

Tackling Junk Food Promotion to Children

Eating too much junk food can be extremely harmful to a child's development. It can cause chronic health conditions, addiction, difficulty focusing and depression.¹ Advertising or promotion of tobacco and alcohol is already restricted because of their negative health impacts. It is past time we take a similar approach to safeguarding children's health and end the promotion of junk food.

Junk Food near Checkouts

Supermarkets and other retailers often place high sugar or high fat food, and sugary drinks, near checkouts to increase impulse sales. As a result, more Australian adolescents are eating confectionary, and this in turn is linked to lower fruit and vegetable intake.²

Studies have found that when confectionary items are not placed near checkouts, people buy less of them.^{3,4}

England has banned confectionary near checkouts since 2022,⁵ with the move largely supported by consumers and the food industry.⁶ The cities of Perris and Berkeley in California have also banned the sale of confectionary at checkouts over the last four years.⁷

We will fight to ban the placement of unhealthy food and drinks near checkouts in large retailers (big supermarkets and pharmacies).

Advertising Junk Food to Kids

The average Australian child will watch more than 800 junk food ads a year.^{8,9}

Young people are particularly susceptible to food advertising, as their brains are not developed to resist the allure of marketing. As a result, food advertising aimed at children leads to an even higher consumption of snack foods, high-sugar drinks, and fast food.¹⁰

Banning unhealthy food and drink ads during typical viewing hours for children is supported by the majority of Australians,¹¹ six leading chronic disease organisations,¹² the Australian Medical Association,¹³ and many more health organisations.¹⁴

We will fight for a ban on television ads for unhealthy food and drinks during standard viewing hours for children.

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¹ Thomas, L, [How Fast Food Affects Children's Health](#), News Medical Life Sciences, 2024.

² Chen, YJM, Haynes, A, Scully, M, Gascoyne, C, McAleese, A, Dixon, H, Morley, B, Wakefield, M, [Food purchasing practices in various retail settings and dietary intake: A cross-sectional survey of Australian adolescents](#), Health Promotion Journal of Australia, 34(4), 2023.

³ Vogel, C, Crozier, S, Penn-Newman, D, Ball, K, Moon, G, Lord, J, Cooper, C, Baird, J, [Altering product placement to create a healthier layout in supermarkets: Outcomes on store sales, customer purchasing, and diet in a prospective matched controlled cluster study](#), PLOS Medicine, 18(9), 2021.

⁴ Fildes, A, Lally, P, Morris, MA, Dalton, A, Croker, H, [Impact on purchasing behaviour of implementing 'junk free checkouts': A pre-post study](#), Nutrition Bulletin, 2022.

⁵ Taylor, L, [Unhealthy snacks to be banned from checkouts at supermarkets in England](#), The Guardian, 2020.

⁶ Quadir, S, [British public back ban on selling junk foods at checkouts, study shows](#), City University of London, 2023.

⁷ Zulkosky, C, [Another City Bans Junk Food at Supermarket Checkout](#), The Food Institute, 2023.

⁸ Careforkids.com.au, [Screen time: What are Australian children watching?](#), n.d.

⁹ Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance, [Leading Australian chronic disease organisations welcome proposal to tackle unhealthy food marketing](#), 2023.

¹⁰ Harris, JL, [Protecting Young People From Junk Food Advertising: Implications of Psychological Research for First Amendment Law](#), American Journal of Public Health, 102(2), 2012.

¹¹ NewsGP, ['We need to act': Junk food advertising bill tabled](#), 2023.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ AMA, [Junk food advertising regulation on the table to protect kids](#), 2023.

¹⁴ Medical Forum, [Junk food advertising ban](#), 2023.