



Action Schools! BC



Instructional Example

# Healthy Messaging

## Subject: Physical and Health Education (PHE) Grade 7

### OVERVIEW

What and when children eat is affected by a number of factors, such as their knowledge and attitudes about food and health, their individual tastes, and their socio-economic status. Another key factor is their exposure to food and beverage marketing.

Children are exposed to more food and beverage marketing than ever before. This marketing has an impact on the foods they eat, their food preferences and beliefs, and the foods they influence their parents to buy. It is also a recognized contributor to rising rates of childhood obesity, and increased risk factors for chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer.

Children and youth are particularly vulnerable to the influence of food and beverage marketing because they are unable to critically assess its persuasive and commercial intent. This strategy is designed to provide students with the ability to critically analyze messages so they can make informed decisions.

### BIG IDEAS

- Healthy choices influence our physical, emotional, and mental well-being.
- Learning about similarities and differences in individuals and groups influences community health.

### CORE COMPETENCIES

#### Communication (C)

- Acquire, interpret, and present information (includes inquiries)
  - Students inquire into topics that interest them, and topics related to their school studies (e.g., the interrelationship between our environment and food choice as the context of an inquiry). They present for many purposes and audiences; their work often features media and technology. Examples include “show and tell,” explaining a concept (e.g., students’ participation in class discussion), sharing a Power Point presentation about a research/inquiry topic, and creating a video

proposal (e.g., Action Schools! BC's Food Marketing activity, available at [www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources](http://www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources)).

## Thinking (CT)

- Question and investigate
  - Students learn to engage in an inquiry and investigation where they identify and explore questions or challenges related to key issues or problematic situations in their studies, their lives, their communities, and the media (e.g., the interrelationship between our environment and food choice as the context of an inquiry). They develop and refine questions; create and carry out plans; gather, interpret, and synthesize information and evidence; and draw reasoned conclusions. Some critical thinking activities focus on one part of the process, such as questioning, while others may involve a complex inquiry into a local or global issue (e.g., Action Schools! BC's Food Marketing activity, available at [www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources](http://www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources)).

## Personal and Social (PS)

- Well-being
  - Students who are personally aware and responsible recognize how their decisions and actions affect their mental, physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and spiritual wellness, and take increasing responsibility for caring for themselves (e.g., students begin to see the role that marketing has on their food choices). They keep themselves healthy and physically active, manage stress, and express a sense of personal well-being. They make choices that contribute to their safety in their communities, including online interactions. They recognize the importance of happiness, and have strategies that help them find peace in challenging situations (e.g., students understand that marketing can negatively influence their food choices and how they are impacted by this).

## LEARNING STANDARDS

### PHE Curricular Competencies (What Students Will Do)

#### ***Social and Community Health***

- Explore strategies for promoting the health and well-being of the school and community (e.g., providing opportunities for students to deliver messages that promote healthy food choices).

#### ***Healthy and Active Living***

- Investigate and analyze influences on eating habits (e.g., have students explore the idea that the apps they use, the games they play, the websites they visit, the celebrities they follow on social media and the news they watch can influence their behaviour and purchases. How could these types of marketing influence their food choices?).
- Identify factors that influence healthy choices and explain their potential health effects (e.g., opportunities are provided for students to identify that marketing contributes to obesity and overweight).

- Identify, apply, and reflect on strategies used to pursue personal healthy-living goals (e.g., helping students to deliver messages that are accurate and promote healthy food choices by advocating healthy diets and healthy food).

### ***Mental Well-Being***

- Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others (e.g., creating a shared understanding that healthy lifestyle practices support positive mental and emotional health).

### PHE Content (What Students Will Know)

- Influences on food choices (e.g., teaching students that marketing affects food choice is important).

## COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH PILLARS

### Relationships and Environments:

- Explore marketing efforts that reach students in the school environment (i.e. ads on websites they visit on school computers, signs in the gymnasium, billboards across the street, push notifications from apps they receive while at school, etc. ).

### Teaching and Learning:

- Students explore marketing and learn how to become critical viewers of food and beverage marketing.

