



# **NEWS RELEASE**

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.



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GP's working with young people

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## **What are we feeding our Children? GP Group Audit finds Junk Food Advertising Overdose**

The average Australian child would have sat through a total of 3 hours and 22 minutes of junk food advertising on television during the Summer holidays, according to an audit of junk food advertising to children, released today by Dr Rob Walters, Chair of the Australian Divisions of General Practice.

“ADGP’s Junk Food Advertising Audit reveals that Australian children are exposed to an average of 68 advertisements a week encouraging them to eat fast food, confectionery and other forms of non-nutritional food. This is the equivalent of watching one and a half full-length movies of junk food ads over the holiday period,” Dr Walters said.

“Our Audit found that over 99 per cent of food advertisements on TV are for foods with little nutritional value – which means that children are receiving an overwhelmingly distorted message about diet from TV,” Dr Walters said.

ADGP recorded and analysed 50 hours of child-targeted television on commercial television stations during the January holiday period. The main findings of ADGP’s Junk Food Advertising Audit were:

- Over 99 per cent of food advertisements broadcast during children’s TV programming are for junk food (food high in fat, sugar and/or salt with little nutritional value).
- There is an average of one junk food advertisement per ad break during children’s television programs.
- The main categories of foods advertised are: fast food (hamburgers, pizza and fried chicken); soft drink; chocolate confectionery; and ice cream.
- Children watching an average of two and half hours of television per day during the holiday period would have been exposed to 406 advertising messages encouraging them to eat junk food.

“Given that the National Health and Medical Research Council has found that even a single exposure to food advertising can alter children’s food preferences, this high level of junk food advertising is extremely concerning,” Dr Walters said.

“As the peak body representing GPs out in the community, ADGP is aware of the increasing incidence of obesity among Australian children and the impact that this is having on the health of our population.

“Obesity is a risk factor for the two biggest killers of Australians today - heart disease and stroke - and disease processes for these conditions are starting to develop in our children in their formative years.

“GPs report seeing more children than ever before with Type 2 Diabetes – a disease associated with a poor diet and lack of exercise. The increase in Type 2 Diabetes has serious health, social and economic consequences for Australia’s future.

“ADGP is concerned that the high level of junk food advertising in the media is undermining the efforts of parents, teachers, doctors and health authorities to teach children healthy eating habits.

“ADGP supports a ban on junk food advertising during children’s television programs and other media targeted at children. This ban would reduce the exposure of children to messages promoting foods with little nutritional value and support the efforts of parents, teachers, doctors and governments to educate children about the benefits of a healthy diet and lifestyle.

“I have sent a copy of ADGP’s Audit of Junk Food Advertising to Children to every Federal Parliamentarian and urged them to support ADGP’s campaign to reduce the exposure of Australian children to junk food advertising,” Dr Walters said.

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***A Copy of the Junk Food Advertising Audit is available on the ADGP website at [www.adgp.com.au](http://www.adgp.com.au)***