

MARKETING OF UNHEALTHY FOOD AND DRINK TO CHILDREN FAQs:



Q1: WHAT IS THE COMIC ABOUT?

A: Marketing unhealthy food and drink to children has become a normal part of our everyday lives through online sources (facebook, youtube), TV, radio, outdoor billboards and at sporting events. Sometimes we don't even notice it! This marketing is harmful and unacceptable. The comic highlights this issue, explaining why it is important so that we act together to take back control and protect our children from the harm these advertisements cause!

Q2: WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT THE MARKETING OF FOOD AND DRINK TO CHILDREN? DOES MARKETING HAVE ANY REAL EFFECT?

A: Children are vulnerable; they cannot discriminate between a programme and an advertisement¹ and there is strong evidence that the marketing and advertising of junk food and drink influences children's food choices and consumption contributing to obesity^{2,3}. The majority of food marketing is for unhealthy products, such as fast food and soft drinks⁴. Junk food marketers are setting our children up to become brand-loyal and life-long customers and develop unhealthy eating habits. Restricting junk food advertising is a powerful tool to help reduce childhood obesity and help establish healthier habits for life⁵.

Q3: BUT ISN'T IT PARENTS RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE HEALTHY CHOICES FOR THEIR CHILDREN?

A: Yes, but making healthy choice is difficult when we are constantly surrounded by an avalanche of manipulative marketing aimed at children. Junk food advertisers tell us to eat their food and use children's heroes to influence the food preferences of children. These actions increase pester power and undermines the ability of parents to guide their children towards healthy eating, impacting the quality of a child's diet and ultimately affecting their weight.

Q4: WHAT IS CURRENTLY IN PLACE TO PROTECT OUR KIDS FROM HAVING UNHEALTHY FOOD AND DRINK MARKETED TO THEM?

A: In New Zealand the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) sets the regulations for marketing. This is a self-regulated system. Although there is an **Advertising Standards Authority Code** with a **children and young people advertising code** sometimes things fall through the cracks and that is where our voice is really important and we can make a complaint.

Q5: WHAT DIFFERENCE CAN I MAKE?

A: A big difference! If you see an ad that you believe is inappropriately targeting children and breaking the ASA code make a complaint! Visit the **ASA website**. Without complaints, marketers think the system is working. Share the message with your friends and family, the more people involved the greater the power!

Q6: WHO IS HAT?

A: Healthy Auckland Together (HAT) is a group of 26 organisations representing local government, mana whenua, health agencies, NGOs, university and consumer interest groups. HAT focuses on the whole system, creating environments that encourage good nutrition and physical activity through policy change, advocacy and infrastructure design and planning. You can read more about our work **here**

CLICK TO SHARE THE COMIC. LET'S #DUMPTHEJUNKNZ TOGETHER

1 Kunkel D, Wilcox BL, Cantor J, Palmer E, Linn S, Dowrick P. Report of the APA task force on advertising and children. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. 2004 Feb 20.

2 Boyland EJ, Halford JC. Television advertising and branding. Effects on eating behaviour and food preferences in children. *Appetite*. 2013 Mar 1;62:236-41.

3 Hastings G, McDermott L, Angus K, Stead M, Thomson S. The extent, nature and effects of food promotion to children: a review of the evidence. Geneva: World Health Organization. 2006 Jul;20.

4 Signal LN, Stanley J, Smith M, Barr MB, Chambers TJ, Zhou J, Duane A, Gurrin C, Smeaton AF, McKerchar C, Pearson AL. Children's everyday exposure to food marketing: an objective analysis using wearable cameras. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*. 2017 Dec;14(1):137.

5 Alwan A. Global status report on noncommunicable diseases 2010. World Health Organization; 2011.