

April



# Consumer Beware



## Main Objective

Make healthy choices despite advertisements that encourage you to do otherwise.

Find an alternative to watching TV during National TV Turn-Off Week – go for a walk, read a book, go to the park with your friends, play a game with your family...

## Background

Companies use various advertising methods to encourage you to eat their foods, go to their restaurants, and buy their products. You see ads in the newspaper, in magazines, on TV, on billboards, and even on the food packages themselves. Companies will lower prices or include a toy to get you to buy their products. Restaurants will let you play a game or supersize an item for a few pennies more just to get you in the door.

Unfortunately, many of these ads are for unhealthy foods and are advertised on TV during the time most kids are watching their favorite shows. This impacts the types of foods they want from the grocery store or which restaurants they want to go to when the family goes out for a meal. By becoming an educated consumer, you and your students will not only begin to understand what companies are doing, but you also learn to make healthy choices regardless of what the companies would like you to do. (See KP KIDS handouts, “Eating Habits” and “Activity - Eating Habits”.)

National TV Turn-Off Week encourages everyone to turn his or her TV off for only seven days during the entire year. It is meant to provide people with an opportunity to take another step away from the constant barrage of advertisements. It is also a good opportunity for kids and adults alike to reevaluate how much time they actually spend in front of the TV and start to discover more physically-active things that could be done instead. Unfortunately, a lot of extra eating is also done in front of the TV so watching less TV also means eating less food. (See KP KIDS handout, “Activities to Enjoy Instead of Eating”.) This is an activity that will truly benefit everyone!

## Take Home Activities

- 1) Take note of how many times the family buys food or goes to a restaurant because of something that is being advertised.
- 2) Start making choices about where and what to eat based on nutritional lessons learned throughout the year and not based on advertisements.
- 3) As a family, participate in TV Turn-Off Week (the last week in April). Make a list of everything you can do instead of watching TV. Keep the list posted on the refrigerator, or better yet, on the TV! (See Kaiser Pemanente handouts, “Break Free of TV” and “Get Active and Be Healthy” in English and Spanish.)



## School Activities

- 1) Set up a friendly competition between classes to design the best advertisement for a healthy food or activity. This could be done as a print ad or as a mock-TV ad that can be shown to the whole school during an assembly. Display all healthy print ads created by the students around the school.
- 2) Create a student advisory committee to evaluate the school environment for products that may advertise any unhealthy behaviors.
- 3) Encourage students and staff to participate in National TV Turn-Off Week (last full week in April). (See <http://www.tvturnoff.org>)

## Classroom Reward Ideas

Contact a local paper to run the school's best healthy ad, or ask a local grocery store to display the print ads created by the students.

## Resources

### TV Turn-Off Network

<http://www.tvturnoff.org>

This website provides information on National TV Turn-Off Week, which is the last full week in April. Facts, events, and contest information are updated annually. Other materials are also available for purchase, such as bookmarks, pencils, posters and water bottles.

### Student Media Awareness to Reduce Television (S.M.A.R.T.) Stanford Health Promotion Research Center

<http://hprc.stanford.edu/pages/store>

(Item #: HPP6; Teacher's Manual and CD-Rom; 2004, \$199.00)

S.M.A.R.T. is a curriculum proven to motivate upper-elementary schoolchildren to reduce TV watching and video game usage. It was developed and evaluated in the San Francisco Bay Area.

### "Where's the Fruit?"

<http://www.preventioninstitute.org/sa/fruit/>

An interesting 2007 research study that addresses the fruit content of the most highly-advertised children's food and beverages.

### Common Sense Media

<http://www.common sense media.org>

Common Sense Media, a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization which strives to provide trustworthy information and tools to improve the media and entertainment lives of children and families. It includes tips for parents to monitor media consumption, internet safety, and addresses the media effects on children's health. Also a source for statistics on children and media consumption:

[http://www.common sense media.org/resources/media\\_facts.php](http://www.common sense media.org/resources/media_facts.php)

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## Activities Linked to Kindergarten Content Standards & Framework

### Reading 1.18

- Students can describe why they like and eat the foods that they do in general and specific language. Have them pay particular attention to their actual food preferences as well as what may influence those preferences.

### Listening & Speaking 2.1

- Students can describe food advertisements they see through an oral presentation.

### Statistics, Data Analysis, & Probability 1.1

- As a class, you can keep track of the number of times students watch TV during the month and record the result using pictures or graphs. From here, they can set a goal to decrease that amount during the month aiming for “zero” by National TV Turn-off Week (the last full week in April).

### Health Framework Expectation 1

- Look more closely at the prizes in cereal boxes or the toys given out at restaurants. Students can begin to learn that those items don’t change the taste of the foods but may change whether or not a student wants to eat those foods.



## Activities Linked to 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Content Standards & Framework

### Writing 2.2, Listening & Speaking 2.4

- Have students write brief expository descriptions of a magazine ad for food or a cereal box using sensory details. Students can then share the description out loud. Have students pay particular attention to those details that make them more or less interested in buying and eating the foods.

### Measurement & Geometry 1.2

- As students begin to understand time, have them look at it in relation to how long they watch TV. From here, they can set a goal to decrease that amount during the month aiming for “zero” by National TV Turn-off Week (the last full week in April).

### Social Science 1.2.1

- Construct maps (or locate items on maps) of local neighborhoods paying attention to restaurants that serve healthy or unhealthy foods.

### Social Science 1.6.1

- Introduce the concept of exchanging money for food. Compare foods purchased at the grocery stores to those purchased at the farmers’ market.