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Project Co-ordinator

Company name: Business Solutions Europa
Name of representative: Luigi PETITO
Address: 551 Green Lane - Ilford
          Essex IG3 9RJ - UK
Phone number: 0032 486 619 818
E-mail: luigi@bs-europa.eu
Project Website: www/animate-eu.com – www.myfriendboo.com
The importance of breakfast
Arianna Parodi
Gaslini Institute
Centre for the Prevention and Treatment of Childhood Obesity
Cardiff, 17-18 March 2009
Content Workshop

The views expressed in this presentation are purely the author’s own and do not reflect the views of the European Commission.

The primitive function of food is to provide the body with all the nutrients and elements needed to grow, develop, survive and perform vital functions, but eating habits are much more than that. Food habits express who we are and how we are feeling, provide a way of relating to other people, sharing with the people we live and also with the environment and surroundings. Food habits are part of culture, traditions and personal history. Modifying such structured habits is difficult.

What is the meaning of eating?

According to a pan-European survey the main influences on food choices for consumers in the European Union aged 15 years and over are food quality (including food safety), price, taste, awareness about healthy eating and the family.

EUROPEAN DIET: why do they eat?

Diet depends on many different factors, including climate, infrastructure and development of the region, agriculture, political and economical aspects and transport.

People’s food choices are influenced by: psychological factors; food preferences and dislikes; uses and traditions; culture, social values, food symbolism, beliefs and religion; education; economic factors; aesthetic factors; age; physiology; mass communication and advertising; and family and friends.

According to a pan-European survey the main influences on food choices for consumers in the European Union aged 15 years and over are food quality (including food safety), price, taste, awareness about healthy eating and the family.

EUROPEAN DIET: when do they eat?

Eating schedules are not the same in every European country, but there is a common trend towards an increasing proportion of food being eaten outside of formal meals.

Surveys on the eating habits of children and young people report snacking behaviour as extremely common. The 1992 national consumption food survey in the Netherlands reports that foods eaten between meals supply an important proportion of total daily caloric intake, and this proportion peaks in boys and girls aged 13 to 16 years.

Data from the United Kingdom suggest a proportion similar to that in the Netherlands, whereas the proportion is not that high among children in Spain, where the midday meal (early afternoon) is the main meal of the day and is often provided by the school or eaten at home.

EUROPEAN DIET: With whom do children eat and who prepares their food? (1)

According to a European Food Information Council survey carried out in four European countries (France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom), children significantly influence the choice of what they eat for breakfast, both on weekdays and weekends. For lunch and dinner, the mother usually decides what to eat and prepares the food. This survey suggests that few fathers in these countries play a part in selecting food for their children.

The European Food Information Council survey shows that dinner is the meal eaten most frequently with the family. Lunch is often eaten with one or both parents, especially on weekends.

During the week, eating habits for lunch vary according to differing school schedules. Thus, a high percentage of children in France, Italy and Germany (41–77%) have lunch with their families, compared with only 4% in the United Kingdom. About 50% of the children usually have breakfast with one or both parents on weekdays and a higher percentage on weekends in all four countries.
The 1993–1994 WHO Health Behaviour of School-Aged Children (HBSC) Study reported wide variation between countries in the proportion of respondents who ate fruit every day, ranging from 31% for 11-year-old boys in Greenland to 91% in 13-year-old girls in the Czech Republic. In many countries fewer 15-year-olds than 11-year-olds said they ate fruit at least once every day. In general, less than half of the pupils ate raw vegetables daily, and slightly more girls than boys.

According to HBSC data, countries differ substantially in the proportions of young people who reported eating whole-grain bread daily. This is caused in part by cultural factors and the types of bread available. In Denmark and Finland, large proportions of pupils (about 70–80%) said they usually eat this kind of bread. Other countries as Austria, Spain, Sweden or Wales the intake was considerably lower (about 15–35%).

Soft drinks were consumed more frequently on a daily basis in Belgium (60%), Scotland (52%) and Wales (44%), versus northern countries (10%) or Spain (26%). According to the national food consumption survey in the Netherlands, younger children usually have milk, soft drinks, fruit, cakes and sweets between meals. Older children have soft drinks, sweets and nuts during the day more often than do younger children.

About 70% of pupils from Scotland and Northern Ireland reported eating candy or chocolate bars most frequently, only about 10–40% of pupils in Northern Europe reported doing so.

Breakfast eaters have higher daily intakes of micronutrients and are more likely to meet nutrient intake recommendations compared with breakfast skippers. Nutrients that seem to be particularly affected across a variety of studies and population groups include vitamins A and C, riboflavin, calcium, zinc, and iron. Eating breakfast is associated overall with more healthful food choices or diet habits in children and adolescents. Breakfast skippers are more likely to have overall diets defined as poor or inadequate. Breakfast skipping also has been associated with increased snacking or higher intakes of high-fat snacks. Omitting breakfast was associated with omission of other meals by adolescents.

The frequency of eating breakfast was significantly and positively associated with calcium intake. Calcium intake is a critical nutritional issue for children and adolescents because bone calcium accretion is highest during adolescence. A significant number of children, particularly female adolescents, do not meet the Adequate Intake recommendations for calcium.

Fiber intake results significantly higher in breakfast eaters vs. skippers, and the inclusion of a ready-to-eat cereal seemed to contribute to daily fiber intake.

Breakfast consumption may positively benefit cognitive function, particularly memory; academic performance; school attendance rates; psychosocial function; and mood. Although study results are inconsistent, breakfast consumption may be associated with more healthful body weights in children and adolescents, despite possibly higher daily energy intakes in breakfast consumers. Skipping breakfast is a common behavior observed in overweight or obese children and adolescents and may be related to dieting and disordered eating habits. Breakfast skippers may be less likely to engage in physical activity, which may contribute to positive energy balance and weight gain.
In countries in northern and central Europe, breakfast is traditionally an important meal of the day, whereas in southern Europe it does not get the same attention, and many people eat very little for breakfast, if any at all.

**UK:** 9% of the children do not usually have breakfast

**Germany:** 1% of the children do not usually have breakfast

**Belgium:** high prevalence of skipping breakfast

**Spain:** the proportion of children skipping breakfast has been decreasing in recent years.

Generally in Europe traditional cooked breakfast has largely been replaced by simple, light foods mainly eaten cold; the types of foods consumed at breakfast were similar across various population groups. Milk is one of the most commonly consumed foods by children at breakfast. Breakfast cereals, which usually are consumed with milk, also are popular. Various breads also are commonly consumed.

Major changes observed in breakfast consumption patterns over a 26-year period include the increased consumption of low-fat milk, ready-to-eat cereals, and juices, and the decreased consumption of high-fat milk, whole-grain breads, and eggs.

### Breakfast in Europe (Traditional Breakfast: some examples)

#### Continental breakfast

Continental breakfast is an institutional meal plan based on lighter Mediterranean breakfast traditions. A typical Continental breakfast consists of coffee and milk or hot chocolate with a variety of sweet cakes such as brioches and pastries, often with a sweet jam, cream, or chocolate filling. It is often served with juice. The continental breakfast may also include sliced cold meats, such as salami or lun, and yogurt or cereal.

