

# Changing the Way People Eat: Making Healthy Food Choices Easy

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# Background to Which?

- Established in 1957
- EU's largest consumer organisation - over 700,000 members
- Independent of government and industry
- Member of BEUC, the European Consumer Organisation, Consumer International & the Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue

*We exist to make individuals as powerful as the organisations that they have to deal with in their everyday lives.*

# Making healthy food choices easy

- Why should we change the way we eat?
- Whose responsibility is it? - Which?'s 12 demands
- Tackling the barriers
  - information and labelling
  - responsible advertising and promotion
  - availability of healthy choices
- Where are we now?

# Why should we change the way that we eat?

- Rising rates of obesity and diet-related disease across the UK - around a quarter of the population are obese
- 22% of 15 year old boys and 17% of 15 year old girls are overweight or obese in Wales
- Obesity is a risk factor for other conditions including type 2 diabetes
- Cancers, coronary heart disease and stroke account for two-thirds of all deaths
- Around a third of cancers and cases of heart disease are due to poor diet
- The World Health Organisation estimates that obesity is already responsible for 2-8% of health costs and 10-13% of deaths in Europe.

## Whose responsibility is it?

- Action needed by many stakeholders on many levels
- Need to tackle the barriers that make it difficult to eat healthily
- Education alone has not worked
- Need to create an enabling environment so that 'the healthy choice becomes the easy choice'
- Children need specific protection
- Government has to drive the changes that are needed

# A multi-faceted approach: Which?'s 12 demands



1. Government to prioritise nutrition policy by establishing a Nutrition Council
2. Government to set clear goals to reduce obesity in children and adults
3. Restrictions on advertising of foods high in fat, sugar and salt during children's viewing times
4. Government standard on responsible marketing of food targeted at children
5. Introduction of a school food standard
6. Introduction of a national nutrition labelling scheme to identify foods high in fat, sugar and salt

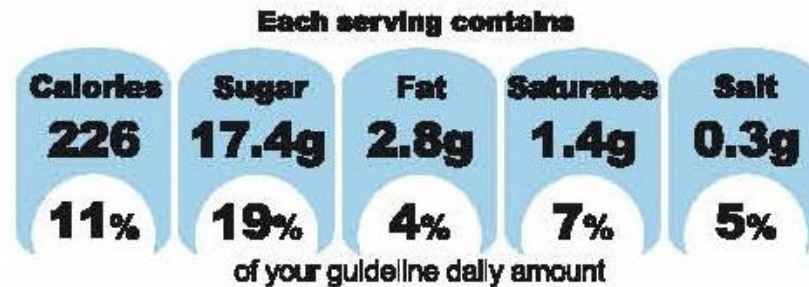
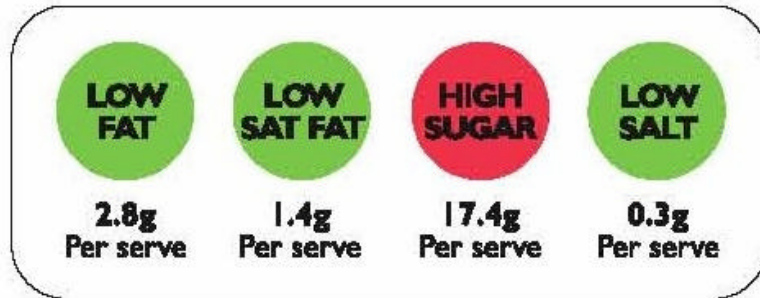
## Which?'s 12 demands

7. Tighter controls over foods that are presented as healthy
8. Manufacturers, retailers and caterers to reduce fat, sugar and salt levels in their foods
9. Government to examine financial incentives and disincentives
10. Supermarkets to make it easier for consumers to choose healthy options
11. Scrap the Common Agricultural Policy and replace with a consumer-focused food policy
12. Government campaign to change UK eating habits

