

# Making America Organic...One Home At a Time!



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December 12-14, 2005

## TV Ads Strongly Influence Kids' Diets

SpongeBob SquarePants, Shrek and other characters kids love should promote only healthy food, a panel of scientists recommended.

In a report released Tuesday, the Institute of Medicine said television advertising strongly influences what children under 12 eat.

The report said the food industry should spend its marketing dollars on nutritious food and drinks. That means SpongeBob, the popular animated star of the Nickelodeon cable TV network, and other characters should endorse only good-for-you food, the panel concluded.

"The foods advertised are predominantly high in calories and low in nutrition -- the sort of diet that puts children's long-term health at risk," said J. Michael McGinnis, a senior scholar at the institute and chairman of the report committee.

The report said evidence is limited on whether TV advertising leads to obesity in children. A study hasn't been done that would demonstrate a direct cause and effect.

Still, the panel found the evidence compelling enough to call for a concerted effort to change the nature of foods being marketed to children, said panel member Ellen A. Wartella, psychology professor at the University of California, Riverside.

The growth in new food products targeted to kids has been huge, from 52 introduced in 1994 to nearly 500 introduced last year, the report said.

"Overwhelmingly, those foods are high-calorie, low-nutrient foods, not the kind of foods that are recommended for children to eat," Wartella said.

The findings were no surprise to Iowa Sen. Tom Harkin, who requested the report.

"We like to think that SpongeBob SquarePants and Shrek and the pretty little princesses are likable, kid-friendly characters, but they're being used to manipulate vulnerable children to make unhealthy choices," said Harkin, the senior Democrat on the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee.



"The industry must stop pushing junk food on our kids," Harkin said.

Nickelodeon in October announced a campaign aimed at persuading kids to eat healthy foods and to get up off the couch and move. The campaign features former President Clinton, SpongeBob SquarePants and Dora the Explorer.

Among children and adolescents from ages 6 through 19, obesity rates have tripled over the past 40 years. Obesity increases the risks of type 2 diabetes and many other diseases and health conditions.

In adults, a person who is obese has a Body Mass Index, or BMI, of 30 or more. Children are defined as obese according to a formula placing their BMI at or above the 95th percentile on government charts specifying age and gender. BMI shows body weight adjusted for height.

An advertising industry spokesman called the findings frustrating, because many companies have been reformulating products to make them healthier or reporting calorie and fat content on menu boards or packaging.

"There's a long way to go, but the industry is responding, and it doesn't seem like there's any recognition of that in this report," said Wally Snyder, president and CEO of the American Advertising Federation.

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### Harvest Blend Regular

- Bacon Avocado
- Carrots
- Celery
- Green Onions
- White Mushrooms
- Cucumbers
- Spinach
- Romaine Lettuce
- Braeburn Apples
- Navel Oranges
- Bananas
- Kiwi
- Anjou Pears

See the web site for details on our other options. Produce bag contents are subject to change based on availability.

### Account Updates



We've gotten a lot of new customers lately, so this is a reminder that whenever possible, all changes to your account should be made through the Member Area of the web site.

Due to the amount of email we get, we cannot promise that requests sent to us in email will be seen in time for your next delivery.

If you have any questions about your account, we'd be glad to help. But please remember to use the web site whenever possible.

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"Lack of physical activity is a major problem here on childhood obesity. And, in fact, the industry is heavily involved in special programs to educate parents and children about the need for good nutrition and physical activity," Snyder said.

The panel assessed hundreds of studies, then reviewed evidence from 123 of them and completed the most comprehensive review to date on the scientific evidence of how food marketing affects kids' diets.

While the research focused on TV advertising, the panel noted advertising is one facet of a marketing environment vastly different from the 1970s. It now includes Internet games, cartoon character endorsements, coupons and store events, product placement in supermarkets and organized word-of-mouth campaigns.

Advertising accounts for about one-quarter of what companies spend on marketing, the report said.

Besides telling food and beverage companies to promote healthier food, the panel urged the industry to create standards that enforce healthy diets for kids. The panel also encouraged the media and entertainment industry, the government and school authorities to campaign for healthy diets for kids.

The panel said the government should use tax breaks and other incentives to encourage the shift away from junk food and said if it doesn't happen, Congress should mandate it.

An arm of the National Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Medicine is congressionally chartered to advise the government on medical issues.

## Recipes

### Beef and Scallions

- 1 1/2 tbsp dry sherry
- 3 tbsp oyster sauce
- 1/2 tsp white sugar
- 2 tsp cornstarch
- 2 tbsp peanut oil
- 1 lb flank steak, thinly sliced
- 1 bunch green onions, cut into 1/2-inch pieces

In a small bowl, mix the sherry, oyster sauce, sugar, and cornstarch. Heat the oil in a skillet, and cook the flank steak about 3 minutes. Stir in sherry sauce mixture. Add the green onions, and continue cooking 10 minutes, or until the flank steak is evenly brown and the green onions are tender.

### Green Onion Pancakes

- 1 bunch green onions, cut into 7-inch pieces
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup ice cold water
- 3 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed and finely chopped
- 1 hot red korean pepper, or 1/4 bell pepper, seeded, deribbed, and finely diced
- pinch of hot red pepper flakes
- salt and pepper, to taste

Wash the green onions and pat dry with a towel. Reserve four pieces for garnish. To make the batter, in a chilled bowl, combine the flour and ice water and lightly mix with a wooden spoon. Season with the salt and pepper.

In a large cast-iron or non stick skillet, heat one tablespoon of vegetable oil over medium-high heat until it begins to smoke. Working quickly, add half of the green onions to the skillet and, using a spatula, form them into a rectangular shape, about 7 inches square. Add half of the pepper,

red pepper and red pepper flakes. Quickly pour half of the batter over the green onions, spreading the mixture evenly between them and maintaining the rectangular shape as much as possible.

With the spatula, lightly flatten the green onions. Cook for 90 seconds, until the pancake edges turn golden brown and crusty. Shake the pan to loosen the pancake. Flip it over and add 1/2 tablespoon of vegetable oil to the skillet.

Using the spatula, flatten and shape the pancake, making it as thin as possible; cook for 2 minutes. Flip again and cook for 1 minute, to restore crispiness. Slide the finished pancake onto a bamboo tray. Repeat with the remaining ingredients. Transfer both pancakes to a cutting board and cut into bite-size pieces.

To serve, arrange the pancakes on 4 individual plates. Garnish each piece with 1 piece of the reserved green onion. Serve hot as an appetizer or side dish with Vinegar Soy Sauce or Allspice Sauce, or both, in bowls as dipping sauces.

### Mushroom and Wild Rice Soup

- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp butter
- 1/3 cup wild rice
- 6 to 7 cups vegetable stock
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 12 oz. white button mushrooms
- 1 carrot, peeled and cut into matchstick-sized strips
- salt and freshly-ground black pepper, to taste

Sauté the onion and wild rice for two minutes in the butter in a medium-sized saucepan. Stir in the vegetable stock. Cover and simmer 25 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add chopped garlic, cover again, and simmer another 15 minutes, until the rice is almost tender. Add the mushrooms and simmer, covered, for another 10 minutes. (You can make the soup up to this point a day ahead and refrigerate.)

Just before serving, stir the carrot strips into the soup and simmer for two minutes until the carrots are crisp and tender. Season with salt and pepper.