**Boiled eggs** with **soldiers** are a popular breakfast meal in GB although like the full English breakfast they are mainly eaten at the weekend. Porridge is a traditional breakfast in Scotland as well as the rest of Britain in the winter months.

**Belgium**

The breakfast in Belgium consists of breads, toasted or untoasted, with several marmalades, jams, and nut spreads, such as Nutella, or just with a bar of chocolate. Other common toppings include sliced meats and cheeses. Pastries and croissants may be served on Sundays, but are mostly not eaten on weekdays. Belgians often enjoy coffee, tea, hot chocolate, water, or fresh juice with breakfast.

**Bulgaria**

Breakfast usually consists of various kinds of savoury or sweet pastry, with cheese, meat or jam filling. The most typical breakfast consists of two slices of burek and a glass of yogurt. Breakfast also often consists of open sandwiches. The sandwich is buttered (with margarine), with toppings such as prosciutto and yellow cheese.

**Poland**

The traditional Polish breakfast is a large spread with a variety of sides eaten with bread or toast. Sides include various cold cuts, meat spreads, the Polish sausage kielbasa, tomatoes. Quark cheese is the breakfast classic and comes in many forms (it can be eaten plain, with salt, sugar, or honey). Eggs are served often as the main breakfast item, mostly soft-boiled or scrambled. For a quick winter breakfast, hot oatmeal, to which cocoa is sometimes added, is often served. Breakfast drinks include coffee, milk (some areas may serve fresh milk from the cow), hot cocoa, or tea. Traditionally, the Poles avoid heavy-cooked foods for breakfast.

**Italy**

The traditional breakfast in Italy is simply Caffè e pane with bread or rolls, butter, and jam. Fette biscottate (a cookie-like hard bread often eaten with Nutella) and biscotti (cookies) are commonly eaten. Children drink hot chocolate, plain milk, or hot milk with very little coffee. If breakfast is eaten in a bar (coffee shop), it is composed of cappuccino e brioche (frothed hot milk with coffee, and a pastry).

It is very common for Italians to have a quick breakfast snack during the morning (typically a panino, or bread roll).
Breakfast in Europe (Traditional Breakfast: some examples)

Spain. In Central Spain, the traditional breakfast is *chocolate con churros* — hot chocolate with Spanish-style fritters, which are extruded sticks of *doughnut*. The chocolate drink is made very thick and sweet. This meal is normally served in cafeterias. In the South and West it is more common to have a cup of coffee (usually with milk) and a toast with a choice of *olive oil* and salt, *tomato* and olive oil, *butter*, jam, *jamón serrano* (cured ham). Freshly squeezed orange juice is widely available in most places as an alternative for coffee. The breakfast is not often larger than these two items, because usually in late morning there is a break known as *almuerzo* when there is a snack.

In conclusion...

For a healthful breakfast, children should include foods from a variety of food groups (e.g., whole grain, fruit, and dairy) to ensure that they receive a variety of nutrients and fiber. Consumption of a high-fiber, low-sugar, fortified, ready-to-eat cereal likely will provide additional benefits to nutrient and fiber intakes.

Children who tend to skip breakfast because of a lack of time in the morning should eat breakfast either at school or on their way to school. Many breakfast foods can be consumed while on the go, for example, dry cereal, whole-grain toast or bagel, 100% juice in a to-go container, and fresh fruit.

Thank you!

This presentation arises from the project ACTIVE which has received funding from the European Union, in the framework of the Health Programme.

The views expressed in this presentation are purely the authors’ own and do not reflect the views of the European Commission.
1) General introduction on children and obesity
2) The situation of obesity in project countries
3) EU policy

Arianna Parodi
Gaslini Institute
Centre for the Prevention and Treatment of Childhood Obesity
Cardiff, 17-18 March 2009
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...Children are fat because they eat too much and they move not enough... It sounds too easy, isn’t it?

Nowadays there is a tendency to consider overweight/obesity as a multifactorial condition, coming out from the interaction among genetic and epigenetic factors (i.e. environmental, metabolic and behavioral factors).

The current demographic shift towards a high prevalence of overweight in western populations in a relatively short time (one or two generations) is likely due to environmental causes (change in nutrition and lifestyle).

Thus far excessive fat intake was on trial against obesity. Actually fats cannot be responsible for the obesity epidemic in USA because fat consumption is drastically falling down in the last decades.

It is often said that the rising prevalence of childhood obesity is linked to a larger caloric assumption. Actually, this is not completely true, because there has not been any increase in caloric intake in the last three decades (Bogalusa Heart Study and NHANES).

The right question: How many fats? Which fats?

FAT INTAKE
SWEETS/ CARBOHYDRATES INTAKE

Specially high glycemic index food

(such as a soft drink contains on average 4-5 spoons of sugar!!)

Unhealthy diet adverse health consequences

It may result from excessive intake of soda and sweetened beverages, fast-food consumption, inadequate intakes of fresh fruits, vegetables, fiber-rich foods, and dairy and other calcium-rich foods.

Increasing obesity rates indicate a need to revisit the diet and lifestyle characteristics of children and adolescents.
Obesity = multifactorial condition = interaction between genetics and environment

Focus on urban design, on marketing, on education, on health system, on communication strategies, on public choices, on conflict of interest...

High energy foods, rich in carbohydrates with high glycemic index and in saturated fats, cost relatively few, compared to healthier foods.

Genetics

Overweight/obesity in one or both parents is one predictive factor of overweight in offspring

More than 300 genes, markers or chromosomal regions linked to obesity phenotypes

35 mendelian disorders have been reported

Genetic susceptibility: a determined genotype cannot necessarily cause overweight but can increase the risk in a certain environment (the so-called "obesigenic" environment)

Control mechanism of food intake is the result of an interaction from inside (brain, adipose tissue, endocrine system, digestive system) and outside (feelings, food aspect, behaviours, environment)
The Energy Balance Equation

Dietary Intake − Energy Expenditure = Stores

(What you got − What you spent = What’s Left)

Nowadays healthy diet AND movement are considered both essential in the fight against GLOBESITY.

In conclusion...

The World Health Organization describes obesity as ‘one of today’s most public health problems’ and further comments that an ‘escalating global epidemic of overweight and obesity is taking over many parts of the world.’

Of even more concern is the increased prevalence of overweight and obesity (OW/OB) among children and adolescents.

World-wide, about 50% of school-aged children and adolescents are overweight or obese, with very high rates being seen in the Americas, Europe (WHO: 20% OW/OB children) and even the Middle East.

It is an ironic and rather sad fact that the two major nutritional problems that presently face the world are obesity and starvation (About 600 million people face severe energy shortage and starvation).

2) The situation of obesity in project countries

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In recent years, the problem has gained the full attention of health care professionals, health policy experts, children’s advocates.

In Europe, the necessity of a periodic monitoring of the condition in children and adolescent has recently raised (strongly motivated from the increased perception of children OW/OB as a priority of the European public health).