## Making healthy choices easy: Information and labelling

- Lack of clear consistent advice
- Nutrition labelling is still too limited
- It is difficult to understand what the levels mean
- Simplified schemes are now being used on front of pack but manufacturers and some retailers are failing to use FSA multiple traffic light scheme

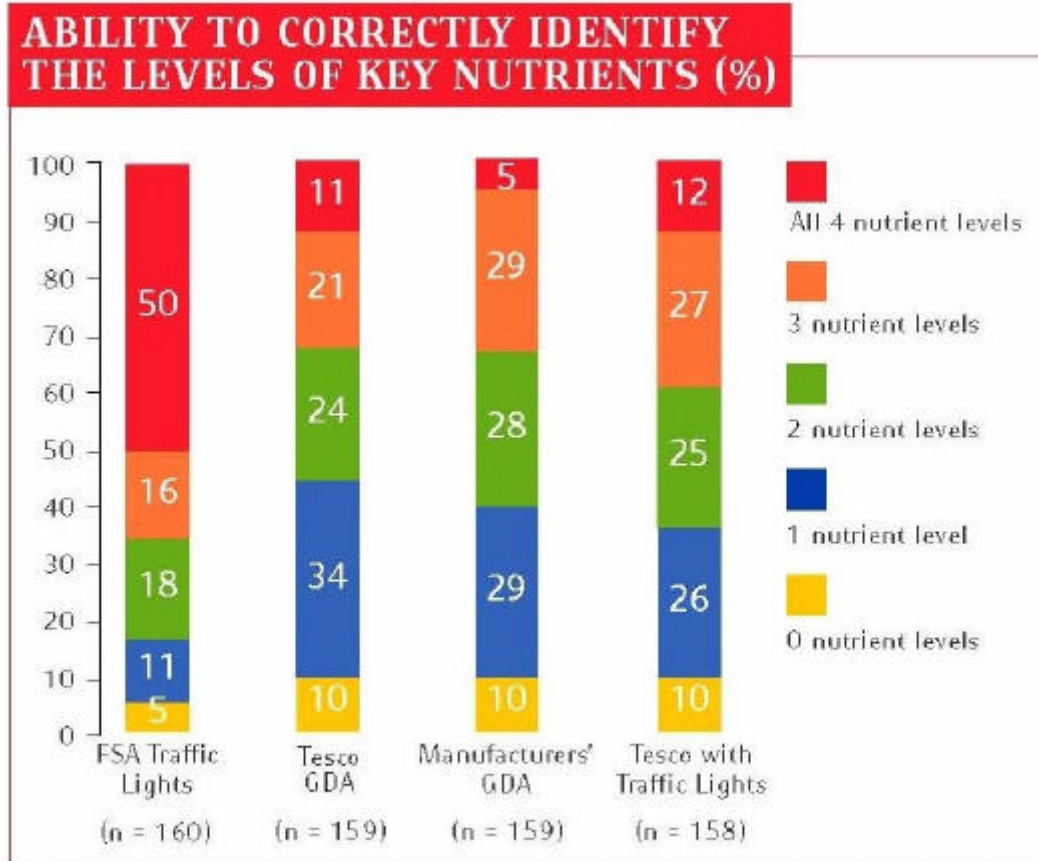
# Simplified labelling?



## Which? 'Healthy Signs?' report

- FSA traffic light labelling scheme came out as the best system throughout our test
- It also performed well for people from lower socio-economic groups and those who would not normally use labels

# Which? 'Healthy Signs?' report



Base 636

## Information and labelling

- Very limited information available when eating out
- Many products carry nutrition claims - but legal definitions were only recently agreed for terms such as 'low fat' and 'light'
- Consumers find health claims helpful, but don't know which ones they can trust
- Too many products claiming to be 'healthy' are anything but



**Milky Way whipped milk and chocolate flavour spread -  
'rich in calcium, magnesium and vitamins'**



# Information and labelling

## Response so far

- Several retailers and manufacturers using FSA scheme eg. Sainsbury's, ASDA, Co-op, Marks and Spencer, Waitrose, McCain
- Others rejected traffic light scheme and launched rival campaign
- FSA evaluation of impact of different schemes taking place

