

Lesson: Ad Smarts

Goals:

- Students will be able to identify the four components of an advertisement.
- Students will understand outside influences that affect their food choices.
- Students will be able to choose the best food choice for their health by considering advertisement claims and analyzing nutrition labels and ingredient lists.

Supplies Needed:

- 5.2_LV_ADSMART-VISUALS
- 5.2_LTA_Advertisements-and-Snack-Products
- 5.2_LW_Advertising-Worksheet

Background:

Children are exposed to over 20,000 advertisements per year (about 55 ads per day). Many of the advertisements that are targeted to children are for food products. The purpose of this lesson is to teach children how to evaluate food advertisements so they can make informed choices. Advertising is not evil. Emphasize that it is up to consumers to make good choices. By asking questions and reading labels, consumers can make better choices. Some ads may encourage mindless eating. Lack of planning snacks and meals may lead people to grab quick Slow Foods for snacks when they are hungry. Taking the time to plan great tasting Go Food snacks and meals is important.

Lesson:

How many minutes every day should you be moving or exercising? *(60 minutes)*

What are some things that you have found that you like to do instead of playing video games or watching TV? *(Ride bikes, play with friends at the park, walk the dog, play soccer, tag, tennis, basketball)* Great! It is important that the physical activity that you choose is something you enjoy!

What are some ways we make sure we feel energetic during the day? (*Eat Go Foods, move 60 minutes a day, get 10-11 hours sleep, eat until satisfied not too full, spend less time on electronics.*) Great!

Who remembers the difference between a portion of food and a serving of food? (*Portion is what is served, serving is a measured amount of food.*)

Did anyone have a chance to practice some of the ways we discussed to reduce portion sizes at home or when eating out? What are some methods you used? (*Use smaller plates, split meals, put snacks in a bowl instead of eating out of the bag.*)

Portions and servings are about the amount of food we eat. It is important to listen to our bodies to recognize feelings of satisfaction when eating; not too full, not still hungry.

Today we are going to talk about outside influences that affect what we eat and why we eat. Some of our decisions may be driven by advertising.

(Show Slide 1.) I'm going to say a jingle or phrase, you tell me what brand or product I'm thinking of:

- I'm lovin' it! (*McDonalds*)
- Taste the Rainbow (*Skittles*)
- They're magically delicious! (*Lucky Charms*)
- Once you pop, you can't stop! (*Pringles*)

How did you know what brand/product I was thinking of? Did you hear it on TV? See it online? These food brands are so well known because of advertising. Advertising is a type of communication that is used to persuade someone to take action. For example, you may see a flyer or commercial trying to persuade you to buy a product or support an idea.

(Show Slide 2.) We see advertisements all the time; on TV, on buildings and buses, on people's clothes, even inside stores. We also hear them on the radio. Advertisements are everywhere! On average, we see about 50-60 ads per day.

Many advertisements we see on TV promote food or beverages. Think about the last time you watched TV. How many food or beverage commercials did you see? How many were advertising fast food, soda, sugary cereal or other Slow Foods? Now think about Go Foods such as apples, broccoli or grapes. Have you seen many commercials for Go Foods? Probably not, this is why.

Advertising costs money. During the Super Bowl, companies pay \$2 to \$3 million dollars for every 30 second ad. Big corporations have money for these advertisements but most farmers don't make enough money to pay for advertising. Where do most of our Go Foods come from? (*Farms*). So if you see an ad, it is usually because someone spent a lot of money to make sure you saw that ad!

What Slow Foods are you seeing ads for? (*Chips, ice cream, candy, sodas*)

(Show Slide 3.) Do you recognize this slogan? "Hungry? Why Wait?" (*Snickers*) This promotion wants you to grab a Snickers bar for quick energy. Wouldn't an apple be just as easy? Or an apple with peanut butter? A Snickers bar is a once in a while treat because it has added sugar.

Does anyone remember the difference between hunger and appetite? Appetite is an emotional wanting or desire for a food or beverage with no actual physical symptoms. Hunger is a physical feeling of stomach pain or gurgling sounds or feeling light headed, spacey and/or weak from lack of food. Appetite is a want; we want it because it looks so good. Hunger is a need. Our body is out of energy and needs fuel.

Advertisements often try to spark our appetite when we're not really hungry. You may be captured by exciting colors, images of artistically-enhanced food or hear upbeat sounds, which may trigger your appetite. Have you ever watched an ad for a big juicy hamburger and then thought that would be really good to eat right now even though you just had lunch? Or, have you seen an advertisement for a soda and thought, I am really in the mood for a soda? Has this ever happened to you?
(Allow children to share their experiences.)