Over 40% in South Italy regions

31-40% in Centre Italy regions

Lower prevalence in North Italy regions

.data kindly provided by the project "MYPIRAMID" Italian version of European project Gaining Health: The European Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases

WHQ Europe is now performing a study in 15 European countries using the same methodology (very similar to that employed by Okky).
Behaviours and social aspects of eating from OKKIO study

- 7% = skip breakfast
- 25% = do not eat fruit and vegetables
- 82% = plentiful mid-morning snack

School nutrition education programs are performed in 79% of the classes.
School physical activity promotion initiatives are present in 90% of the classes.

About 50% of mothers with a full-time work.
4 out of 10 mothers of CH/OF children do not think that their sons’ weight is excessive.

Behaviours and social aspects of eating from OKKIO study
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data referred to Liguria (Italy), as preliminary results of the project “OKKIO ALLA SALUTE” Italian version of European project Gaining Health: The European Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases.

3) EU policy

The White Paper promotes several actions relate directly to the functioning of the internal market (such as labelling requirements, health claims authorisations and food controls procedures) while others are part of more specific frameworks such as the Common Agricultural Policy (though the CMO for fruit and vegetables), Commission initiatives in the field of education, regional policy (structural funds) and last but not least audiovisual and media policy.

"one set of co-ordinated actions at the EU level is considered preferable to numerous, individual actions at Member State level”

Firstly, actions should aim to address the root causes of the health related risks. In this way, the actions set out in the strategy should contribute to reducing all risks associated with poor diet and limited physical activity including that associated with excess weight.

Secondly, the actions described are intended to work across government policy areas and at different levels of government using a range of instruments including legislation, networking, public-private approaches, and to engage the private sector and civil society.

Thirdly, the strategy will require action from a wide range of private actors, such as the food industry and civil society, and actors at local level, such as schools and community organisations.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, monitoring will be essential over the coming years. The number of activities aimed at improving diet and physical activity is already extensive and is growing year by year. There is often little or no monitoring taking place, resulting in limited assessment of what is working well, or whether actions need to be refined or fundamentally changed.
Thank you!

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Healthy way of life

Main issues about healthy eating and physical activity

Laura Gennaro

Cardiff, 17-18 March 2009
Content Workshop
Nutrition, Fruit and Vegetables, Calories, Fat... all over magazines, on the news, in school...
Why is such a big deal?

We need nutrition from foods and drinks to fuel our bodies. The kind and amount of food we give our bodies can directly affect how we look and feel. With the best (most nutritious) fuel, in the right amount, we're ready and able to do all the stuff we have to do, and all the fun stuff we love to do.

A healthy eating style is about fueling your body in a healthy way
The world makes it a little complicated. As many regular people struggle with weight, the media shows super skinny women and buff guys, and hints that being thin or really muscular makes people happy and popular.

Add to all this the fact that eating is sometimes about more than just fuelling our bodies—like when families cook up a huge meal to celebrate, or when some people eat because they feel sad!
Teaching consumers to make wise food choices in the context of the total diet is not a simple process.

Depending on the audience and the situation, a variety of nutrition information, communication, promotion, and education strategies may be needed for an appropriate and effective nutrition intervention.

It may be necessary to suggest a change to a more healthful lifestyle in terms of small steps that can lead to a broader success in improving both fitness and the quality of the diet.
Eating habits start developing from the age of 2 onwards. In general, the period between 2 and 6 years of age is the one most prone to factors capable of changing eating habits, for good or for bad.

Therefore, from 6 onwards, their habits are almost “forever”, and more difficult to change.

If we are able to make them realize that:
• Each food matters, and none is “good” or “bad”
• It is important to eat everything “with gusto”, but in moderation
• Physical activity and wellbeing are strictly related

… we have done half of the job!!!
What is a healthy diet?

Eating a healthy diet means giving to the body the type and amount of foods and drinks that help to look and feel at your best. When you give to the body what it needs (like vitamins, minerals, protein), it uses that great stuff to give you lots in return, like energy, powerful muscles, and strong bones.

Healthy eating is like a puzzle. There can be a place for everything, but nothing to skip completely, in order to have a balanced lifestyle.

If you're thinking that you cannot have soda, corn chips, or chocolate cake, don't worry! These foods can fit into the puzzle.

Some foods (like sodas, potato chips, chocolate cake, and more....) can pack a lot of calories, fat, sugar, and/or salt. It’s true. But.....

… if you usually follow a balanced healthy diet, every now and then you can surely indulge yourself.
We can summarize the main issues of children nutrition education in 5 rules:

1) Move yourself and check your weight!
2) Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables
3) Have your breakfast every day
4) Vary your food
5) Do not eat too many sweet things and beverages
Eat well, burn well: whether energy comes or goes matters

Our body needs a balance between intakes and expenditures:
Energy coming from foods will be used both for living and for every day activities.

If we are very active, we need more energy to “move”
If we overeat and we don’t “move” enough, our intakes will become “fat”.

It is of utter importance to keep an eye on the calories, but also to lead a healthy, active lifestyle
For how long do we need to exercise to burn what we have just eaten?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Quantity (g)</th>
<th>Energy (Kcal)</th>
<th>Standing still (min)</th>
<th>walking (4 km/h-min)</th>
<th>Ironing (min)</th>
<th>Cycling (22 km/h-min)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-4 biscuits</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 jam snack</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 croissant</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasta and beans</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice cream</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Children look up to parents and learn from them.

Many children, just as adults do, lead a quite sedentary lifestyle and don’t move enough.

Activities carried out in gyms or sport centers are not enough to teach our children the importance of physical activity.

They should do the stairs, walk to school (and everywhere they need to go), do every playground activity they like (football, dancing, running, etc…).

These activities are costless but indeed priceless in order to drive them to an active lifestyle.

Children learn from parents, so parents should be the first to give a good example
Therefore…

… kids who aren’t very active simply need to eat less food than kids who are very active.

And, furthermore…

It is better to split the daily food intake in 5 times: breakfast, mid morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack, dinner.

Hunger-break appointments, during the day, allow the children not to have an empty stomach, or not to be too starving. They are also useful to prevent them from nibbling continuously, uptaking more food than they need.
Repetita iuvent

Our weight represents an “energy assessment” of inbound and outbound calories.

Energy is supplied by aliments and is used by our body either when we are asleep (to keep functioning organs as brain, lungs, heart etc.) or during physical activity (in order to sustain muscular activity).

If we gain more energy than what we are able to consume, the excess accumulates in the body as fat which determines a weight gain both in adults and in children.

If, instead, the opposite happens, the body utilizes its reserve of fat in order to answer the energy request.
Too much body fat is a danger for the health mainly because can cause the insurrection of some diseases (coronary hearth disease, diabetes, some kind of cancers), wheezes (nocturnal apnoea) and due to the consequences provoked to the articulation by the weight excess (vertebral column, knees, hips etc.).

The greater the excess of weight the higher the risks taken.
Inverse problem can be considered excessive thinness. Nowadays we see an increase of this kind of problem especially in the youngest share of the population because of the role model suggested by the media.

Sometimes the attempt to emulate those models brings the individual to reduce the weight in such a way that this is not compatible anymore with a good health. In fact, when the body burns all the fat and can not gain any energy from food, it is forced to use the muscles and internal organs one.
HOW TO KEEP YOUR WEIGHT IN THE RIGHT RANGE

Caring about the weight is something that starts in childhood as one obese child has good chances to be obese also in his/her adult life.