## Action needed

- All manufacturers and retailers to apply traffic light colours based on FSA criteria
- Front and back of pack nutrition labelling should be addressed by EU review of nutrition labelling
- Claims legislation is agreed - need to ensure that implementation is robust

# Which? shoppers' card

## Food Shoppers' Guide

To check if the foods in your shopping basket are high in fat, sugar and salt, here are some guidelines:\*



### WHAT'S A LOT? - per 100g

Sugar: 10g is a lot

Fat: 20g is a lot

Saturated Fat: 5g is a lot

Sodium: 0.5g sodium or 1.25g of salt is a lot

*\*Source: Food Standards Agency (FSA)*



# Making healthy choices easy

## Responsible advertising and promotion

- **FSA systematic review of the evidence 'the Hastings review' showed that:**
  - > food promotion has an effect on children's food preferences, purchase behaviour and consumption
  - > the effect is independent of other factors and operates at both a brand and a category level
  - > the advertised diet is less healthy than the recommended one
- **Failure to tackle this area will undermine other initiatives eg. school meals**
- **Which? research has highlighted sense of frustration felt by parents and support for restrictions**

# Responsible advertising and promotion

## Which? consumer research

- 2003 survey found that 70% of parents thought there should be no advertising of junk foods during children's TV viewing times
- 2004 focus groups with parents highlighted their frustration with the use of cartoon characters and celebrities endorsing foods high in fat, sugar and salt

## Focus groups June 2004 - typical comments

*'You think you are going to put your foot down and you get to the third day and they are still crying and that and you get worn down and you just give in - you think just have your nuggets, just eat them, just eat something'*

*'She's going Shrek, Shrek, Burger King, Shrek, Shrek, Burger King. She's never really asked me about food and this is the first time. So we went down there, and I was thinking well, she's three years old and she's susceptible to this....from three!'*

*'If David Beckham did an advert about an apple telling them how good it is and listing its vitamins, all the kids would be screaming for one'.*

# Which? consumer research - 2006 surveys

- 86% of parents agreed 'the Government should do more to control the way that unhealthy foods are marketed to children
- 77% of respondents thought food companies that sponsor sports events should be more responsible in the way they market their products
- 4 in 5 adults and voters agree that TV ads for unhealthy food should not be shown when children are most likely to be watching TV
- 9 in 10 agree that food companies should be more responsible in the way that they market food to children

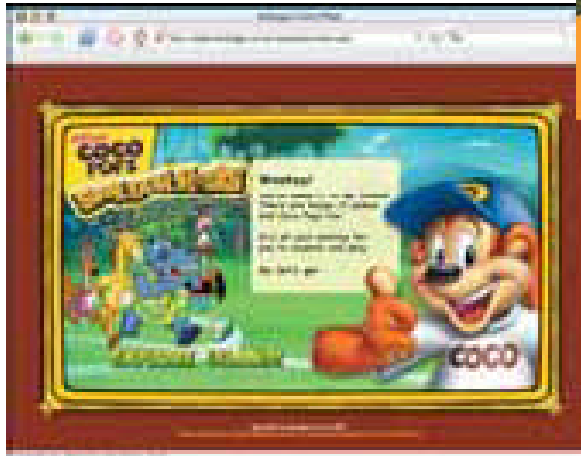
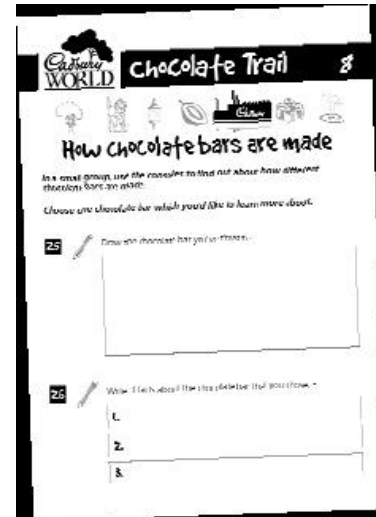
## 'Food Fables' report 2006