When you find yourself watching an ad like this and starting to want food, ask yourself, "Am I really hungry?" Or, did that ad just trigger my appetite? Wait a few minutes and you might find that sensation of false hunger just goes away!

Since we see so many advertisements in one day, it is important to learn how to evaluate ads so we can make better choices.

When you see an advertisement, it is important to evaluate the information to understand if this is the right product for you. Ask yourself four key questions:

(Show Slide 4.) What is the ad selling? Is it a product? A service?

(Show Slide 5.) Who is the target audience? Is the ad for adults? Teenagers? Children? Grandparents?

You might notice that when you go to the grocery store, the products are arranged so that foods marketed to children your age are placed on the shelf at about your eye-level. Many of these foods are Slow Foods, so really look both up and down when shopping to see what options there really are!

(Show Slide 6.) What is the hook? A hook is something that advertisers use to grab your attention. A hook might be a special coupon, a prize, a famous athlete, upbeat music, or a cartoon. Once you identify the hook, ask yourself, if there was no hook such as a famous athlete, cool packaging, or fun music, would I still be interested in this product?

(Show Slide 7.) What are they not telling me?

Advertisements cannot lie, but they don't have to disclose the whole truth.

(Show Slide 8.) For example, a box of Cheez-Its advertises that it contains 100% real cheese. However, if you look at the ingredient list the first ingredient is enriched flour, then some vitamins, then soybean and palm oil, then cheese. The advertisement makes you think, "Oh it has cheese, cheese it good for me so these crackers must be good too." Even though it may be real cheese there is not much in one serving and the first ingredient is enriched flour and we know that it is better to have whole grain flour. What would be a better choice for a snack that might be similar to Cheeze-Its? (*Whole grain crackers with sliced cheese*). In order to know exactly what you're getting, it is important to read the small print such as nutrition labels or ingredient lists.

For example, many labels list zero trans fat. What do you think zero trans fat means? It may be hard to believe, but zero trans fat does not mean that there is no trans fat in the product. The law states that if there is less than 0.5gms of trans fat per serving, the company can advertise zero trans fat. Since trans fat is a Slow Food, we should know if it is in a product we are going to eat. If we eat two servings then we may be eating almost one gram of trans fat.

Luckily there is another way to know if the product has trans fat. Can anyone remember how? (*Looking at the ingredient list for partially hydrogenated*) Right! This means there is trans fat. Even though it is a small amount, less than 0.5g, you have more information to decide if this is the right snack for you.

(Show Slide 8.)

I'm going to show you a picture of an ad, and together we'll answer the four ad questions.

What are they selling?

(Fruit Roll ups)

Who is the target audience? *(children, mothers)* How can you tell?

(Children; bright colors, ,mothers; they may win cash)

(Show Slide 9.) What is the hook? *(Cash)*

You may win cash if you buy these fruit rollups. This is very unlikely!

Finally, after viewing the ad, ask yourself the question, "what are they not telling me?"

(It is high in sugar because it is the second ingredient listed and it has trans fat because the ingredient list says partially hydrogenated and will make you feel sluggish rather than happy and full of long lasting energy.)

Understanding advertisements and knowing how to read nutrition labels and ingredient lists gives you all the power to choose great tasting Go Foods for snacks and meals. This puts you in complete charge of your body and health! How does that feel?

Let's give you all a chance to practice evaluating advertisements.

(Divide the class into groups of four or five students. When they are settled, explain the activity.)

(Show Slide 10.) I am going to give you each an advertisement for a snack food. With your group answer the four questions shown on the board.

(Give each group one advertisement and one handout. Walk around to help the groups if needed).

(After approximately 5 minutes) Now I am going to pass out packaging for snacks similar to the one in the ad. I want you and your group to look at the ingredient lists and nutrition labels. By applying what you have learned about nutrition, decide which snack would be the best choice for you. List the product you found to be the healthiest and the reasons why. Keep in mind that there may be more than one right answer. There are a lot of different nutrients to consider when looking at the health value. **(Allow 5 minutes.)**

Let's see what you came up with. I would like each group to:

1. Explain then advertisement (what the product is, the target audience, the hook and what they are not telling me).
2. Name the products they were comparing.
3. Name which product is the healthiest choice? (A chart has been provided only to help guide your decision. Students do not need to fill this out if they can conclude the healthiest snack another way).
4. Describe how you came to that decision.

Did the advertisement influence your decision?

Great! It's important to be Ad Smart so we can make our own decisions and not let others make them for us-- particularly when it comes to our health!