



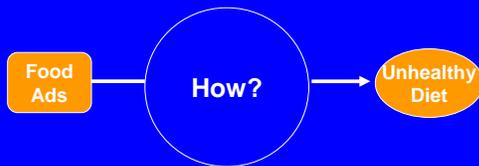
Children and food advertising effects: When are they old enough to resist?

Jennifer L. Harris
October 22, 2008

“Food marketing works” (IOM, 2006)

- Brand recall
- Brand preferences
- Requests to parents

But how does it work?



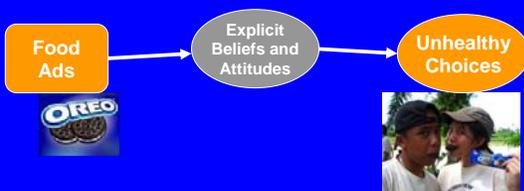
Implications for effective solutions and public policy

Outline of discussion

- Psychology of advertising effects
 - Intended effects
 - “Side effects”
- Developmental differences
- Potential solutions

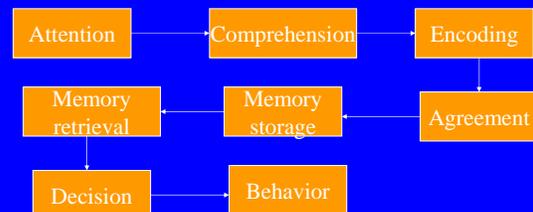
Food advertising effects

Most existing research is based on an information processing model



Information processing

Serial approach to persuasion (McGuire, 1976)



Current advertising theory

Effects occur “Under-the-radar”

- Classical conditioning (positive affect)
- Mere exposure (Zajonc et al.)
- Brand representations (Keller, 2003)
 - Core motivations
 - Popular events, characters, celebrities
 - Purchase and consumption occasions

Brand representations

Attitudes: “object-evaluation associations in memory” (Fazio, 1986)



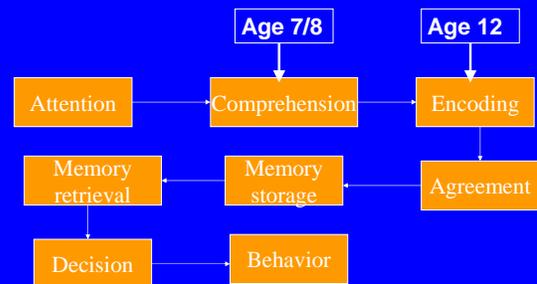
Current advertising theory

Priming effects: Subtle cues in the environment (primes)

→ Automatically affect behavior, outside of conscious awareness

**Food advertising =
Real-world primes**

When do children understand?



Sources: John, 1999; Kunkel et al., 2004

Are adolescents more susceptible?

According to alcohol and tobacco literature, Adolescents are:

- Less able to inhibit impulsive behavior and wait for longer-term rewards
- More susceptible to peer influence and image advertising
- More vulnerable to addiction

Source: Pechmann, Levine, Loughlin & Leslie (2005)

Potential solutions

How to defend against “under-the-radar” advertising effects?

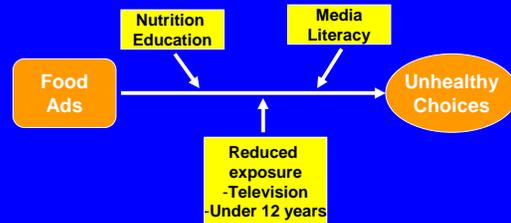
- It's very difficult
- Automatic acceptance (Gilbert, 1993)
- Mindless processing (Chanowitz & Langer, 1981)

Teaching advertising defenses

Nonconscious mental contamination
(Wilson & Brekke, 1994)

- Awareness
- Understanding
- Motivation
- Ability

Proposed solutions



What about?

- Adolescents and adults
- Other forms of advertising
 - Product placements
 - Sponsorships, co-branding, licensing
 - Internet

What is the policy question?

At what age can children defend against advertising effects?

OR

At what age are we no longer obligated to protect youth from unhealthy advertising influence?