The evaluation of the body weight is calculated on the basis of the Body Mass Index (BMI) which considers the weight and the height of an individual (the link is between weight in kilos and height in metres to the square).

\[ IMC = \frac{\text{Weight (Kg)}}{\text{height (m.)} \times \text{height (m.)}} \]

\[ 18,5 > IMC < 25 \]

UNDERWEIGHT \hspace{1em} OVERWEIGHT

EXAMPLE:
a man of 80kg and 1,85 tall will have a BMI=80:1,85:1,85=23,4
so his weight is normal
Something interesting…

The presence of other people at a meal can either increase or decrease intake, depending upon factors such as the familiarity and gender of the dining companions. For example, it is known that people generally eat more in the company of others than when alone, although social facilitation of eating has been reported to be stronger among friends and relatives than among strangers.

Furthermore, eating can be inhibited in the presence of others compared to eating alone if an accompanying diner is of the opposite sex and considered attractive.

and…

Positive correlations between body fatness and television watching in children and adults have been reported and may be related to both increased food intake while watching TV and decreased energy expenditure.
We can summarize the main issues of children nutrition education in 5 rules:

1) Move yourself and check your weight!
2) Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables
3) Have your breakfast every day
4) Vary your food
5) Do not eat too many sweet things and beverages
"Eat your fruits and vegetables"

You've heard this statement since childhood.

Research shows why it is good advice:

• Healthy diets rich in fruit and vegetables may reduce the risk of cancer and other chronic diseases.
• Fruits and vegetables also provide essential vitamins and minerals, fiber, and other substances that are important for good health.
• Most fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories and are filling.
Fruits and vegetables contain essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber that may help protect you from chronic diseases.

Fruits and vegetables come in terrific colors and flavors, but their real beauty lies in what's inside. Fruits and vegetables are great sources of many vitamins, minerals and other natural substances that may help protect you from chronic diseases.

And it is not a single one of these, to be important. They are all of them that give you the benefit we’re talking about.

To get a healthy variety, just think color. Eating fruits and vegetables of different colors gives your body a wide range of valuable nutrients. Some examples include green spinach, black beans, yellow corn, purple plums, red watermelon, and white onions.
Diets high in a variety of fruits and vegetables appear to decrease the risk of cancer and cardiovascular diseases. Nevertheless, in most Western countries, most children eat less than the recommended amount of fruit.

At least 5 servings of fruit and vegetables are recommended every day. Better more.

It's easy…

Fruits at breakfast, as snack in the morning or in the afternoon, to conclude lunch and dinner.

Vegetables at every meal.
Research says that…

As the percentage of fruit/vegetables purchased by parent increases, the child are more likely to taste all of the fruit/vegetables offered to him/her.

But…

Exposure to a variety of fruits promotes fruit acceptance, but not vegetable acceptance. Thus foods do not all carry the same potential for being accepted by children, the acceptance of green vegetables being more difficult to promote than that of orange vegetables.

However, even initially disliked, vegetables can be accepted after repeated exposure

Then…

Don’t stop offering fruit and vegetables to your children!
We can summarize the main issues of children nutrition education in 5 rules:

1) Move yourself and check your weight!
2) Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables
3) Have your breakfast every day
4) Vary your food
5) Do not eat too many sweet things and beverages
Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, yet it is the meal most often missed.

It’s important to fill the "empty tank" with breakfast every morning. We lack of energy from the dinner of the day before. Breakfast gives us that first burst of energy we need.

Regular breakfast consumption can have positive health benefits. It is important to overall dietary quality and nutritional adequacy in school aged children. Breakfast skipping can interfere with cognition and learning among children. Moreover, children who report eating breakfast on a regular basis tend to have better nutritional profiles than their breakfast skipping peers.

But...

... young people are more likely to miss breakfast than any other meal.
Some curiosity…

Breakfast skipping among young people has been shown to be associated with an increased likelihood of being overweight or obese, whereas breakfast consumption has been shown to be associated with a lower body mass index (BMI).

Parental eating behaviours is positively associated with both unhealthy and healthy dietary behaviours of children and adolescents. For example, parental breakfast eating is positively associated with adolescent’s breakfast consumption…

…but breakfast among young people may be difficult for those from single-parent families where the parent is also in employment (i.e. little time to shop and prepare healthy foods).
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Every day, even only to live, our body needs proteins, lipids, carbohydrates, water, vitamins, minerals, and a lot of other compounds.

The only way to get all of these substances is having a varied and balanced diet.

A “complete” food does not exist.

In fact, no food contains all we need and in the right quantity. Therefore, the best way to provide all we need is combining food of different types.

Plenty of fruit and vegetables, the most of the calories from cereals and potatoes, less proteins and from different sources (meat, fish, eggs, pods and cheese), a few fats, oils and sweets. Milk and yogurt every day.
Beyond this nutritional dimension, food variety also contributes to the psychological dimension of eating, since variety, both within and between meals, contributes to the pleasure of eating. Furthermore, food variety (not only type of food, but even brand and origin) will help us to avoid contamination from toxic compound that can naturally be in some food

And...

Consumers and educators preferred dietary guidance that enables consumers to eat in a way that suits their individual tastes and lifestyles. In this way, they can avoid to uptake too many compounds of some types, or not enough of others; furthermore, they can balance a small amount of low-nutrient or high-energy-density food or beverage (eg, fried food, butter/margarine, jelly, alcohol) with nutrient dense, healthy foods (vegetables, whole grains, etc…) to achieve an overall healthful dietary pattern
Last, but not least...

Nutrition labels are a tool that consumers can use to choose and compare foods. Even food and nutrition professionals have found the label to be an effective educational tool that helps consumers plan their diets.

For example, 48% of respondents to a survey reported that they had changed their minds about buying or using a food product after reading the nutrition label.
We can summarize the main issues of children nutrition education in 5 rules:

1) Move yourself and check your weight!
2) Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables
3) Have your breakfast every day
4) Vary your food
5) Do not eat too many sweet things and beverages
Sweets are of different types. Many of them (like candies, bars, jams, spreads, chocolate, and many carbonated beverages) contain only sugar or sugar and fat; therefore they give us only kcalories and a few essential nutrients.

Better bakery products, such as biscuits and cakes without custards. Containing also flour and eggs, they are a really nutrient option!!
The rule is always the same

Don't eat too much of one thing.

You can still enjoy the burgers, fries, and ice cream. But, make sure you eat a variety of foods—that includes dairy, whole grains, and fruits and vegetables.

Remembering that:
• Each food matters, and none is “good” or “bad”
• It is important to eat everything “with gusto”, but in moderation
• Physical activity and wellbeing are strictly related
Thank you!

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FOOD COMMUNICATION: The Context

Cristina Giannetti

Cardiff, 17-18 March 2009
Content Workshop

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Why analyze food context?

To understand the context in which our children are involved, the influences imposed upon them by media, industry and advertising is vital to make a truly effective cartoon on healthy food.
Who are our children?

