

Frequently Asked Questions



PROTECT KIDS FROM
JUNK FOOD MARKETING

Parents Have Asked:

01

What changes will protect children from junk food marketing?

Children should be free to learn and play without being targeted by junk food marketing. Supporting this law will create ad-safe spaces around schools, playgrounds, sports grounds and around times children watch TV or digital videos.

02

What is an ad-safe space?

Think of it as a bubble about 500 metres around each school. These spaces will be free of harmful advertisements such as junk food products and allow children to be children, not customers.

03

Does advertising really affect children?

Research shows when children see advertisements over and over again it changes how they think about kai and their health over the long term. Hundreds of millions are spent on advertising every year because it works and children become lifelong customers.

04

How will this benefit our community?

The big picture benefit of creating ad-safe spaces is creating healthier communities. These are communities where parents and caregivers are empowered to make their whānau food choices without advertising pressure.

Over time these changes will lead to healthier lives through better eating habits. In the short term, it reduces the 'pester power' of kids triggered by advertising.

05

How big is this problem really?

A New Zealand study placed cameras on children to discover how much advertising children see every day. Children saw one brand every minute, even when they were on school grounds. Schools in neighbourhoods with less money were shown to have twice as many advertisements on display near school grounds than neighbourhoods where families earn more.

Advertisers are choosing to saturate some neighbourhoods over others in a bid to maximise profits.

06

How do companies currently advertise to children?

At the moment big junk food companies can put ads around schools and other places children learn or play.

Other techniques include using toy giveaways, like Happy Meals or Kinder Surprise eggs, to kickstart 'pester power' and make junk food look fun.

It can also be the use of cartoons or jingles children enjoy. Mostly, the problem is that there is so much junk food advertising everywhere children look. From playgrounds to swimming pools to libraries to even their own bedrooms with sponsored products won through sport.

07

Are other countries doing this?

New Zealand has been slow to act while other countries leap forward. The United Kingdom, Portugal, Chile, Canada and Thailand are introducing new laws that protect their people from unhealthy food ads.

08

Why do you call these foods unhealthy or 'junk food'?

We use the phrase junk food to describe foods that are usually 'ultra-processed', typically loaded with sugar, salt, saturated fats and other things designed to make people want to buy and eat lots and lots of them.

They are often, but not always 'fast foods' available as takeaways. In the long run and overall, Kiwi kids are eating too much of this kind of food too often and not enough fresh fruit, vegetables, milk, eggs and other good kai to grow up as strong and healthy as possible.

There are lots of reasons for this – like the high cost of healthier food. Protecting kids from junk food marketing is just one step, but a very important one, to give our kids a healthy future that should be their birthright.

09

How can I help or get involved?

We welcome your support and together we know we can be the change we want to see.

We are asking people write to their members of parliament and councillors to show they support the new law. Every little bit of support makes a big difference.

Head to junkfoodfree.org for more information.

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Parents and caregivers are the guides for whānau nutrition, not advertising or junk food companies. With your support, we can introduce the first New Zealand law to create advertising free spaces around children's schools, playgrounds, sports grounds and digital devices. Let's put families back in charge of mealtimes in their homes and communities.

New Zealand has no laws saying what foods and drinks can be advertised to children or what tactics advertisers can use to target children. As a result, Kiwi kids now see one piece of advertising every minute. The environments they learn and play are wallpapered with more and more advertisements for unhealthy kai. This makes it harder for parents to direct what food and drinks children see and ask for day to day.

Children should have the right to be free of unhealthy food and drink ads by making a new law that:

1. Creates ad-safe spaces around areas children learn and play
2. Reduces junk food advertising from the internet and digital spaces
3. Shields children from being targeted by advertising tactics such as using toys or cartoons to make unhealthy food look fun
4. Frees up television from unhealthy food advertisements during times kids are awake

Advertising material for unhealthy food and drinks is all around our schools. These ongoing message kids see all the time to eat junk food makes it seem normal to eat unhealthy kai all the time - eating habits that last long into adulthood.

We want to even the playing field and give our children the right to learn and play free from advertising influence. We want to give parents back the power to decide which companies get to influence and target their children in their day to day lives, and communities the power to enforce healthy zones around their kids.

This new law will help create healthier communities through healthier children.

Challenge yourself in your neighbourhood. Next time you walk or drive your child to school try looking for the number of advertisements for junk food items you pass along the way. Look at billboards, bus shelters and corner dairies.

Check out junkfoodfree.org for more resources.

Lend your voice to junkfoodfree.org and help us make this change for all tamariki.