



## A REVIEW ON MARKETED UNHEALTHY FOOD PRODUCTS AND BEVERAGES

Prashant L. Pingale<sup>1\*</sup>, Hrushikesh S. Benare<sup>1</sup>, Deepak P. Mene<sup>2</sup>, Sunil V. Amrutkar<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Pharmaceutics, GES's Sir Dr. M.S.Gosavi College of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Nashik, Maharashtra, India

<sup>2</sup>Department of Pharm. Chemistry, GES's Sir Dr. M.S.Gosavi College of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Nashik, Maharashtra, India

\*Corresponding Author Email: prashant.pingale@gmail.com

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### ABSTRACT

In recent years, the food and beverage industry in India has viewed children and teenagers as a most important market force. As a result, children and teenagers are now the target of intense and specialized food marketing and advertising efforts. The market for children's products and food is huge. Parents on the one hand have a hard time raising children the way they want to, while on the other hand, kids are being increasingly influenced by commercialism that often goes against what parents are trying to do. Food and drink marketing is a enormous and increasingly sophisticated industry and children are among its major targets. Advertisements and marketing of the food products on Television sets, the Internet and the mobile phones are being integrated with sponsorship agreements and product placement to maximize their impact.

**Keywords:** Food, beverages, children, market

### INTRODUCTION

Many advertisements promote foods high in fats, sugar and salt, consumption of which should be limited as part of a healthy diet<sup>1</sup>. Food advertising and other forms of marketing have been shown to influence children's food preferences, purchasing behaviour and overall dietary behaviour. Marketing has also been associated with an increased risk of overweight and obesity in children. The habits children develop early in life may encourage them to adopt unhealthy dietary practices which persist into adulthood, increasing the likelihood of overweight, obesity and associated health problems such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases<sup>1</sup>. Nutrition during childhood and adolescence is essential for growth and development, health and well-being<sup>2,3</sup>. Further, eating behaviors established during childhood track into adulthood and contribute to long-term health and chronic disease risk. Numerous studies have consistently documented that dietary intake patterns of American children and adolescents are poor and do not meet national dietary goals. Children are exposed to unhealthy food marketing in a range of ways. Sport sponsorship is a significant form of unhealthy food and drink marketing that is increasingly being used to market these products to children. While sponsorship may be an important source of funding for sport, sponsorship by manufacturers of unhealthy food and drinks can undermine the health promoting goals of sport. The promotion of food and drinks that are high in fat, sugar and/or salt may undo some of the health benefits gained by children participating in sport and help to establish and reinforce unhealthy eating habits which last throughout life<sup>4</sup>. A food additive cannot be used in a conventional food unless it has been approved for that use by FDA. FDA regulates both dietary supplements and conventional foods under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (the FFDCA), but the requirements for them are different. However, substances that are generally recognized as safe by qualified experts are not considered to be food additives, and can therefore be added to conventional foods without preapproval from FDA. Dietary ingredients (the "active ingredients" in dietary supplements) require no FDA preapproval to be used in a dietary supplement and the

FFDCA requires FDA to prove that a product is unsafe under the conditions of use suggested in the labeling in order to take the product off the market<sup>5</sup>.

### Risks associated with Unhealthy food products

#### Energy and Focus

Junk food and foods with high sugar content deplete energy levels and the ability to concentrate for extended periods of time. Energy and focus are especially crucial for school-age children. Children set the foundation for lifelong habits in their youth, making junk food particularly hazardous to their well-rounded development. Physical activity is also essential for children of all ages, and regularly eating junk food does not provide the necessary nutrients children need for sufficient energy to engage in physical activity. A lack of physical activity is harmful to physical and mental well being and may also exclude a child from critical social development.

#### Obesity Risk

A study published in "Pediatrics" in 2004 found fast-food consumption in children was linked with many dangerous precursors for obesity. According to this study, kids who ate fast food were more likely to consume a higher amount of calories, fat, carbohydrates and added sugars in one fast food meal. They were also less likely to consume as much fiber, milk and fruits and vegetables as children who did not eat fast food. Children who consumed more fattening foods while eating fast food were also likely, in general, to eat more unhealthy foods at other meals. According to a statement released by the journal "Nature Neuroscience" in 2010, high-calorie food can be addictive, causing children who occasionally eat fast food to learn problematic patterns of eating. These factors were found to place children who regularly ate fast food at increased risk for obesity.

### Chronic Illness

According to the Prevention Institute, experts blame junk food for rising rates of diabetes, high blood pressure and stroke. Increasing rates of chronic illness affect children who regularly consume junk food. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention predicts if current trends continue; one in three U.S. adults will have diabetes by the year 2050. Diabetes can result in disability and premature death. The Center for Food Safety noted in 2012 that obese children are also more likely to develop high cholesterol and heart disease later in life. According to the Women's and Children's Health Network, changes can happen in children's bodies even when they're young that are associated with disease at a more advanced age.

### Self-Esteem and Depression

Self-esteem and confidence in oneself are especially important to growing children and regularly consuming junk food can negatively impact this sense of self. According to "Kids Health Club" magazine, junk food can affect a child's physical development in detrimental ways, including unhealthy weight gain, which can result in self-esteem problems. According to the journal "American Family Physician," depression- which can be very dangerous for children – have negative impacts on growth and development, performance in school and social relationships and can ultimately lead to suicide.<sup>6</sup>

### Harmful Foods and Beverages Consumed by Children

Following are the unhealthy food consumed by the children; it may be either given to the children on their demand.