- **We looked at leading food company policies:**
  - > Burger King, Cadbury Schweppes, Coca Cola, Haribo, Kellogg's, KFC, Kraft, Masterfoods, McDonald's, Nestlé, PepsiCo, Weetabix
- **We monitored their marketing practices for six months - March to August**
- **We focused on foods high in fat, sugar and salt**
- **We talked to children**
  - > 26 five to nine year olds (paired in-depth interviews)
  - > 24 fourteen to fifteen year olds (group discussions)

# Food Fables report 2006

- > Some policies were too narrow to prevent the use of all irresponsible marketing methods
- > Some were too general or vague
- > Usually apply to younger children only
- > Some policies contain caveats such as not marketing 'primarily' to certain age groups or 'where they are the majority of the audience'
- > Some policies allow marketing to parents, not children but the distinctions can be blurred
- > In some cases, marketing practice contradicted the stated policy

# Examples of marketing practices



# Examples of marketing practices



## What children said

*'I've seen Coke advertised loads of times for the World Cup'*  
(5-6 year old)

*'They make me want more...a little dog advertises them. He is a funny character'*  
(8-9 year old, referring to Cookie Crisp)

*'I like the free toys in the kids' happy meals'* (5-6 year old)

*'I wanted Frosties... I liked the look of them, the tiger.'* (8-9 year old)

## Response so far

- Insufficient recognition of problem by industry
- A wide range of methods now being used to target children - including internet, computer games, text messaging, sponsorship etc
- Commitment by Government to look at voluntary solution - and consider legislation in 2007 if necessary
- Ofcom has consulted on tightening the broadcast code:
  - > Proposed to include programmes of appeal to under 16s based on nutrient profiling
- Non-broadcast
  - > Waiting for broadcast so very little progress
- EU Platform provides an opportunity for voluntary commitments - but little progress has been made so far

## Action needed

- Restrictions are needed on TV advertising of foods high in fat, sugar or salt before 9.00 pm when most children are watching - Ofcom's proposals do not go far enough so Government intervention is necessary.
- Similar restrictions are needed for other, non-broadcast advertising and promotion that ensure foods high in fat, sugar or salt are not marketed to children under 16

# TV advertising - when children are watching

## Programmes that attracted the highest viewing figures for 4 to 15 year olds ( 16-29 October 2006)



Description	OOOs	Viewing_Index
1. ANT AND DEC'S SATURDAY NIGHT TAKEAWAY	1154.5	88.78
2. CORONATION STREET	814.5	48.64
3. EMMERDALE	545.5	42.85
4. THE X FACTOR RESULTS	516.6	71.60
5. THE X FACTOR	511.7	76.63
6. WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?	481.4	49.52
7. HEARTBEAT	450.2	32.70
8. THE BILL	430.9	45.90
9. LADETTE TO LADY	428.6	50.31
10. TRINNY AND SUSANNAH UNDRRESS	369.7	52.04
25. ITV EVENING NEWS	187.0	29.81
26. PARKINSON	186.5	36.46
<b>27. SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS</b>	<b>170.3</b>	<b>268.69</b>
<b>28. BIKER MICE FROM MARS</b>	<b>168.9</b>	<b>291.34</b>
<b>29. MY PARENTS ARE ALIENS</b>	<b>168.1</b>	<b>259.61</b>
<b>30. AVATAR: THE LEGEND OF AANG</b>	<b>160.4</b>	<b>251.55</b>



# Making healthy choices easy: Availability of healthy choices

- Choice of products on offer
- Appropriate portion sizes - and choice
- Nutritional quality of existing products
  - > Reductions in salt, fat (including saturates and trans) and sugar
- Consistent and responsible promotion of healthier products and product ranges