According to Harvard sociologist Juliet Schor:
• Not only they are consumers as adults are, but they also have a strong influence on their parents’ shopping habits (kidfluence).
• They have their own money and they also go shopping, often alone.
• They have developed a strong orientation to the symbolic meanings constructed through branding.
• They have dramatically increased their tv exposure.
• In other words they’ve become a very appealing market, the promised land for food industry.
The new promised land: how to get there

- The growth of this market has led to a dramatic increase in advertising to children.
- Corporate efforts directed at children have become increasingly aggressive.
- Marketing is becoming more and more sophisticated, invasive and insidious. Our children are literally bombarded. The majority of TV ads dedicated to children is focused on food.
The new promised land: how to get there

Advertisers and marketers have studied a lot of different ways to reach children’s minds:

- coolness
- age compression and tweening
- nag factor or pester power
- dual messaging
- transtoying
• Nowadays it is an all-encompassing quality, something that every product must have and every child must be.
• It is the key to social success, able to define someone’s popularity and social acceptability.
• What is cool today will not be cool tomorrow.
• The opposite of cool is loser.
Ingredients for coolness

- Social exclusiveness, in other words owning expensive things not easily affordable by most. Things that are desirable and, at the same time, inaccessible.
- Being successful and rich.
- Being cleverer than adults (adults are not cool).
- Reaching limits, without passing them, with regard to what is dangerous and prohibited (by authorities).
- Having older children’s tastes and behaviours.
- Feeling older.
Coolness: the expert’s opinion

Gene Del Vecchio, Ogilvy and Mather, former CEO, author of *Creating Ever Cool: A Marketer’s Guide to a Kid’s Heart*:

“Being cool means having something that others don’t. It makes a child feel special and pushes him to seek the latest cool product.”
Age compression and Tweening

- Advertisers are redefining age-appropriateness by reducing target ages and creating a more adult-like relationship earlier, or what the industry terms “age compression”.
- This is clear with the process known as “tweening” of the 6-12 year old market, that is advertising products and messages previously intended for teens. A good example of this are the Winx cartoons and food products rich in calories (sugar above all) like breakfast cereals, snacks, drinks.
Nag factor or pester power

- Children’s power to pester their parents with continuous requests to buy advertised products.
- Ads now bypass the parents and appeal directly to children. For instance, a cereal high in sugar (unhealthy) will be exclusively targeted to children.
- According to corporate interests healthy food is not cool.
Differentiation in strategy approach to children and parents. For instance, an advertisement directed at the parents highlights certain features (health, nutritional values, food safety) and hides others (nutritional facts, calories, salt etc). By contrast, the children’s version highlights the jazzy features parents disapprove of or prefer not to pay for.
Transtoying

- Increasing market trend in foodspace. Industry transforms food and consequently eating into something to play with (snacks and cereals with funny shapes or strange colours, free gifts in association with the product, etc).
- Question: if a child learns that eating means fun and the games, why should he or she learn to recognize and appreciate the taste of good, healthy food?
Who is producing (and selling) food for our children?

Foodspace in Europe

- The food and drink industry is the second Europe's most important and dynamic industrial sectors. It is made up of about 310,000 companies, and provides jobs for more than 4 million people.

- With an annual turnover in excess of €800 billion, this diverse sector is a strong exporter and is extremely competitive on domestic and international markets.
Communicating (healthy) food: reflections

Until now we have understood that:

- Marketers and advertisers can communicate with children in various ways, directly and indirectly, using different strategies, languages and tools.
- Health, intended as food and lifestyle, is not cool.
- Direct communication on health issues (made by adults and authorities who are not cool) is ineffective.
Communicating (healthy) food: a new strategy?

“Nowadays food is becoming a lifestyle and people eat as they would like to live. This consideration must be at the base of every food strategy. In communicating or in launching new products we must be aware of it”.

“The food market is becoming more aggressive, the consumer more evolved, competition more intense. To win, desire must overcome need”

Mc Cann Erickson research 2006
Why is it so difficult to communicate the healthy food concept?

The food issue has particular features:

• everyone feels expert for the simple reason he eats every day.

• everyone has personal and well defined preferences and habits due to family and country of origin.

• everyone is linked to a particular gastronomic tradition (granny’s recipes, typical dishes).
Different meanings of food

Calories and nutrients are only a small part of what food means to everyone:

- Pleasure and taste
- Emotions (gratification, hunger, comfort, anxiety, relaxation)
- Sociability (sharing food brings people closer)
- Memories (of our childhood, of a trip etc)
- Culture
The right message: what should it be?

- Based on the awareness that food is not only a question of calories, but also of culture, pleasure, emotion, sociability.
- Economically sustainable
- Not pretending to completely overwhelm lifestyles and habits
- Not educational
- Positive and motivating
- Easy to apply in everyday life
Communicating healthy food in Europe

- Food is also the product of nature (environment and climate), culture (man’s capacity to elaborate earth products) and history (this process took centuries).

- In Europe there is a great abundance and variety of foods, traditions and cuisines, while there are many varying habits concerning food
Bulgaria

- Great variety of vegetables, herbs and fruits.
- Bulgarian cuisine is based on meat, potatoes, beans and salad (required at every meal) and is featured by hot and spicy flavours. It is also noted for the diversity and quality of dairy products (yoghurt characterized by lactobacillus bulgaricus was born there).
- Great importance has the bread, prepared in many shapes and flavours, considered a real holiday food.
- Light breakfast, full lunch, light dinner
A continent of differences

Belgium

It’s famous for mussels and frites (French-fried potatoes), waffles, chocolate, endive and Brussels sprout. Charcuterie, a basket of bread, and beer often make a meal. Meat, fish and seafood are important. Hearty soups play a big role. Almonds and spices are used in abundance, and fresh herbs lace appetizers, salads, meats, and even desserts.
A continent of differences

Poland

- Meat, potatoes, cereals, fish soup are at the base of Polish cuisine.
- In no other European countries cuisine spices has a such important role.
- Big breakfast, full lunch (served very late), light dinner (eggs, sandwiches), often concluded with a cup of hot chocolate.
- Potatoes are like bread and they must be on the table.
A continent of differences

- Potatoes: very important in Poland, Ireland, Germany, Belgium
- Spices: Bulgaria, Poland, Belgium
- Sweet and Sour: Germany, England
- Meat: Germany, Bulgaria,
- Vegetables: Italy, Spain, Bulgaria
A continent of differences

- Soup: a very common way to eat vegetables all across Europe
- Big breakfast: Poland, Great Britain
- Big lunch: Bulgaria, Poland
- Big dinner: Italy and Spain
The right message in Europe

How can one manage so different a target?

Generally speaking: when talking about breakfast, we should remember that in Europe we have a lot of possibilities, heavy or light. We should underline the importance of having a good nutritional breakfast.
The right message in Europe

Gathering data and information on other countries’ food and eating habits. After an accurate analysis we are able to define an easily applicable universal message. However one should take into account the different meal times all over Europe. For instance, in some countries lunch can be a light snack while in others it is a full meal.
The right message to children

- Children (and their families) usually know the right things to do and eat, but don’t always behave accordingly.
- We should give them not only the knowledge of food, but also the insight, a real life moment in which our target can identify with strong emotional participation.
- Giving insight allows children to totally accept our position and thus modify their behaviour.
Communicating the right message to children

How can we win over the children?

