

Can a Kim Kardashian lollipop help you lose weight?

May 18 2018, by James Brown



Credit: Aline Viana Prado from Pexels

Kim Kardashian West has been [heavily criticised](#) for promoting "appetite suppressant" lollipops on [her Instagram account](#). Despite the criticism, more than a million people have liked her post, showing the

extent of her influence, especially over her mainly young female audience.

Appetite is a complex biological and psychological process that isn't easily controlled with a lollipop – regardless of what it contains. It involves [areas of the brain](#) that create the sensations of hunger or fullness. [Hormones released from the gut or the body's fat stores](#) also play a role in controlling appetite.

These hunger or fullness signals can be blocked or "suppressed" to influence our eating behaviour. A number of chemicals that can act as appetite suppressants exist, including [illicit drugs](#), such as cocaine and methamphetamine, and herbal supplements, such as matcha tea and hoodia – although there is no suggestion that such chemicals are in this lolly.

These chemicals do not form the basis for medically managed weight-loss programmes but, as decreased appetite usually leads to decreased food intake, they are sometimes used by people who want to lose weight. Importantly, many of these chemicals are illegal, unregulated or ineffective and can potentially have serious side effects.

Show me the evidence

The lollies in question are produced by Flat Tummy Co, an American company. Flat Tummy Co has previously been accused of false advertising and ordered to [take down a social media post](#) advertising one of its products.

This latest product claims to include an "active ingredient" that the company calls [satiereal](#), a product derived from saffron. According to the website, satiereal is [clinically proven to reduce appetite](#); however, no evidence of this effect in the format or dose of these lollies is available,

and the study these claims are based on was very small.

Importantly, the lollies are apparently marketed at [young women](#), looking at the [pink packaging and use of young female models](#) on the company website. This approach has rightly been criticised because of the effect it can have on the well-being of young women.

Although eating disorders can affect people of all ages, they are predominantly found in younger people, especially females. About [1.25m people in the UK](#) are thought to have an eating disorder, most of whom are female.

Adverts like this, from influential people, can be damaging, as they help to sustain the persistent belief that being thin is attractive. This can cause [body dissatisfaction](#). Women and young girls are bombarded with unrealistic and often manipulated images of the physical form [which they compare themselves to](#), and [social media](#) has itself been suggested to be [a cause of eating disorders](#). The message that this advert appears to send is that it is good to have a reduced [appetite](#), and this could be dangerous for vulnerable young women.

Don't speak to Kim, speak to your GP

Increasingly, celebrities are paid to advertise health products via social media. This means that often followers of these "influencers" take health advice from unqualified celebrities instead of more appropriate sources.

Celebrities are often paid to advertise products, whether they are beauty creams or health supplements. And they may not even use the products that they promote.

While many people look to celebrities for inspiration when it comes to their look, it is not wise to follow their advice on health. If you feel you

need help managing your weight or if you have concerns about your body image, speak to your GP. Help with eating disorders is also available [online](#).

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