# Ready meals compared (2004)

	Highest amount of fat per 100g	Lowest amount of fat per 100g	Highest amount of sodium per 100g	Lowest amount of sodium per 100g
Lasagne	10.7g	3.1g	0.5g	0.2g
Cheese and tomato pizza	13.7g	3.6g	1.8g	0.2g
Steak and kidney pie	20g	12.4g	0.5g	0.3g
Chicken tikka with rice	7.5g	3.3g	0.5g	0.2g
without rice	13.5g	5g	0.5g	0.1g
Quiche Lorraine	25.1g	16.4g	0.6g	0.3g

# Breakfast cereals compared 2006

## From 275 cereals Which? looked at:

- > Over 75% were high in sugar
- > Almost a fifth were high in salt
- > Nearly 90% targeted at children were high in sugar; 13 per cent were high in salt and 10 per cent were high in saturated fat

# Breakfast cereals compared 2006

Cereals targeted at children: those with pictures or cartoons on the front of the packet

Product	What's in a portion? <sup>1</sup>	Nutrition information								Is hydrogenated vegetable oil listed as an ingredient?	Can this be advertised?
		Sugars		Fat		Saturates		Salt			
		per 100g	per portion	per 100g	per portion	per 100g	per portion	per 100g	per portion		
<b>Crunch</b>											
Mornflake Pecan & Maple Crisp	50g cereal	24.90	12.50	17.10	8.50	6.00	3.00	Trace	Trace	No	No
Mornflake Strawberry Crisp	50g cereal	26.60	13.30	14.90	7.40	4.70	2.30	0.75	0.38	No	No
<b>Flakes</b>											
Asda Choco Flakes	30g cereal, 125ml milk	37.00	11.10	0.70	0.21	0.30	0.09	1.75	0.53	No	No
Asda Frosted Flakes	30g cereal, 125ml milk	38.00	11.40	0.50	0.15	0.30	0.09	1.50	0.45	No	No
Kelloggs Frosties	30g cereal, 125ml milk	37.00	11.10	0.60	0.18	0.10	0.03	1.15	0.35	No	No
Kelloggs Reduced Sugar Frosties	30g cereal, 125ml milk	25.00	7.50	0.60	0.18	0.10	0.03	1.40	0.42	No	No
Sainsbury's Choco Flakes	30g cereal, 125ml milk	36.80	11.04	0.70	0.21	0.40	0.12	1.50	0.45	No	No
Sainsbury's Frosted Flakes	30g cereal, 125ml milk	38.10	11.43	0.50	0.15	0.30	0.09	1.50	0.45	No	No
Sainsbury's Reduced Sugar Frosted Flakes	30g cereal, 125ml milk	25.00	7.50	1.00	0.30	0.40	0.12	1.20	0.36	No	No
<b>General</b>											
Asda Golden Balls	30g cereal, 125ml milk	38.00	11.40	1.50	0.45	0.30	0.09	0.75	0.23	No	No
Nestle Football Crisp	30g cereal, 125ml milk	35.40	10.62	3.70	1.11	1.30	0.39	0.80	0.24	No	No

# Making healthy choices easy

## Availability of healthy choices

- **Schools**
  - > Commitment to nutrient-based standards in schools
  - > Important to look at whole school provision and approach to food
  - > Greater focus on teaching of food skills
  - > Important that not undermined by failure to tackle other issues

## Response so far

- Government commitment to work with industry on salt, fat and energy levels
- Positive response on salt from many industry sectors
- Fat and sugar are more controversial
- Work on reducing saturates and trans fats is encouraging
- Some new products emerging
- Portion sizes - some commitments, but little evidence of things changing
- An increase in the promotion of healthy foods eg. fruit

## Action needed

- Government should lead on fat and sugar reductions where feasible
- Salt work needs to continue
- Effective implementation of new school standards
- Standards needed for other areas such as hospital food

## Conclusion: Where are we now?

- Some positive initiatives but not going far enough
- Government leadership and co-ordination is essential
- Many parts of industry still seem to be treating it as a short-term PR exercise, particularly in relation to marketing
- Government must intervene where self-regulation is failing
- Still much easier to make unhealthy choices rather than healthy ones