



April 10, 2023

The Right Hon. Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Office of the Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
By email: justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca and pm@pm.gc.ca

The Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Health
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
By email: jean-yves.duclos@parl.gc.ca and hcminister.ministresc@canada.ca

Dear Prime Minister and Minister Duclos:

Subject: Restricting marketing of unhealthy food and beverages to children and youth

First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Society (First Call) appreciates your continued commitments to supporting healthy eating initiatives.

We are writing to ask for immediate action on restricting the marketing of food high in sodium, sugars and saturated fat to kids.

Along with the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Childhood Obesity Foundation, First Call has followed the research for many years on the harm done to children and youth by marketing highly processed, unhealthy foods to them. We know children are easily influenced to make unhealthy food and beverage choices by marketing practices. Most children under age 9 do not understand the persuasive intent of marketing messages. Children 10 to 12 years of age will not use their critical evaluation skills to interpret advertisements unless prompted to do so. Even adolescents are vulnerable to harm from exposure to advertising and promotions for high-risk, addictive products, especially when impulsive behaviors or image benefits are depicted. This is because their brain is still in development and teenagers tend to be more impulsive and self-conscious than adults.

Consumption of ultra-processed foods is highest in children 9-13 years old, making up nearly 60% of the calories in their diet. Such diets are linked to an increase in diseases such as heart disease, stroke, cancers, and mortality in later life.

Children and youth deserve to be protected from marketing and industry tactics that influence their food preferences and harm their health, and the federal government has the responsibility to use its regulatory powers to protect them.

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The 2021 Liberal election platform and the December 2021 health minister mandate letter included commitments to supporting restrictions to marketing to kids. In addition, Health Canada's Forward Regulatory Plan 2022-2024 included a commitment to introduce draft regulations by fall 2023.

Moving forward on this federal commitment will help protect children and youth across the country from manipulative marketing strategies and support parents to make better food choices for their families.

First Call is urging you to act now to put the interests of children's health and well-being first.

Sincerely,



Adrienne Montani
Executive Director

Copies:

Stephen Lucas, Deputy Minister, Health Canada

Pam Aung Thin, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Health Canada

Dani Saad, Senior Policy Advisor, Prime Minister's Office

John Broadhead, Director of Policy, Prime Minister's Office

Jared Valdes, Sr. Parliamentary Affairs Advisor, Ministry of Health

Nathanielle Morin, Policy Advisor, Ministry of Health

Celia Lourenco, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Health Products & Food Branch, Health Canada

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