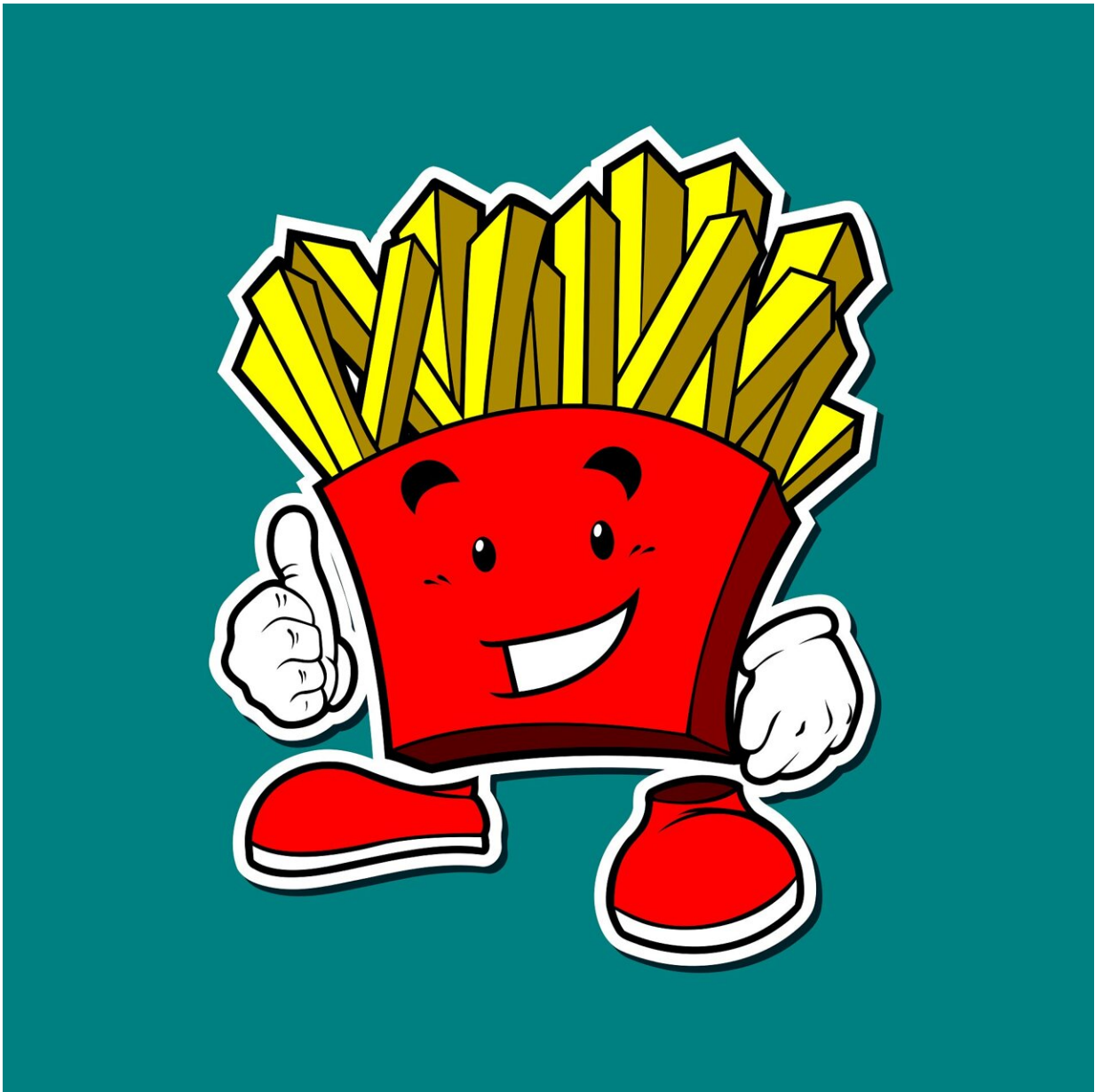


Further evidence of the impact of junk food marketing on children

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A new Liverpool-led global evidence review, commissioned by the World Health Organization (WHO), provides further evidence that food marketing is associated with the increased intake of junk food in children.

Drawing on findings of other recent research by the same team, the review concludes that the implementation of policies to restrict children's exposure to food marketing is expected to benefit [child health](#).

Advertisements to promote products high in fat, sugar and/or salt (HFSS) are prevalent across television, [digital media](#), outdoor spaces, and sport, with children and adolescents particularly vulnerable to their effects.

However, while there is widespread interest in the impact of food marketing on children, the underpinning evidence for WHO's current set of recommendations on the marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children now largely predates the internet as a major marketing platform.

With over a decade of new research to consider, WHO commissioned a new review to establish the current relationship between food marketing and eating behaviors and health in children across different marketing platforms. The findings will help inform an updated set of guidelines.

Led by Professor Emma Boyland, researchers from the University of Liverpool and the University of Stirling conducted a review ninety-six studies (64 randomized controlled trials, 32 non-randomized studies).

Their research, published in *JAMA Pediatrics*, found that food marketing was associated with significant increases in [food intake](#), choice, preference, and purchase requests. However, there was no clear evidence of relationships with purchasing, and little evidence on dental health or body weight outcomes.

Emma Boyland, Professor in Food Marketing and Child Health at the University of Liverpool, said: "This review provides a robust new synthesis of evidence showing that [food marketing](#) is associated with increased intake, choice, preference, and purchase requests in children and adolescents. Furthermore, it reinforces the message that more effective restrictions around [food advertising](#) are needed to help restrict children's exposure to unhealthy products and ensure the choices they do make are beneficial to their health.

"Every food-related decision is influenced by a myriad of factors beyond our control—the availability, accessibility, affordability, marketing and promotion of processed items all seeking to grab our attention and be the one we purchase to the detriment of competitor brands' bottom lines. Take away the advertising and manipulation, and we can begin to tip the balance in favor of being able to make our own minds up about what we eat and drink."

More information: Emma Boyland et al, Association of Food and Nonalcoholic Beverage Marketing With Children and Adolescents' Eating Behaviors and Health, *JAMA Pediatrics* (2022). [DOI: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2022.1037](#)

Emma Boyland et al, Systematic review of the effect of policies to restrict the marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to which children are exposed, *Obesity Reviews* (2022). [DOI: 10.1111/obr.13447](#)

Provided by University of Liverpool

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