



Health organizations tell food industry: pick on someone your own age New coalition urges ban on all food and beverage marketing to children and youth

Toronto – Under embargo until February 24, 2016 at 10:00 am ET A national coalition advocating for restrictions on food and beverage marketing to children and youth is launching today at the Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada (CDPAC) annual conference. Co-led by the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Childhood Obesity Foundation, the Stop Marketing to Kids Coalition says the time has come to protect children and to support parents to make healthy decisions for their families.

"Marketing works, plain and simple. This is why food and beverage companies do it and this is why it has to stop where our children's health is concerned," says David Sculthorpe, CEO, Heart and Stroke Foundation. "Our children are not their business."

In Canada, as much as 90 per cent of the food marketed to children and youth on TV is unhealthy. Kids are targeted through many channels and in different venues. This includes TV and movies, and in schools, rec centres, stores, and restaurants, and across the Internet. Tactics include logo placement and coupon giveaways, sponsorships, celebrity endorsements, branded videogames, product placement, and toy giveaways in restaurants.

"Parents work extremely hard to teach their children healthy habits as they know the habits they form at an early age follow them through their lives. We need to help parents as they strive to instill healthy preferences in their children," says Dr Tom Warshawski, Chair, Childhood Obesity Foundation. "To do this we need to protect our children and youth from harmful industry marketing tactics."

The coalition has developed the *Ottawa Principles*, which outline the policy recommendation of restricting commercial marketing of all food and beverages to children and youth 16 and under, with marketing being defined as any means of advertising or promoting products or services. The restrictions would not apply to non-commercial marketing for valid public health education or public awareness campaigns. The *Ottawa Principles* also include a set of definitions, scope, and principles to guide policy development.

"Our children and youth deserve to be protected and respected," says children's entertainer Raffi Cavoukian, "I am proud to endorse the principles of the Stop Marketing to Kids Coalition, and I encourage the government to put restrictions in place as soon as possible."

Unhealthy eating choices are closely linked with childhood overweight and obesity, which can result in the premature onset of heart disease and stroke risk factors, such as high blood pressure.

Regulations limiting marketing to children have been effective and cost efficient in influencing their food choices. Furthermore, restricting TV food advertising to children would be one of the most cost-effective population-based interventions available to governments today.

At the same time, industry measures to self-regulate have not worked. Research shows that the nutritional quality of food advertised to children hasn't improved and the amount of advertising has actually increased since industry adopted voluntary measures.

As well as the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Childhood Obesity Foundation, the coalition includes eight Canadian health and civil society organizations as partners, and dozens of other groups and key individuals have endorsed the *Ottawa Principles*.

More information about the coalition including the *Ottawa Principles*, and a mechanism for concerned Canadians to send their member of parliament a letter supporting restrictions on food and beverage marketing to kids, is available at the coalition website at www.stopmarketingtokids.ca

Coalition supporting partners

- Childhood Obesity Foundation (founding member)
- Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada (founding member)
- BC Healthy Living Alliance
- Canadian Cancer Society
- Canadian Diabetes Association
- Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada
- Dietitians of Canada
- Food Secure Canada
- Toronto Public Health
- Quebec Coalition on Weight related problems

The following groups and individuals have endorsed the *Ottawa Principles*

- Alberta Policy Coalition for Chronic Disease Prevention
- Alberta Food Matters
- Association of Local Public Health Agencies
- BC Healthy Living Alliance
- Canadian Association of Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation
- Canadian Cancer Society
- Canadian Council of Cardiovascular Nurses
- Canadian Diabetes Association
- Canadian Medical Association
- Canadian Nurses Association
- Canadian Pediatric Society
- Capsana
- The Centre for Child Honouring
- Childhood Obesity Foundation
- Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada
- College of Family Physicians Canada
- Dietitians of Canada
- First Call BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition
- Food Secure Canada
- Health Officers Council of BC
- Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada
- Institut De Cardiologie de Montréal
- Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health
- Quebec Coalition on Weight related problems
- Toronto Public Health
- Troubadour Productions

Individuals

- Dr Charlene Elliott, researcher in food marketing, policy and children's health
- Dr Kapil Khatter, family physician with an interest in healthy food environments
- Dr Kim Raine, public health nutrition expert and professor
- Dr Monique Potvin-Kent, researcher and expert on food and beverage marketing directed at children
- Dr Norm Campbell, hypertension expert and professor
- Raffi Cavoukian, children's entertainer
- Dr Yoni Freedhoff, obesity expert and long-time public health advocate

Stats

- Only 45 per cent of youth ages 12 to 19 eat at least five servings (the minimum recommended) of fruit and vegetables daily.
- 31.5 per cent of Canadian children and youth ages 5 to 17 are overweight or obese.
- Only 7 per cent of Canadian children and youth get the recommended amount of physical activity.
- A report released by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in August 2015 suggests obesity levels for Canadian (and US) children have levelled off, but they are still at the highest level ever.

About the Heart and Stroke Foundation

The Heart and Stroke Foundation's mission is to prevent disease, save lives and promote recovery. A volunteer-based health charity, we strive to tangibly improve the health of every Canadian family, every day. Healthy lives free of heart disease and stroke. Together we will make it happen. heartandstroke.ca

About the Childhood Obesity Foundation

The mission of the Childhood Obesity Foundation is to lead a societal shift toward healthy eating and active lifestyles to promote childhood healthy weights and the resulting physical and emotional impacts. The vision of the Childhood Obesity Foundation is children and youth of Canada free of chronic disease that ensue from unhealthy weights. childhoodobesityfoundation.ca

For more information, please contact:

Stephanie Lawrence
Heart and Stroke Foundation
slawrence@hsf.ca
613-691-4022