

**Food advertising on Sydney commercial television:  
The extent and nature of children's exposure  
2006-2007**

**Summary of findings**

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## BACKGROUND

This report is a summary of findings from an analysis of children's exposure to television food advertising on Sydney commercial television in May 2007. The findings are presented in comparison to findings from an identical study conducted in May 2006.<sup>1</sup>

357 hours of broadcasting on 3 channels (7, 9 and 10) was recorded during the hours 06:00-23:00, over a period of 7 consecutive days from Sunday May 13<sup>th</sup> - Saturday May 19<sup>th</sup> 2007. Data was recorded using an established television monitoring infrastructure system at the School of Public Health, University of Sydney.

A total of 10,210 advertisements were recorded and coded for analysis. Coding was conducted according to criteria used in the 2006 study<sup>1</sup> in order to allow comparison between the two studies.

## FINDINGS

### **Overall, food advertising rates decreased slightly between 2006 and 2007**

1. The proportion of all advertising that was for food and/or beverages reduced slightly from 26.2% in 2006 to 24.9% in 2007.

### **Overall, junk food advertising rates decreased slightly between 2006 and 2007**

2. The proportion of all food advertising that was for high fat/high sugar (HF/HS) products reduced slightly from 43% in 2006 to 38.3% in 2007.

### **Food advertising rates during designated children's viewing hours\* were unchanged and were similar to overall rates of food advertising**

3. The proportion of advertising broadcast during designated children's viewing hours that was for food and/or beverage products was similar in 2007 (24.3%) to in 2006 (25.5%). These rates were similar to rates of food advertising overall (24.9% in 2007 and 26.2% in 2006).
4. In 2007, food advertisements were broadcast at an average rate of 6.8 advertisements per hour during designated children's viewing hours, compared to 7.4 per hour outside of these times.

These rates were similar to in 2006, when an average rate of 7.2 food advertisements per hour were broadcast during designated children's viewing hours, compared to 7.4 per hour outside of these times.

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\* As deemed by the current Children's Television Standards: M-F 07:00-08:00 and 16:00-20:30; S-S 07:00-20:30



### **Junk food advertisements continue to be broadcast at higher rates during designated children's viewing hours than at other times**

5. In 2007, 47.7% of food advertising during designated children's viewing hours was for high fat/high sugar products (compared to 30.9% outside of these times).

This proportion was similar to in 2006, when 48.6% of food advertising broadcast during designated children's viewing hours was for high fat/high sugar products (compared to 39% outside of these times).

6. In 2007, advertisements for high fat/high sugar foods were broadcast at an average rate of 3.3 advertisements per hour during designated children's viewing hours, (compared to 2.3 per hour outside of these times).

These rates were similar to in 2006, when an average of 3.5 advertisements for high fat/high sugar foods were broadcast per hour during designated children's viewing hours (compared to 2.9 per hour outside of these times).

### **Junk food advertising peaks during programs most viewed by children<sup>2</sup>, and has increased during these times since 2006**

7. 43.3 % of all advertisements broadcast during the highest rating (most popular) programs with children 5-12yrs old were for food products (at a rate of 14.7 per hour), compared with 24.6% during lower rating programs.
8. 72.5% of food advertisements broadcast during the highest rating programs with 5-12 yr olds were for high fat/high sugar products. This compares to 30% of food advertising during the highest rating programs with adults over 18yrs. (See Figure 1)
9. The proportion of food advertisements for high fat/high sugar products broadcast during the most popular programs with children 5-12 yrs old increased from 66% to 72% from 2006 to 2007. (See Table 1)

**In 2007, 10.6 advertisements for high fat/high sugar foods were broadcast per hour during programs most viewed by 5-12 year olds.**



## Frequently advertised food categories

10. In 2007, the most frequently advertised food groups were:

Miscellaneous foods<sup>†</sup> (29%)  
Fast food restaurants (14.5%)  
Core foods combined<sup>‡</sup> (12.8%)  
Dairy Products (9.6%)  
Confectionary (8.2%)

11. Fast food restaurants were advertised twice as often during designated children's viewing hours than during other times (17% of all food advertisements compared to 8.2%).

12. Fast food restaurants were the most frequently advertised food group during popular children's programs:

**31.1% of all food advertisements during programs most popular with 5-12 yr olds were for fast food restaurants, more than twice the proportion of these advertisements during lower rating programs.**

