

Report: Canada should ban all unhealthy food marketing that may be seen by children

March 20 2024



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Canada should ban the marketing of unhealthy foods wherever children may be exposed, whether on TV, social media, or billboards. This is one of the main conclusions of a Canada-wide [study](#) involving more than fifty food and nutrition experts made public today by a team from Université Laval's Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences.

The study, conducted as part of a research program by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, also recommends better funding for school food programs, limits on salt, sugar, and saturated fats in restaurants and packaged foods, and a tax on sugary drinks, among other measures.

Led by Professor Lana Vanderlee, Canada Research Chair in Healthy Food Policy, the main objective of the Food-EPI Canada 2023 survey was to assess Canada's progress in developing public policies aimed at creating a healthy food environment.

The authors note that Canada has taken concrete action in a number of areas in recent years: prohibiting partially hydrogenated oils in foods, updating food labeling regulations on packaged products, and revising Canada's food guide based on recent scientific evidence, among others.

But despite the good news, the average Canadian is not consuming a [healthy diet](#): 78% of those ages 12 and over don't eat a minimum of five servings of fruit and vegetables daily, 58% of the population consumes more sodium than recommended, and 46% of energy intake among Canadians comes from ultra-processed foods.

"The progress made in recent years should not blind us to the major work that remains to ensure a healthy food environment for the entire population, and particularly children," say Professor Vanderlee, who is also a researcher at Université Laval's Centre NUTRISS.

"Even in a province like Quebec, where targeting children in food marketing campaigns is prohibited, [young people](#) are exposed to an enormous amount of unhealthy food marketing that negatively influences their attitudes, preferences, and eating habits."

"Yet a growing number of studies confirm that limiting children's exposure to unhealthy food marketing can have a significant positive impact on the quality of their diets. It's time for Canada to follow the example of countries like the UK and Mexico, who are proposing novel policies to address this issue."

"Bold, comprehensive, and concerted [political action](#) will be required if we are to create healthy food environments for all and make real progress in the fight against diet-related diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and many types of cancer," concludes Vanderlee.

More information: Report: [informascanada.com/fileadmin/F ...
EDERAL-FINAL-Web.pdf](https://informascanada.com/fileadmin/F...EDERAL-FINAL-Web.pdf)

Provided by Laval University

Citation: Report: Canada should ban all unhealthy food marketing that may be seen by children (2024, March 20) retrieved 9 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-03-canada-unhealthy-food-children.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--