

Preschoolers who know snack-food brands on road to obesity?

May 30 2017



(HealthDay)—Preschoolers who recognize food brands such as Coca-

Cola, M&M's, KFC and Pringles may be more likely to be obese, a new study says.

Researchers at the University of Michigan found these kids may not remember names or characters precisely, but recognizing brands and logos is associated with an unhealthy diet that can lead to weight gain.

This association, which didn't prove cause and effect, was independent of other variables, including TV watching or family demographics, the researchers said.

"It is interesting that despite very low recall rates for some foods, recognition rates were still high," study lead author Kristen Harrison said in a university news release. She's a professor of communication studies at Michigan.

For example, most of the kids knew the Keebler logo matched with cookies but few were able to name the brand.

For the study, the researchers measured the [body mass index](#) (BMI) of 247 young children. BMI is a measure that includes weight and height to determine a person's [healthy weight](#).

The kids were an average age of 4.5 years old. They were asked to identify and recall characteristics of 30 different U.S. [food](#) brands.

The most well-known brand among the kids was Pepperidge Farm Goldfish, which was almost always recognized. The children were given three choices of foods to match with a particular brand logo. The correct answer could be found by guessing one-third of the time but even the least recognized brand, SpaghettiOs, was correctly identified 41 percent of the time.

The researchers found that [overweight children](#) recognized 10 food items more often than the kids who were a healthy weight. These items were: M&M's candies; Cocoa Puffs cereal; Keebler cookies; Pringles potato chips; Rice Krispies cereal; Cap'n Crunch cereal; Coca-Cola; Planter's peanuts; KFC and Hamburger Helper.

The [brand](#) with the highest recall percentage among the overweight [children](#) was McDonald's.

The study appears in the July issue of *Appetite*.

More information: SOURCE: University of Michigan, news release, May 2017

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides more on [childhood obesity](#).

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Citation: Preschoolers who know snack-food brands on road to obesity? (2017, May 30)
retrieved 25 April 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-05-preschoolers-snack-food-brands-road-obesity.html>

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