- Being appealing to them
- Getting in touch with them
- Being reliable sources
- Not betraying their trust
- Not being arrogant
Communicating the right message to children

The laugh power

• Entertainment is the easier approach, laughter the prize for having grabbed their attention, and making them more willing to listen.
• No fear
• Never generate fear or anxiety in children. If you give the problem, you must also give the solution
Communicating the right message to children

• To be on the same plain, so they can recognize and identify their reality with something more attractive and modern.

• Characters that children can easily identify and that inspire a desire to make friends. They must not inspire feelings of indifference, competition or superiority
Of course, you can!

- Teaching them the possibility of changing their reality.
- Convincing them to be protagonists.
Communicating (healthy food): the challenge

- Our challenge is to apply successful strategies to food issues, opening new perspectives where traditional campaigns have failed.

- Edutainment, with its long successful worldwide history, has proved to be an extraordinarily effective medium, able to promote social values and correct behaviour.

The results are measurable.
Why does edutainment work?

- Albert Bandura’s social cognitive theory
- Human beings can learn new behaviour through observation and imitation of other human beings
- Our self-confidence increases when we see other people perform our same tasks with success
How does edutainment work?

- 3 kind of characters
- Positive: public love them. Their lives and their stories are guided by the values we want to promote
- Negative: public hate them. By contrast with the positive ones they represent all the behaviour to bias
How does edutainment work?

• Transition: public identify with them. They’re attracted from negative values but choose positive ones. In this way transition characters obtain important advantages or something good happen to them. Therefore public become convinced that doing the same will be convenient for them.
“Telling stories, saving lives”
PCI-Media Impact
Thank you!

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Nutrition education: the right way and the wrong way

Laura Gennaro

Cardiff, 17-18 March 2009
Content Workshop

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The media today are full of information about nutrition. Breaking news about health and fitness can be found almost daily on television. Most major newspapers devote regular columns to nutrition, health, and dieting. Even the Internet focuses on health!

People do indeed use the media as a source of information about nutrition, and television and magazines are relied upon more often for nutritional guidance than are family and friends. At the same time, many adults also feel that the media contain information that is often confusing and contradictory.

In one recent study, adults who reported more confusion and skepticism about nutrition messages in the media also were more likely to eat a fat-laden diet. The authors of the study speculated that the proliferation of media information may be contributing to a nutrition backlash among certain subgroups of people.
Science and society speak different languages and they often don’t understand each other

From research findings to changes in behaviours

*Why it is so difficult?*
Science wants to qualify
Media wants to simplify
Italian media and press about food and health: Who is guilty?
Niente pesce o verdure, imitando mamma

No fish or vegetables, like mummy
Meno merendine, più salute

Ingredienti leggeri, informazioni chiare e niente pubblicità rivolta ai bambini: così cambierà l’industria alimentare.

di ANNA MARIA ANGELONE

Chi credeva che l’ondata salutista in Europa si sarebbe esaurita con la guerra ai fumatori farà bene a riferirsì all’anima in pace. E infattì in arrivo una crociata, ben più imponente, contro i chili di troppo. Destinata a far comparire sui mercati cibi meno calorici, a dare un’informazione più chiara di ciò che finisce in pancia, sì. E a vietare la pubblicità diretta ai bambini del cosiddetto "junk food", quella spazzatura fatta di fritti, merendine e bevande zuccherose nociva alla linea e alla salute. Con un obiettivo prioritario: migliorare le abitudini alimentari e lo stile di vita di centinaia di milioni di persone.

Davanti ai dati allarmanti sull’obesità Bruxelles ha deciso di mettere in torno allo stesso tavolo grande industria, distributori, catene di ristorazione, pubblicitari, consumatori, nutrizionisti e governi per studiare le soluzioni. Per il momento non sarà imposto alcun obbligo o divieto. «Il 15 marzo lancerà a Bruxelles una piattaforma su dieta, attività fisica e salute per prenare e, spero, invertire la tendenza registrata sull’aumento dell’obesità» anticipa a Panorama il commissario europeo alla Sanità e sicurezza dei consumatori, Markos Kyprianou. «L’accordo porterà gli attori chiave a lavorare insieme per prendere misure volontarie, ma concrete e verificabili.»

In assenza di risultati, non si escludono diktat futuri. «È chiaro che se questo processo fallisse» prosegue il commissario Kyprianou «non avremo altra alternativa che considerare la via della legislazione. Del resto, stiamo già preparando norme sulle etichette nutrizionali da varare il prossimo anno.»

La tabella di marca prevede un primo incontro a maggio: ciascuno, produttori di alimenti e bevande anzitutto, dovrà dire cosa sta facendo e cosa propone per una corretta alimentazione. I piani dovrebbero essere pronti in estate, comunque entro il 2005. Un punto si farà nel 2006, ma si prevede che nuove misure siano prese prima.

Dove si interverrà? «Mi aspetto provvedimenti in merito a educazione e informazione dei consumatori, marketing dei prodotti, promozione dell’attività fisica, composizione dei cibi e quantità delle confezionamenti» elenca Kyprianou. «Vorrei che l’industria non rigolasse più direttamente ai bambini messaggi pubblicitari di alimenti con alto contenuto di grassi, zuccheri e sale, come già hanno scelto alcune aziende.» È il caso della Kraft Foods, che ha rinunciato a fare spot di biscotti, patatine e bibite ai più giovani.

È su questa fascia di età che il giro di vite sarà più stretto. Stando ai dati dell’International obesity taskforce, l’obesità colpisce in tutto il mondo oltre un miliardo di persone. E non è più solo un problema degli USA, dove...
Fat kids, snacks are absolved. “It’s fault of TV and genes”

Bambini grassi, merendine assolte “Colpa della tv e della genetica”

Anna Fregonara

Bambini obesi. La colpe non è da cercare nei fuoripasto, bensì

Sovrappeso in aumento anche per i giovanissimi
Allarme dei ricercatori

“Tre ore al giorno davanti al piccolo schermo e in città è peggio che in campagna”

Bambini di Legnano, il 88% dei bambini di età compresa tra i 4-6 anni non partecipano a giochi organizzati per motivi vari, come il rischio di essere cercati da due genitori.
Obesi, è anche colpa dell’ansia

Oggi la giornata contro il sovrappeso. Informazioni e controlli in 140 centri sanitari

Un ragazzo su quattro mangia continuamente I prodotti mediterranei per aiutare gli oversize

GATY SEPE

Gli americani sono spacciati: per nove uomini e sette donne su dieci il destino che conduce all’obesità è già tracciato. L’Europa è messa in società Astra per conto di Coldrett. Secondo lo studio, per la maggioranza degli italiani e il pranzo il pasto principale della giornata, anche se il 27% punta sulla cena, mentre un elevato 22% non mangia niente alla prima colazione. «Una cattiva abitudine che - sostiene la Coldrett - risulta accentuata tra le giovani generationi che in un caso su tre dichiarano di rinunciare al passo del martino».