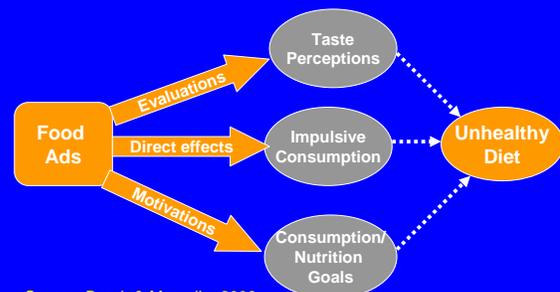
Thank you!



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Priming obesity

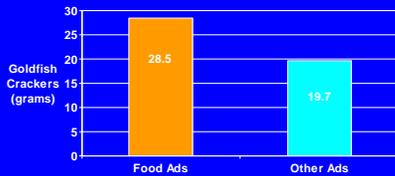


Source: Bargh & Morsella, 2008

Children and food ads

Increased amount consumed while watching by 45%

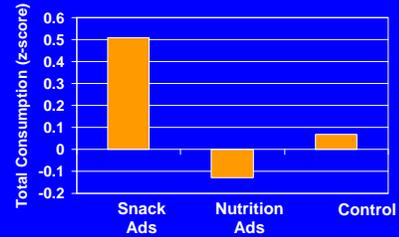
- 93 kcal in 30 minutes



Harris, Bargh & Brownell, in press

Adults and food ads

Increased snack food consumed after watching – snack ads only



Taste expectancies



Nutrition Info:

Calories: 100	Dietary Fiber: 6 g
Total Fat: 1.5 g	Sugar: 9 g
Sodium: 140 mg	Protein: 3 g

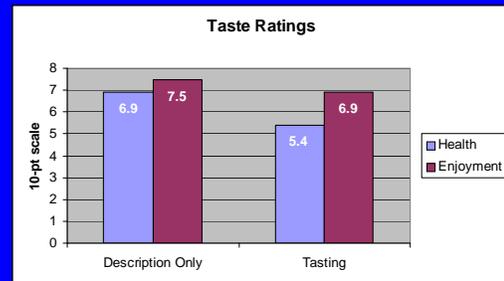
Healthy Description

These chocolaty muffins not only taste good, but they're **good for you** too! Full of **wholesome** benefits, each wonderful muffin is made with **all-natural** ingredients and **no artificial** preservatives, flavors or colors. And every bit is filled with dark chocolate chips. Dark chocolate is a natural **anti-oxidant**, making them an even healthier choice. To top it all...

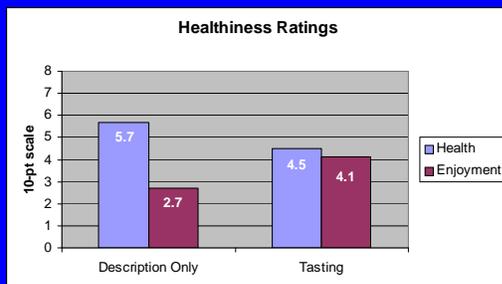
Hedonic Description

From the very first mouthful, you will **love** these chocolaty muffins. You are sure to **enjoy** the burst of intense chocolate flavor and **wonderful** chewy texture. These muffins are full of **delectable** chocolate chips that **melt in your mouth** in each bite. So sweet, delicious and **satisfying**. After only a taste you will find that they are **scrumptious!** The chewy texture...

Expectancies affected taste



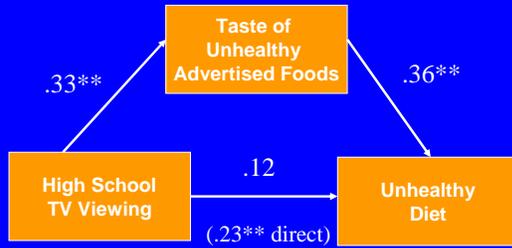
But not perceived healthiness



TV viewing and diet



TV viewing and diet



Food advertising to children

- Rewards unhealthy behaviors
 - Snacking
 - Anywhere, any time
 - Fun, happiness, “cool”



Sources: Folta et al., 2006; Harrison & Marske, 2005; Reece, Rifon, & Rodriguez, 1999