

Statement on Junk Food Marketing to Children

Across the planet, obesity in children is reaching epidemic levels. More kids are getting fatter; and not coincidentally, many of these children are the targets of saturation marketing by the junk food industry, which seeks to displace healthful local eating habits with its own high calorie, high-added-fat, high-added-sugar junk food.*

The time has come to reaffirm that raising children is the role and responsibility of parents. It is not the role of the junk food industry or any other industry, and these corporations must stop injecting themselves into the relationship between parents and their own children. They must stop creating strife in the home by prodding kids to whine and throw tantrums for junk food. They must stop draining family budgets, especially in developing countries, by enticing children to demand junk food that their parents cannot afford.

These corporations must stop undermining the efforts of parents to transmit traditional -- and healthful -- eating habits to their children, and they must respect the sanctity of the family dinner table and the cultural heritage that surrounds it.

We, the undersigned, support a global ban on junk food marketing to children twelve years of age and below. This one step is perhaps the single most inexpensive and cost-efficient way to reduce the global burden of obesity, diabetes and their complications among children. It would require virtually no governmental expenditure, and would likely save families billions of dollars each year that could be better spent on such things as education, healthful food and health care.

Perhaps most important, it would reaffirm that raising children is the role of parents, and not of global junk food corporations.

We strongly urge the World Health Organization to incorporate such a ban into its Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, and to encourage its member states to adopt it. Or, if necessary, the World Health Assembly should issue International Health Regulations to prohibit advertising of junk food to children twelve years of age and below.

* For the purposes of this statement, junk food is defined as foods or beverages that are relatively high in saturated or trans fat, added sugars or salt, and relatively low in vitamins, minerals, protein and fiber.

The statement was written and organized by Commercial Alert, www.commercialalert.org.

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Coronary Prevention Group

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Soroptimist International of Great Britain
Stroke Association
TOAST (The Obesity Awareness & Solutions Trust)
UK Public Health Association
UNISON
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Vegetarian and Vegan Foundation
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