the Evidence.*

G Hastings, L McDermott, K Angus, M Stead, S Thomson (2006). *The extent, nature and effects of food promotion to children: A review of the evidence*. Background document no 1, WHO Forum and Technical Meeting on the marketing of food and nonalcoholic beverages to children, Lysebu (Oslo), Norway, 25 May 2006.

A recent systematic review of the extent and nature of food promotion to children, and its effects on their food knowledge, preferences and behavior focused on the following questions:

- What is the extent and nature of food promotion to children?
- What are the effects of food promotion on children's food knowledge, preferences and behavior?

The findings in relation to the extent and nature of food promotion were that:

- Food dominates advertising to children.
- Five product categories dominate this advertising (soft drinks, presugared cereals, confectionary, snacks and fast food restaurants).
- The advertised diet contrasts dramatically with the recommended diet.
- Children engage with and enjoy this "unhealthy" advertising.

The findings in relation to the effects were that:

- Food promotion influences children's nutritional knowledge, food preferences, purchasing and purchase-related behavior, consumption, and diet and health status.
- The extent of the influence is difficult to determine (though advertising is independent of other factors).
- Food promotion affects both total category sales and brand switching. While the more complex studies have all been undertaken in developed countries, the review shows that children respond to advertising in much the same way regardless of their country's place on the development ladder. In fact, there is reason to believe that children in developing countries may be even more vulnerable to food promotion because:
  - They are less familiar with advertising.
  - They are a key entry point for developed country firms because they are more flexible and responsive than their parents.
  - They associate developed country brands with desirable attributes of life.

Consideration should therefore be given to how infrastructure can be developed so that there are adequate complaints procedures and mechanisms for enforcing and monitoring either legislation or self-regulatory activities. The review is likely to understate the problem. The evidence base focuses on television advertising, with relatively little attention given to other forms of advertising, and several indirect effects of marketing are not considered. The review concludes that food marketing affects children's food behavior in a negative way and therefore global action is needed on the marketing of food to children.

For more information on Marketing to Children:

<http://www.iotf.org/documents/iotfmarketingbriefsep2006.pdf>