



Advertisers target Hispanic and Black youth with unhealthy snacks

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Companies target unhealthy snack food advertising directly to black and Hispanic youth, and disparities in exposure compared with white non-Hispanic youth have increased. Given that youth of color suffer from higher rates of obesity and other diet-related diseases, snack food advertising likely exacerbates health disparities affecting their communities.

The research

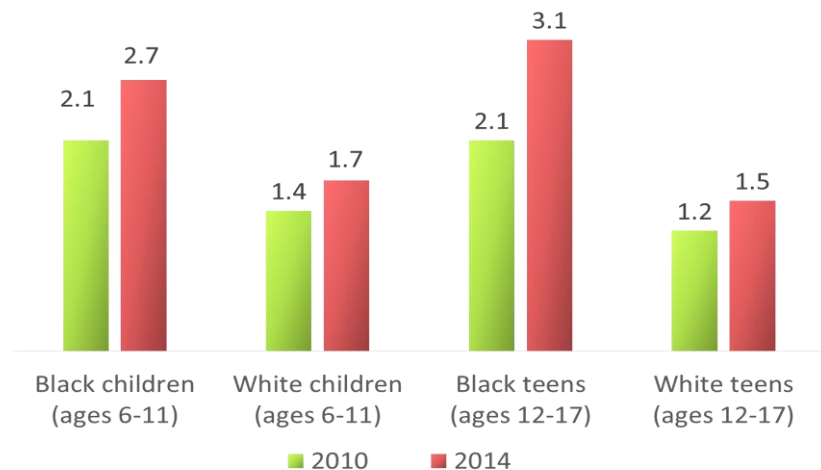
Snack FACTS examines the nutritional quality and advertising for 90 snack food brands offered by 43 companies that were marketed to U.S. children and teens on TV, internet, and in schools in 2014. Researchers analyzed healthier snacks, including yogurt, fruit, and nuts, as well as unhealthy snacks, including sweet and savory snacks such as cookies, chips, and fruit snacks, comparing 2010 and 2014 when possible. The report also examines marketing targeted to Hispanic and black youth.

Findings

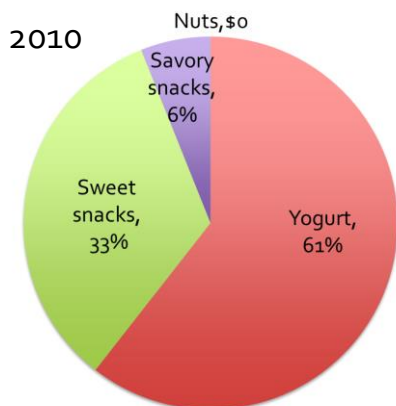
From 2010 to 2014, TV ads for savory snacks viewed by black children increased 48% and ads viewed by black teens increased 95%.

In 2014, black children saw 64% more snack food ads on TV compared to white children, and black teens viewed 103% more compared to white teens.

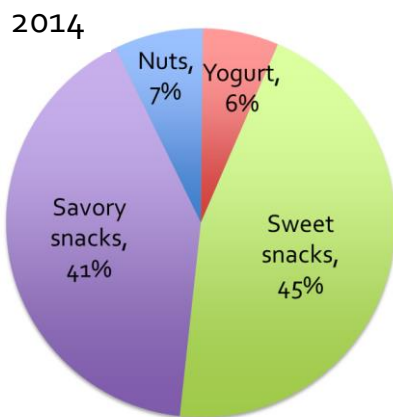
- On a positive note, black children and teens saw approximately 50% and 80% more ads for healthier fruit and yogurt brands.
- However, black children also saw 99% more ads for savory snacks and black teens saw 129% more, compared with white children and teens.
- Disparities in exposure increased versus 2010 when black children and teens had viewed 47% more and black teens viewed approximately 70% more snack food ads than their white peers.



Snack categories advertised on Spanish-language TV



Total: \$48.1 mill



Total: \$45.3 mill

Source: Rudd Center analysis of Nielsen data (2015)

In 2014, companies spent more than \$45 million to advertise snack foods on Spanish-language TV, a decline of 6% versus 2010. However, the composition of snack food categories advertised changed dramatically.

- Yogurt advertising declined by 93%, and not one fruit brand advertised on Spanish-language TV in 2014.
- Spending on savory snack ads skyrocketed 551% and sweet snack ads rose 30%.
- Ads for unhealthy snacks comprised 88% of snack food ads viewed by Hispanic children on Spanish-language TV in 2014, a dramatic jump from 39% in 2010.
- Hispanic preschoolers viewed more snack food ads on Spanish-language TV (87, on average) than Hispanic teens (59, on average) in 2014 (in addition to ads viewed on English-language TV).

Four companies targeted TV advertising for unhealthy snack food brands to Hispanic youth (by advertising on Spanish-language TV) and/or black youth (evidenced by high ratios of ads viewed by black vs. white youth of 2.5 or more).

Company	Hispanic-targeted brands	Black-targeted brands
General Mills	Nature Valley, Fiber One	Betty Crocker Fruit Snacks, Nature Valley, Fiber One
Kellogg	PopTarts, Sunshine Cheez-It, Pringles	PopTarts, Sunshine Cheez-It, Pringles
PepsiCo	Cheetos	Doritos, Tostitos, Lay's Potato Chips, Cheetos
Mondelez Global		Oreos, Honey Maid, Ritz Crackers

Recommendations

Food companies must stop marketing practices that disproportionately target unhealthy snack foods to young people of color.

- As black and Hispanic children are exposed to more food advertising than white non-Hispanic children, improvements to the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative, a voluntary industry self-regulatory program, will provide even greater benefits for children of color.
- Snack food brands should stop targeting advertising for unhealthy foods to all young people, but especially advertising aimed at black and Hispanic youth.
- Industry commitments to increase sales and marketing of healthier products should also address advertising in black- and Hispanic-targeted media, where healthier snacks are now significantly underrepresented.
- Media companies should set nutrition standards for advertising to young people, particularly those with large audiences of Hispanic and/or black youth. Media companies should consider offering lower rates for advertising that promotes nutritious foods.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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The full report, [Snack FACTS 2015: Evaluating snack food nutrition and marketing to youth](http://uconnruddcenter.org/snackfacts), is available at uconnruddcenter.org/snackfacts