Section C

Do Food Advertising and Marketing Influence Children’s Food Preferences, Eating Behavior, and Weight Status?
Findings from G. Hastings et al., 2003 review, *The Extent and Nature of Food Promotion to Children* (n = 65 articles)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effects of Food Promotion on Children’s Food Preferences and Behavior</th>
<th>Strength of evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preferences</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase-related behavior</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumption</td>
<td>Modest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Findings

- Research findings may *understate* the effect that food promotion has on children
- Studies have focused primarily on TV advertising
  - The cumulative effect of this combined with other forms of promotion and marketing is likely to be even greater
- Studies have looked at direct effects on children and *understate indirect influences*
Evidence Linking Diet and Lifestyle Factors to Obesity

- Examined the strength of evidence linking diet and lifestyle factors to obesity
- Four levels of evidence:
  - Convincing
  - Probable
  - Possible
  - Insufficient

## Factors That Might Promote Weight Gain and Obesity

**Strength of Evidence on Factors that Might Promote Weight Gain and Obesity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Increased Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Convincing | • Sedentary lifestyle  
              • High intake of energy-dense micronutrient poor foods                     |
| Probable   | • Heavy marketing of energy-dense foods and fast-food outlets  
              • High intake of sugar-sweetened drinks  
              • Adverse SES conditions                                                      |
| Possible   | • Large portion sizes  
              • High proportion of food prepared outside the home  
              • “Rigid restraint/periodic disinhibition” eating patterns                   |
| Insufficient| • Alcohol                                                             |

In 1991, Sweden instituted a ban on TV and radio ads directed at children under the age of twelve. The Swedish government views advertising to children as morally and ethically unacceptable because children have difficulty distinguishing the purpose of advertising.
Sweden, Norway, the Flemish region of Belgium, and Quebec, Canada: ban television advertising to children
Australia: no ads to preschoolers
Austria, Belgium, Germany, Portugal: ban marketing in schools
Denmark, Norway, Australia: limit prizes or premiums
Denmark, Sweden: prohibit use of characters/actors from children’s TV in ads
Limit Marketing of Low-Nutrition Foods to Children

- How?
  - Prohibit marketing of low-nutrition foods to children
  - Develop nutrition standards for foods that can be marketed to children

- Conduct marketing campaigns to promote healthy eating and activity

- Urge fast-food restaurants, food manufacturers, and TV stations to follow guidelines for responsible food marketing aimed at children

- Legal action
Improve School Nutrition Environments

- Congress/USDA, states, local school districts
  - Implement nutrition standards for vending, a la carte, fund raisers
  - Limit marketing of low-nutrition foods in schools
  - Promote and provide fruits, veggies, whole grains
  - Promote and serve 1% and fat-free milk
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight control practices:</th>
<th>Healthy eating</th>
<th>Dieting</th>
<th>Unhealthy weight control behaviors</th>
<th>Anorexia or bulimia nervosa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical activity behaviors:</td>
<td>Moderate physical activity</td>
<td>Minimal or excessive activity</td>
<td>Lack of, or obsessive, physical activity</td>
<td>“Anorexia athletica”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body image:</td>
<td>Body acceptance</td>
<td>Mild body dissatisfaction</td>
<td>Moderate body dissatisfaction</td>
<td>Severe body dissatisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating behaviors:</td>
<td>Regular eating patterns</td>
<td>Erratic eating behaviors</td>
<td>Binge eating</td>
<td>Binge eating disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight status:</td>
<td>Healthy body weight</td>
<td>Mildly overweight or underweight</td>
<td>Overweight or underweight</td>
<td>Severe overweight or underweight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In Summary**

- Inform adolescents that dieting, and particularly unhealthy weight control behaviors, may be counterproductive.
  - Instead, encourage behaviors that can be maintained on a regular basis.
- Do not use body dissatisfaction as a motivator for change.
  - Instead, help teens care for their bodies so that they will want to nurture them through healthy eating, activity, and positive self-talk.
- Encourage families to have regular, and enjoyable, family meals.
- Encourage families to talk less about weight and do more to help teens achieve a weight that is healthy for them.
- Assume overweight teens have experienced weight mistreatment and address with teens and their families.
“No Nation Is Any Healthier than its Children” (Harry S. Truman, 1946)

Source: http://www.census.gov/pubinfo/www/broadcast/photos/people_places/004310.html