Una tendenza, questa, «evidenziata anche da una ricerca pubblicata sul “Journal of The American Dietetic Association” condotta su 2400 ragazze provenienti da stati diversi nel paese che celebrano il rito del breakfast. Tutti la
Società  Le abitudini da evitare nell’adolescenza

Frequenti tentativi di dieta portano all’obesità

di Andrea Torri

Quali sono i fattori che lasciano prevedere se una ragazza svilupperà in età adulta l’obesità? I ricercatori ne hanno identificato tre: la depressione, genitori obesi e frequenti, radicali tentativi di controllare il peso. Stranamente, come risulta da uno studio pubblicato su The Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, non vengono più considerati i tradizionali fattori di rischio come la mancanza di esercizio fisico, il consumo di cibi grassi e un ritmo di alimentazione molto disordinato. Dall’esame su 466 teenager seguiti per cinque anni è risultato che le più inclini a diventare obesi erano quelle che assumevano emetic e pesanti lassativi. (riproduzione riservata)
Esperimento USA: solo chi apprezza gli alimenti riesce a stare in forma

«Le diete? Fanno male»
Meglio il cibo intelligente

La scoperta: lo stress da calorie aumenta il colesterolo

ROMA — Buone notizie per le donne in guerra con la linea. Le diete non funzionano. Non hanno dimagrante, perché i costi col tempo si riprendono tutti. E non si possono nemmeno mangiare con riscaldamento, con portioni ridotte, ma senza gravame reale è un sistema molto più efficace sul piano della forma e del benessere generale. Colesterolo cattivo e pressione altissima bloccano il cuore e portano al black out. Sembra che il cibo non sia una soluzione, ma deve essere un modo per il cibo. I risultati della ricerca dei ricercatori americani mostrano che i cibi con alto contenuto di zuccheri, grassi e sodio non vengono consumati. Le costituzioni non ripagano. Il segreto è assicurare informazioni corrette che aiutano a scegliere e non si riduce in quantità. E una delle ragioni per cui sono un constante ostacolo della dieta a "mama". Quindi i carboidrati hanno la prevalenza del 40%, contro il 30% di proteine. Un schema salutare, saggisato, non rispetto.

Vincenzo Melchiorri, conduttore di "Rispetto e culturaiaperto a "Le diete fanno ingrasso",
riporta l'attenzione sul movimento fisico. "La maggior parte delle persone non riesce a mantenere il peso e continua a rischiare di perdere calorie. Perché invece è fondamentale il successo è lo sport. Calore di peso in modo segmentale non sta bene, occorre raggiungere un equilibrio psicofisico.

"Diets? They hurt"

Stress from Kilocaloric increases cholesterol

Gli errori — Entro Arcelli, docente di scienze mediche all'università di Firenze, è d'accordo: "L'attenzione morose per il cibo è contemporaneamente. Tanto maggiori sono gli obblighi tanto meno vengono rispettati. Le costituzioni non ripagano. Il segreto è assicurare informazioni corrette che aiutano a scegliere e non si riduce in quantità. E una delle ragioni per cui sono un constante ostacolo della dieta a "mama". Quindi i carboidrati hanno la prevalenza del 40%, contro il 30% di proteine..Un schema salutare, saggisato, non rispetto.

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Margherita De Bac
Consequences of mediatic chaos

Strong emotional impact on the general public

Temporary changes in nutritional behaviour

Negative impact on health
1. Press paradox

2. Advertisement paradox
From a COOP research ("In bocca al lupo", 2007):

If a child, in Italy, would watch TV three hours a day, only in the protected time (broadcasted specifically for children), he risks to watch, in one year, about...

...10.816 commercials on food
(more or less 30 per day)!!!
Evidence of a possible link between obesogenic food advertising and child overweight.

Lobstein T, Dibb S.

International Obesity TaskForce, London, UK. childhood@iotf.org

A significant association was found between the proportion of children overweight and the numbers of advertisements per hour on children's television, especially those advertisements that encourage the consumption of energy-dense, micronutrient-poor foods ($r = 0.81, P < 0.005$). A weaker, negative association was found between the proportion of children overweight and the number of advertisements encouraging healthier diets ($r = -0.56, P < 0.10$).
Beyond-brand effect of television (TV) food advertisements/commercials on caloric intake and food choice of 5-7-year-old children.

Halford JC, Boyland EJ, Hughes G, Oliveira LP, Dovey TM.

Kissileff Laboratory for the Study of Human Ingestive Behaviour, School of Psychology, Eleanor Rathbone Building, Bedford Street South, University of Liverpool, Liverpool L69 7ZA, UK.

j.c.g.halford@liverpool.ac.uk

Food advert exposure has been shown to influence calorie intake and food choice in 9-11 year olds. However, little is known about the effect of food advertisements on feeding behaviour in younger children. Therefore, we conducted a study with 93 children aged 5-7 years, 28 of whom were overweight or obese. The children were exposed to 10 non-food adverts and 10 food adverts in a repeated measures design. Their consumption of sweet and savoury, high and low fat snack foods, and fruit were measured following both sessions. Food advert exposure produced a significant increase in total food intake in young children. The collection of recognition data was incomplete. These data replicate previous findings in that exposure to food adverts increases food intake in all children, but recognition of food adverts is related to body mass index (BMI). Beyond their effects on brand choice, exposure to food advertisements (commercials) promotes over-consumption in younger children.

Low levels of physical activity have been observed in children 3-5 years old, and sedentary activity (measured by TV time) and having a TV in the bedroom have been associated with risk of overweight
Summarizing...

Several studies have examined the content of food advertising aimed at children. In general, these studies have shown that food commercials are dominated by advertisements for high calorie foods with low nutritional quality.

Moreover, these commercial messages can impact children’s food preferences and consumption.

Overall, children who watch more television tend to espouse more “pro junk food” attitudes and beliefs, request more advertised foods/drinks, and consume more calories.
Study: Food in McDonald's wrapper tastes better to kids (3-5 years)

CHICAGO, Illinois (AP) -- Anything made by McDonald's tastes better, preschoolers said in a study that powerfully demonstrates how advertising can trick the taste buds of young children.

Even carrots, milk and apple juice tasted better to the kids when they were wrapped in the familiar packaging of the Golden Arches.

The study had youngsters sample identical McDonald's foods in name-brand and unmarked wrappers. The unmarked foods always lost the taste test.

"You see a McDonald's label and kids start salivating," said Diane Levin, a childhood development specialist who campaigns against advertising to kids. She had no role in the research.

Levin said it was "the first study I know of that has shown so simply and clearly what's going on with (marketing to) young children."

The study included three McDonald's menu items (hamburgers, chicken nuggets and french fries. French fries were the biggest winner: almost 77% said the labeled fries tasted best. 54% preferred McDo'-wrapped carrots versus 23% who liked the plain-wrapped sample.

Policy principles for the promotion of healthy diets and physical activity

Governments need to work together with the private sector, health professional bodies, consumer groups, academics, the research community and other nongovernmental bodies if sustained progress is to occur.

Policy principles for the promotion of healthy diets and physical activity

Change can only be initiated through effective communication. The core role of health communication is to bridge the gap between technical experts, policy-makers and the general public.