### Unhealthy Noodles

An instant noodle comes under this category. Don't give noodles to the kids, it's a 'treat' not meant for growing children. These noodles are made from maida (white refined wheat flour) unless it is stated specifically that whole wheat flour has been used. Maida is wheat flour stripped of all nutrients. In fact; if any ingredient in any product, whether noodles or biscuits is described as 'wheat flour'; read this as maida and not whole wheat flour<sup>7</sup>. Instant noodles have long been a popular meal option, loved for their convenience and low cost. But a new study suggests they may increase the risk for heart disease and stroke<sup>8</sup>. This relates to the atta noodles as well, though these noodles (some pasta's too) do have some atta (whole wheat flour); this 'atta' is not the genuine atta that we use to make rotis with at home. What the manufacturers do is mix atta and maida, or adds a small amount of wheat fibre to maida and lo behold, Indian laws allow them to call this an atta or whole wheat product! Unfortunately in India we do not have specifications as to how much atta need be present for the product to qualify as a whole wheat product<sup>7</sup>. Healthy lifestyle among students is even more imperative as they are the future of the nation but student and youngsters throughout the world personally ignore healthy lifestyle<sup>9</sup>. They found that consumption of instant noodles two or more times a week was associated with a higher prevalence of metabolic syndrome in women but not in men. Metabolic syndrome is set of conditions including high blood pressure, high blood sugar, excess abdominal fat and abnormal cholesterol - which combined increase the risk for heart disease, stroke and diabetes<sup>10</sup>.

### Reasons to avoid the instant noodles

Following are the main reason, which noodles should be avoided<sup>11</sup>.

- Instant noodles contain substances that reduce the body's nutrient absorption ability.
- Instant noodles are high in sodium content

- Instant noodles are high in MSG (monosodium glutamate)
- Instant noodles contain propylene glycol.
- Instant noodles contain cancer-causing substances.

### Sugary Drinks and sodas (diet sodas)

One of the worst things for children is not actually foods but drinks, and not just colas and fruit punch. Juices and sports drinks also contain high amounts of sugar and empty calories. It might come as a surprise that some fruit flavored juices contain even more sugar than sodas. For children over 2 years of age, opt for low-fat, unflavored milk or water most of the time and occasionally 100 percent fruit juice. A big nutrition no-no, these drinks contain absolutely no nutrients that feed your body. Worse, they fill your system with chemicals and sugar that deplete your body of nutrients. A study published in Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention stated that drinking just two sodas per week can nearly double a person's risk of pancreatic cancer. Dr Joseph Mercola, an American doctor and a New York Times bestselling author, says there are "10 teaspoons of sugar" in just one can of soda and "30 to 55 mg of caffeine, artificial food colors and sulphites". Soda also creates acid in the body, which ultimately weakens bones and depletes vital mineral stores. Studies have shown strong associations between diet soda and obesity as well as diabetes. It has been suggested that diet sodas trick the brain into thinking the body is getting sugar, affecting metabolism and prompting cravings for more sugar.

### Potato Crisps

When foods are fried at high temperatures they can form acrylamide, which is a known carcinogen. Dale Hattis, a research professor at Clark University in Massachusetts, estimates that "acrylamidex causes several thousand cancers per year in developed countries like America". Not only are crisps high in fat, but they also are often coated with salt, making them extremely high in sodium. This raises blood pressure and cholesterol and, ultimately, increases your risk of heart attack and stroke. A study published in Cancer Science in 2005 linked a high-salt diet with increased gastric cancer.

### Processed Food

It usually refers to foods that are packaged in boxes, cans or bags. These foods need to be processed extensively to be edible and are not found as is in nature.

### Processed foods are bad for human health, in following ways

- They contains usually high in sugar and high fructose corn syrup
- They are "hyper rewarding" and lead to overconsumption
- They contain all sorts of artificial ingredients
- Many people can literally become addicted to processed junk foods
- They are often high in refined carbohydrates
- They are low in nutrients
- They tend to be low in fiber
- They requires less energy and time to digest
- They are often high in trans-fats or processed vegetable oils<sup>12</sup>

### Reasons to stop eating junk food

Food items including pizzas, chaat, vada pav, bhajiyas, samosas, burgers, frankies, french fries, rolls and wraps are called 'junk food?' Well, the dictionary meaning of the word 'junk' is useless, extra or something that is not needed. And all these fast food items that have invaded every nook and corner of our country are called junk because they completely justify this meaning. Today, junk food

businesses are dominating the food industry to a great extent, with each huge food chain generating multibillion dollar revenue, creating thousands of employment opportunities and influencing diet globally. But all this comes at the cost of health and well-being of millions of consumers. The consequences that this junk food can have on your health are terrible, regardless of whether you have them once in a while, twice in a week or every day<sup>13</sup>. How these junk foods play a crucial role in deteriorating human health?

- It can cause type 2 diabetes
- It can trigger digestive problems
- It causes fatigue and weakness
- Causes depression among teenagers
- It causes fluctuations in blood sugar levels
- It affects the brain function
- It increases the risk of heart disease
- It can cause kidney disease
- It can damage the liver
- It increases the risk of cancer

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