### School Policies:

- Share with students that the *Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools* has a specific section on restricting the marketing of unhealthy food and beverages. This is because healthy eating environments include not only the sale of healthy food and beverages, but also an environment that is free from the marketing of unhealthy food and beverages. <http://healthyschoolsbc.ca/program/395/guidelines-for-food-and-beverage-sales-in-bc-schools>.

## CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

### English Language Arts

- Exploring and sharing multiple perspectives extends our thinking. Also engaging students in opportunities to question what we hear, read, and view contributes to our ability to be educated and engaged citizens. Strategic and purposeful questioning can generate thoughtful discussion and help students to develop the habit of critical thinking. Questions that could encourage students to take a critical perspective when examining a particular food choice include:
  - What solutions can you offer?
  - Who can suggest a way to ...?
  - What causes can you identify?

- What new ideas can you suggest?
- What recommendations can you make?
- What needs to change?
- How can you contribute to this change?
- How do you think ...?
- What have you noticed ...?

## FIRST PEOPLES PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.
- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

## TIMEFRAME

- 45-60 minutes

## MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY

- Action Schools! BC *Food Marketing* learning activity (available from: [www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources](http://www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources)).
- Notebooks/Journal
- Access to the internet

## TEACHER TIPS

- Provide equal access to all materials for all students.
- As there will be varying economic levels of students in the class, ensure that students are not singled out or made to feel uncomfortable due to this.
- Ask students open-ended questions to foster inquiry.
- Avoid rejecting and/or discouraging of any students ideas.
- Encourage students to find solutions on their own.
- Encourage collaboration among students.
- Review the websites and/or books before the class to become familiar with the content.

## STRATEGY

- Ask students to consider some of the ways that our food choices may be influenced (answers could include the amount of money we have to spend on food, where we purchase food, what we are doing, who we are with, and the marketing efforts we are exposed to).
- Variety and balance are important attributes of a healthy eating plan. Perhaps the hardest component of all, though, is not eating too much (i.e. moderation). When large portion sizes, and questions like: “would you like the combo meal?” are the norm, eating a moderate amount of food can be challenging. One of the keys to moderation is recognizing and honoring the body’s hunger and fullness cues.
- Have students explore various fast food restaurant websites, apps, and flyers. Discuss the various strategies used. Answers could include attractive photos, exciting offers, promoting emotions versus products (i.e., the “funning” of food), games that promote their brand as opposed to their products, etc. Invite students to consider the interrelationship between our environment and food choice as the context of an inquiry.
- Guide students through a brainstorm session on defining the term “junk food.” (Generally, junk food is a slang word used to describe pre-packaged snack foods with limited nutritional value - foods that are high in salt, sugar, fat or calories, with low nutrient contents.)
- Possible questions to guide the learning (but are not limited to):
  - What are some examples of junk foods?
  - How many sugary drinks do you consume in a week?
  - How often do you eat junk food? When do you eat it?
  - How often do you eat fast food? Is this food always junk food? Ask students to define the term “fast food.” (Fast foods are quick, reasonably priced and readily available alternatives to home cooking.)
  - What are the most popular fast food restaurants? How often to you eat at fast food restaurants?
  - When you go to a fast food restaurant, what size of serving are you most likely to order?
  - What types of marketing do fast food restaurants use?
  - Has the public begun to view fast food differently? How so?
- Have students consider the interrelationship between fast food/snack foods and food choice as the context of an inquiry.
  - What are some of the reasons why North Americans consume so much junk food and fast food/snack foods?
  - What are the positive elements of fast food/snack foods?
  - What are some of the negative aspects of fast food/snack foods?
- The inquiry may lead to discussions of excessive marketing; disposable income; easy access to fast food in neighbourhoods, schools, malls, etc.; busy lives that don't leave time to prepare proper meals; peer or family influences.
- Positive elements of fast food answers may be: Eating at fast food restaurants is fun, the food is tasty, it's convenient, it's inexpensive, and fast food restaurants provide a popular place for teens to socialize.

