



## Food and beverage marketing in primary and secondary schools in Canada

In Canada, rates of overweight and obesity have greatly increased, and today one third of children and adolescents between 5 and 17 years have excess weight or obesity. In parallel to this trend, “the frequency of food and beverage marketing directed at children and youth has also increased.” However, the scope of marketing platforms has expanded from traditional television channels to the use of the Internet and smartphones. Several studies have shown that food marketing has a negative influence on the school nutrition environment. At the national level in Canada, “food marketing to children is self-regulated by the food and beverage industry” through the voluntary Canadian Children’s Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CAI), implemented in 2007. Based on the existing evidence about the impact of food marketing on nutrition, the purpose of this study was “to describe the type of food marketing occurring in a diverse sample of schools in Canada and to examine differences in the frequency of various food marketing activities by school type, province, and socio-economic status of the student body.”

The final sample for this study included 108 primary schools and 46 secondary schools. Overall, 84% of Principals reported at least one type of food marketing in their school. Additionally, “advertisements provided by, promoting, or representing a food or beverage company/brand or industry association on school property were reported by 26% of Principals.” A number of marketing strategies were also considered, including participation in reward or incentive programmes as well as exclusive contracts with food companies. Most principals reported the presence of one or more types of food marketing within their schools. Based on the present results, it seems that the CIA is ineffective at protecting children and adolescents from marketing. Consequently, “comprehensive restrictions should be mandated by government in both primary and secondary schools to protect the health of children and youth.”

Reference: Potvin Kent M, Velazquez CE, Pauzé E, Cheng-Boivin O, Berfeld N. Food and beverage marketing in primary and secondary schools in Canada. *BMC Public Health*. 2019;19(1):114. [doi:10.1186/s12889-019-6441-x](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-6441-x)

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