

# AUSTRALIAN CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION ALLIANCE



## Media Release

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### **Health groups refute industry claims on unhealthy food ads to kids**

Australia's largest disease prevention groups are calling on the Australian government to introduce mandatory restrictions on unhealthy food advertisements to children, rejecting today's claims from the food industry that its voluntary restrictions on advertising to children are working.

Chair of the Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance Professor Greg Johnson said that voluntary industry restrictions which apply only to dedicated children's TV programs broadcast at limited times were ineffective because they did not apply at times when most children were watching TV.

"Child audience numbers are only around 80,000 at times when industry restrictions apply, but up to half a million children watch TV between 6pm and 9pm each day when they do not apply," Professor Johnson said.

"The voluntary restrictions don't work even during the times when they do apply. As the industry's own report shows, one in five food advertisements at these times is still for unhealthy foods," Professor Johnson said.

"With one in four children overweight or obese we need to do everything we can to help our kids preserve their health into the future by eating healthy food and maintaining a healthy weight," he said.

"But our children are still exposed to a huge volume of advertising for unhealthy food and beverages during their peak television viewing times, which influences their food preferences and eating habits and, ultimately, their weight."

Professor Johnson said obese children tended to become obese adults, putting them at increased risk of developing chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, kidney disease and some cancers.

"If we really want to reduce our children's exposure to unhealthy food advertising then the government must bite the bullet and introduce effective mandatory restrictions as soon as possible".

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*Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance members: Cancer Council Australia; Diabetes Australia; KidneyHealth Australia; Heart Foundation; National Stroke Foundation.*