



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 Permanente 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

April



Consumer Beware



Activities Linked to 6th Grade Content Standards & Framework

Reading 2.6, 2.7, 2.8 & 3.8

**Statistics, Data
Analysis, & Probability
1.1, 1.2, 1.3 & 1.4**

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Analysis, & Probability
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**Social Science 6.2, 6.3,
6.4, 6.5, 6.6 & 6.7**

**Health Framework
Expectation 1**

- Have students critique a printed ad or storyline intended to sell a food product. Discuss how different ads can influence food intake and food preferences.
- Have students individually interview their friends and family members, asking questions such as “how many hours of TV did you watch last week?” that will result in a range of numerical answers. Encourage them to ask as many people as possible. With this data, students can then compute the range, mean, median and mode. Have students guess what will happen to the results if additional data sets are added (e.g. if the class data are analyzed as one complete set). Students can also look at how the inclusion or exclusion of outliers affects the measure of central tendency and which measure provides the most useful information given the question asked.
- Encourage students to track the advertising they are exposed to on a given day or week. Students can keep track of when and where they see the ads, what is being advertised, whether or not they would purchase the food or product and why. For example, have the students watch TV and record the number of food ads they see within a 1/2 hour. Students can then bring this information back to the classroom and, as a class, create an appropriate graph, find the mean, median, mode and range of the data set, and determine any outliers (e.g. PBS sometimes doesn't have commercials so that would be an outlier). You could also have them look at different magazines for food advertisements and have them do the same type of activity.
- When looking at the development of any civilization, pay special attention to the food traded and how it may have impacted their food preferences. Were any marketing techniques employed to help sell their goods?
- Set and monitor a goal to decrease the amount of time spent watching TV to “zero” by National TV Turn-off Week (the last full week in April).