The proof of effective communications is its capacity to create awareness, improve knowledge and induce long-term changes in individual and social behaviours – in this case consumption of healthy diets and incorporating physical activity for health.
Nutrition educators have some major challenges. They need to design messages that attract attention, make sense, and help to encourage changes in what are often entrenched attitudes and behaviors in the target audience.
Which is the audience? Children, but…. also parents!

The American Dietetic Association segments target into 3 groups based on people’s nutritional beliefs and behaviors.
The first group, the “I’m already doing it” segment, consists of individuals who are knowledgeable about nutrition and are already eating healthfully and exercising. This segment, is presumably eager for the latest nutrition information and does not need strong persuasive tactics.

The second group, the “I know I should but . . .” segment, is made of people that are knowledgeable about nutrition and believe healthful eating is important, but they do not necessarily practice health-promoting behaviours. Health messages for this group need to overcome behavioral rather than attitudinal resistance.

The final group, the “don’t bother me” segment, is the toughest to change.
About one third of adults do not care, are in denial, or have other concerns that seem more crucial.
The source of the message: the problem is the stigmatization

Overweight and obese children are vulnerable to weight stigma from other sources, in addition to that from peers. Educators, parents and even health professionals have been reported to stigmatise obese children.

Studies conducted in the early 1960s revealed high degrees of discrimination towards the obese among elementary school students.

Elementary school students are strongly biased against obese peers. All children, regardless of their own body weight, tend to hold negative attitudes towards obese children. It was also found that weight stigma exists among obese as well as among normal and underweight individuals.

Weight stigmatization begins at an early age. Studies reported that 3–5-year-old pre-school children described an overweight child to be more mean and undesirable playmate in comparison to an average-weight child. Others have found that even preschool children ascribe more negative characteristics to fat figures than to normal ones. Children, starting at the age of 3, associate overweight individuals with being mean, stupid, ugly, unhappy, lazy, and having few friends.
The source of the message.

Source similarity is another variable that has been studied. A source can be perceived as similar to the audience on a number of dimensions, such as age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, and even body type.

Some weight management companies have used celebrities such as Kirstie Alley as spokespersons because they, too, like the target audience, have struggled with their weight. In controlled studies, source similarity has been found to increase persuasive effectiveness, decrease it, and have no effect. Such inconsistent findings suggest that the impact of similarity probably depends on a host of other factors in the situation.

Studies suggest that attractive sources are generally more persuasive than unattractive ones. But some researches indicates that physical attractiveness is less effective than source credibility in terms of persuasive impact. Especially on group three (the “Don’t bother me”).

The mechanism, in this case, is “I will never be like you”
Our Rules

Nutrition is not only macro and micronutrients requirement

is our cultural and traditional background
is affectivity, emotion
is sociability
No positive result from education and communication can be expected when food is considered just a mere fuel and nutrient provider.
No positive result from education and communication can be expected when it is done on topics that are not considered "important" by the target.

Eating is an important source of pleasure.
You should never say to children that a food is good or bad!!!

In fact, almost all elementary-age and half of middle school children already believe that there are good and/or bad foods.

Actually, no single food or type of food ensures good health, just as no single food or type of food is necessarily detrimental to health. Rather, the consistent excess of food, or absence of a type of food over time, may diminish the likelihood of a healthful diet.

For example, habitual, excessive consumption of energy-dense foods may promote weight gain and mask possible underconsumption of essential nutrients. Yet small quantities of energy-dense foods on special occasions have no discernible influence on health.
In most situations, nutrition messages are more effective when focused on positive ways to make healthful food choices over time, rather than individual foods to be avoided.

Unfortunately, the current mix of reliable and unreliable information on diet and nutrition from a variety of sources is confusing to the public and elicits negative feelings such as guilt, worry, helplessness, anger, fear, and inaction.
Some experiences
Festival della Scienza


LABORATORY: “Alimenti e salute con gusto”
Babies’ place: let’s draw together. Right colour and correct names
Aprile 2007
At school with pupils

It is quite impossible to persuade pupils that what you are saying is right, if it is different from their daily behaviour.

You can teach them how to recognize mistakes, but most of all you can drive them into the knowledge of food.

They really don’t care if in Cola there are seven sugar’s spoons. Even if they care, they will tell you that they drink “cola zero!” (the one with aspartame, not safe for children)

But… telling them and showing them the quantity of sugar or the risk of aspartame, they will store the information somewhere.
Making children aware could make the families, too

There is some evidence that parental fruit and vegetable intakes, knowledge of intake recommendations and skills has a positive association with children’s intakes, whereas television viewing and exposure to television advertisement were associated with lower intakes of fruit and vegetables.

More specifically, there are three different parental child-feeding patterns: ‘authoritarian’ (highly controlling), ‘permissive’ and lastly, ‘authoritative’ where parents set limits but modulate the degree of parental control. Researches indicates that highly controlling parenting may have a counter-productive influence on their children’s diets, especially their fruit and vegetable intakes.

Other authors insist on a clear division of feeding responsibilities between children and adults. This division consists of the adult being responsible for providing food that is appropriate for the child and repeatedly offering it in a positive environment, and the child being responsible for deciding how much of, or even if, the food item is eaten.
We know that modeling is an important mechanism through which children learn food preferences and that children learn other kinds of behavior from televised models.
The Food Dudes Healthy Eating Programme is a school-based intervention designed for use in primary schools that:
- Encourages children to eat fruit and vegetables both at school and at home
- Helps children develop a liking for fruit and vegetables
- Encourages children to become proud to think of themselves as healthy eaters
- Changes the ‘culture’ of a school to one that strongly supports healthy eating

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ar2h6-j4ewM&feature=related
There are two main phases to the Programme:

**Phase 1 (16 days)**
Each day, children are read a letter and/or watch a specially designed DVD episode (lasting 6 minutes) starring the “Food Dudes”. There are 4 kids, super-heroes, who take from fruit and vegetables their force to fight and save the world.
The purpose of the Food Dudes is to provide influential role-models for children to imitate.
Children are then given a portion of fruit and a portion of vegetable and those who succeed in eating both the fruit and vegetable are given a small reward (e.g. juggling balls, pencils, pedometers etc).
The rewards are used at the beginning of the Programme to encourage children to repeatedly taste fruits and vegetables so that they begin to enjoy the taste of the foods.

**Phase 2**
In this phase the Programme continues to support successful eating of fruit and vegetables, but with less intensity than during Phase 1. Classroom Wall Charts are used to record consumption levels of these foods, and as the children achieve more advanced goals they earn further rewards and Food Dudes certificates.
Why does it work?

By using rewards and positive role-models, the Food Dudes Programme encourages children to repeatedly taste different fruits and vegetables. Repeated tasting of these foods allows children to discover the intrinsically rewarding properties of fruits and vegetables – in other words, they discover that fruit and vegetables actually taste really good!

BUT…

In similar projects, the effect was limited to the project duration. Availability of fruit and vegetables helps consuming more, but if children don’t find at home the same offer and the same availability, and sometimes even if they find it, the effect probably don’t last.
Concluding....

Habits that protect against childhood obesity include:

- having breakfast every day
- eating more vegetables and fruit,
- being physically active.

and

- eating meals with family (who have breakfast and eat fruit and vegetables, without watching TV while they eat)
Thank you!

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