- Negative elements: Many fast foods provide few nutrients and are high in calories, fat, sugar, and salt.
- Have the students reflect on the following questions:
  - What surprised you most?
  - Why is the marketing of fast food/snack food to children a concern to health officials?
  - What are some of the ways that fast food/snack food is marketed to kids? (Answers may include: apps; games on websites; commercials; billboards; toys; clothing; jingles; games; Internet sites; special-sized meals for kids of different ages; cross-marketing with movie and television figurines or popular toys; prizes and games with kiddie meals; indoor playgrounds; and branding)
  - Why would fast food/snack food restaurants and companies target young children in their marketing campaigns? (Make sure that students consider the "whine factor" as well as brand loyalty and brand recognition. Children can strongly influence their family's food purchases).
- Consider also in your discussion:
  - **Mental Well-being aspect:** Is all fast food/snack food bad food? How does eating these foods make you feel? Examining healthy lifestyle practices or coping mechanisms to deal with everyday living is an important part of developing mental and emotional health. The engagement in healthy lifestyle practices contributes to both the quality and duration of life. The health habits or healthy lifestyle practices that a person follows affect their life.
  - Orally share with students:
    - Many minor mental health problems can be relieved by self-help or self-care measures. If we are feeling "blue," "out of sorts," or "stressed out," healthy lifestyle practices such as the following can help us to feel better:
      - Get enough rest and sleep.
      - **Eat a well-balanced diet.** Avoid caffeine, alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs, and avoid mixing alcohol and drugs.
      - Participate in physical activities.
      - Do something that is enjoyable or relaxing (e.g., go to a funny movie, take a walk for enjoyment, listen to music, read a good book, talk to a friend, engage in an activity that is safe and appealing).
      - Attend to spiritual needs (e.g., by meditating, visualizing, praying, appreciating a beautiful sunset).
      - Make a list of the things that are troubling or causing tension, and then put away the list for the rest of the day.
      - Prioritize personal challenges and deal with the ones that are either most stressful or easiest to check off the list.
      - Spend ample time with people whose company is enjoyable, generally those who have a positive and respectful attitude.
      - Talk to a trustworthy friend or family member about own feelings and concerns, and discuss possible reasons for those feelings. Ask them just to listen if advice is not desired.

- **Moderation aspect:** Ensure students understand that eating well means using variety, balance and moderation in what we choose to eat daily. Eating when our bodies don't really require food (like when we're not hungry, or because we are feeling stressed) can lead to overeating. Overeating consistently can over time lead to health problems related to overweight.
- **Healthy alternatives aspect:** What are some examples of healthy fast food/snack food? (Grilled chicken sandwiches, baked potatoes, small hamburgers minus the add-ons (i.e., bacon, cheese, mayonnaise, etc.), wraps, and salads - these are some of the healthier choices you can make).
- Build on the inquiry with the Action Schools! BC healthy *Food Marketing* learning activity, which can be found at [www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources](http://www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources).

## ASSESSMENT

- Evaluation of the projects created by students in the *Food Marketing* learning activity that promote healthy eating. Insure that students take into consideration six Food Guide servings of vegetable and fruit each day.

## ADAPTIONS/MODIFICATIONS

- If computer or Internet access is an issue, consider bringing in various fast food menus and have students design a nutritious meal from one of those restaurants.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Have students keep track of how much snack food and fast food they consume in a week. In addition to recording the food they eat, have students record their activities while snacking. Do any patterns emerge?
- Examine food loss and waste - how much and where? Explore the website: [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org).
- Have the students go into lower grade levels to discuss their inquiry findings with younger students and why it is important to eat well.

## RESOURCES/REFERENCES

Media Smarts – Talking to Kids about Advertising – Tip Sheet <http://mediasmarts.ca/tipsheet/talking-kids-about-advertising-tip-sheet>

University of Calgary – Teacher Background Information Sheets – Media Literacy & Food Marketing <http://www.ucalgary.ca/foodmarketing/educators-parents>

Stop Marketing to Kids Coalition <http://stopmarketingtokids.ca>

Advertising of Food and Beverages to Children: Position of Dietitians of Canada December 2010 <https://www.dietitians.ca/Downloads/Public/Advertising-to-Children-position-paper.aspx>

BC Ministry of Education – *Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools* <http://healthyschoolsbc.ca/program/395/guidelines-for-food-and-beverage-sales-in-bc-schools>