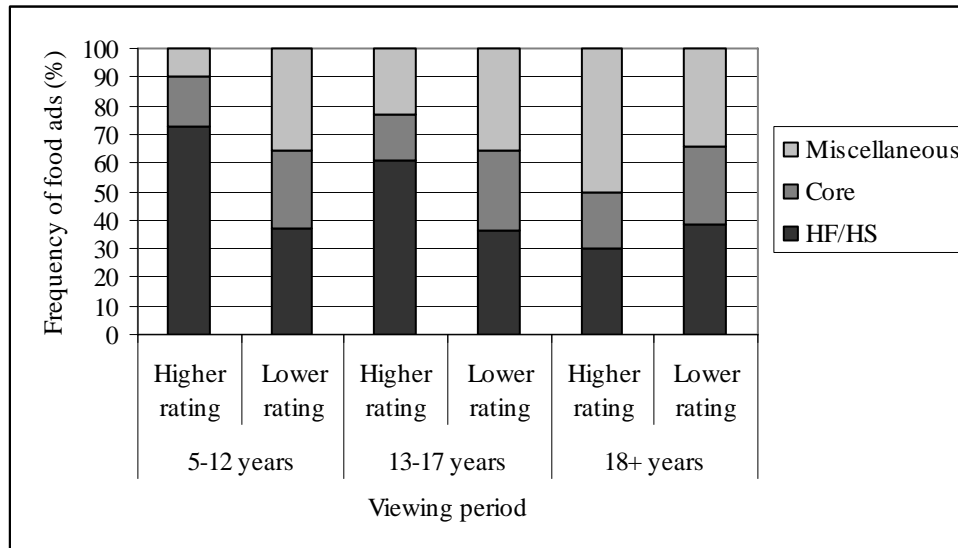
13. The proportion of advertisements for core foods during designated children's viewing hours decreased from 34.2% of all food advertisements in 2006 to 24.3% in 2007. (See Figure 2)

<sup>†</sup> Tea, coffee, alcohol, supermarkets, local restaurants, supplements, yeast extracts (e.g. vegemite), lozenges

<sup>‡</sup> Ready-made meals, soups, sandwiches etc (e.g. Lite 'n' Easy, Subway)



**Figure 1: Proportion of food advertisements by major food group<sup>§</sup> broadcast during popular programs in 2007.**



**Table 1: Proportion of all advertisements broadcast for food products and high fat/high sugar food products during popular programs in 2006 and 2007.**

Demographic Group	During top rated programs for age group (2007)		During top rated programs for age group (2006)	
	Proportion of all ads for food (%)	Proportion of food ads for HF/HS products (%)	Proportion of all ads for food (%)	Proportion of food ads for HF/HS products (%)
5-12 yrs	43.3	72.5	41.0	65.9
13-17 yrs	29.8	61.0	36.5	66.8
18+ yrs	19.1	30.0	25.0	41.9

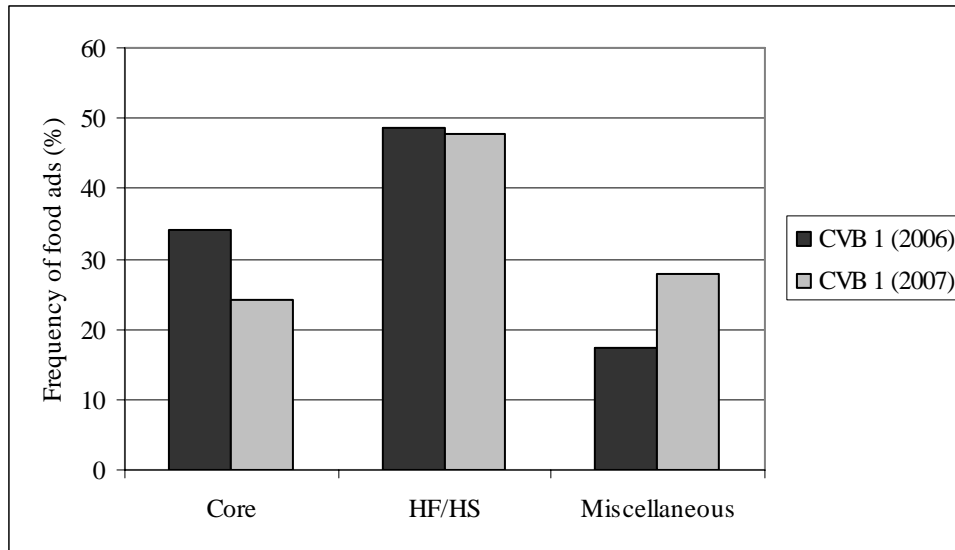
<sup>§</sup> **Miscellaneous:** Tea, coffee, alcohol, supermarkets, local restaurants, supplements, yeast extracts (e.g. vegemite), lozenges

**Core foods:** Dairy, fruit and vegetables, meat/fish/poultry, breads and cereals, baby foods, core foods combined (e.g. soups, sandwiches, ready-made meals)

**HF/HS:** High fat/high sugar products (e.g. confectionary, fast food, sugary breakfast cereals and drinks, cakes/biscuits)



**Figure 2: The proportion of food advertisements for different food groups advertised during children's viewing hours in 2006 and 2007.**



## REFERENCES

1. Kelly B, Smith B, King L, Bauman A. Television food advertising to children: the extent and nature of exposure. *Public Health Nutrition* 2007(Published online by Cambridge University Press March 5, 2007):1-7.
2. OzTAM. Audience viewing data for Sydney for the period 13/05/2007 - 19/05/2007 (5-12yr old demographic group). Purchased from Australian Television Audience Measurement (OzTAM) by NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity June 2007. 2007.

