



**Children - making the  
healthy choice the easy  
choice**

**UK restrictions on marketing of food to children**

**Miranda Watson, Head of Social Advocacy, Which?**

4 April 2008

## About Which?, the UK's largest consumer organisation



- Established in 1957
- Europe's largest consumer organisation - over 700,000 members
- Not for profit
- Research-based
- Independent of government and industry
- Member of BEUC
- Member of Consumers International

*We exist to make individuals as powerful as the organisations that they have to deal with in their everyday lives*

## Childhood obesity - the facts

- UK has one of the highest levels of obesity in Europe
- British children consume too much fat, sugar and salt
- Obesity is a major risk factor in cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and cancer, and reduces life expectancy
- By 2050 it is predicted that if trends continue half of children will be obese or overweight



# Which? Hungry for Change progress report



DEMAND 1:

## Prioritise

by establishing a nutrition council

DEMAND 2:

## Set clear goals

to reduce obesity in children and adults

DEMAND 3:

## Restrict

TV ads for foods high in fat, sugar or salt targeted at children

DEMAND 4:

## Introduce standards

on responsible non-broadcast marketing of food to children

DEMAND 5:

## Introduce

a school food standard

DEMAND 6:

## Introduce

a national labelling scheme

DEMAND 7:

## Tighten controls

on food presented as healthy

DEMAND 8:

## Manufacturers, retailers and caterers

to reduce fat, sugar and salt

DEMAND 9:

## Government to examine

financial incentives and disincentives to produce healthier products

DEMAND 10:

## Supermarkets

to make it easier for consumers to choose healthier options

DEMAND 11:

## Scrap

the Common Agricultural Policy

DEMAND 12:

## Launch a hard-hitting

innovative government campaign to change eating habits

4 April 2008

## Evidence for action on advertising & promotion

- Hastings Review in UK - advertising has direct and indirect effect on children's food preferences and operates at a brand and category level
- 81 per cent of all food advertising expenditure in UK children's airtime was for foods high in fat, sugar and salt.
- Link between food promotion and poor diets in children spelt out in WHO strategy
- *'Food advertising affects food choices and influences dietary habits. Food and beverage advertisements should not exploit children's inexperience or credulity. Messages that encourage unhealthy dietary practices... should be discouraged.'*

# Examples of how British children are targeted with foods high in fat, sugar or salt

which  
?

- Broadcast advertising - TV and radio
- Sponsorship
- Endorsements by celebrities and cartoon characters
- Collector schemes eg in schools
- Free toys
- Promotions in cinemas
- Magazines and comics
- Internet promotions
- Computer games
- In-store promotions
- In or on pack promotions
- SMS text messaging
- Viral marketing



4 April 2008

## Regulation of UK restrictions on TV advertising

- Statutory scheduling restrictions were introduced in January 2008, to stop foods high in fat, sugar and salt being advertised during programmes that appealed to children under 16
- Co-regulatory content rules for broadcast advertising were also renewed to provide better protection. The Government required these rules to be underpinned by a nutrient profiling model
- 11 major food companies and the European Snacks Association have signed an EU pledge to change advertising on TV, print and internet to children under the age of 12







## How do the UK's scheduling restrictions work?

- Ofcom's rules use a viewing index of 120 to determine which programmes appeal to children
- The viewing index means that the proportion of children under 16 watching a programme has to be 20 per cent higher than the proportion of children under 16 in the overall UK population for the HFSS food ad restrictions to apply.
- Ofcom estimated this would reduce exposure of younger children to HFSS food ads by around 51 per cent and older children by around 41 per cent.



## The viewing index fails to ensure all programmes that appeal to children are covered



### Most popular children's programmes and examples of food ads (2008 research)

1. Dancing on Ice	1110.4	77.68	Kellogg's Coco Pops, Kellogg's Crunchy Nut, McDonald's Hot and Spicy Quarter Pounder.
2. New You've Been Framed!	913.7	108.45	Spam Fritters, McDonald's Hot and Spicy Quarter Pounder, Kellogg's Special K Cereal Bar.
3. Harry Hill's TV Burp	899.2	97.46	Ribena Blackcurrant, Subway Spicy Italian and Italian BMT sandwiches.
4. Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory (Film)	681.7	117.10	
5. Primeval	675.6	118.91	Kellogg's Coco Pops, Coca Cola, Red Bull.
6. Emmerdale	600.3	48.05	Kellogg's Rice Krispie Squares, Kellogg's Frosties, Walker's Ready Salted crisps.
7. Mary Poppins (Film)	575.5	106.16	
8. When Britain First Had Talent	569.2	73.24	Rowntree Kit Kat, Burger King 3 Pepper Angus Burger, Kellogg's Coco Pops.



## Regulation of non-broadcast marketing techniques

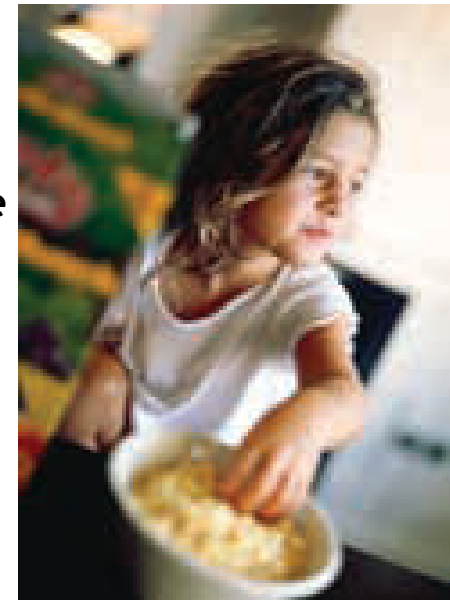
### Self regulation

There is a self-regulatory code for non-broadcast advertising of food to children (CAP code) covering print and press ads, posters, cinema commercials, direct mail, e-mail and text messages, banners and pop-ups.

- The code is not as strong as the statutory TV restrictions:
  - > It does not include all advertising eg packaging and point of sale
  - > it excludes own brand characters
  - > It does not use a nutrition profiling model

### Voluntary codes

- There are voluntary guidelines for internet advertising but these are based on the CAP code
- England and Scotland have developed voluntary guidelines for sponsorship commercial sponsorship in schools
- Many companies have developed voluntary codes but few of these are robust



## Have the measures worked in the UK?

which  
?

### TV Advertising

- A review of TV restrictions in 2008 found that children had seen around 34 per cent less advertising for HFSS foods since the restrictions had been introduced

### Non-broadcast advertising

- Many companies have started to transfer children's non-broadcast marketing onto healthier foods but there are still a wide range of less healthy promotions targeting children.



## Key recommendations for food marketing restrictions for children

- Government needs to take the lead in the development of restrictions to ensure they are robust and comprehensive
- Restrictions are needed for all forms of marketing to ensure children are fully protected
- Restrictions must cover children up to 16 years old
- Restrictions must be based on a nutrient profiling model
- Restrictions must cover all the programmes and places that appeal to children not just those that are targeting children specifically



Thank you