

Quiz: Is your child under the influence? Take the quiz!

1. When my kids are watching TV., I usually:

- Watch my own programs in the other room.
- Get some work done around the house like cooking or cleaning.
- Watch it with them.

2. When I take my kids to the grocery store, they seem to already know about new products that I have never seen. When this happens, I:

- Don't really notice it much. It's impossible to keep up.
- Am a little surprised since I try to keep up with what is popular.
- Am not at all surprised because they see it on TV.



3. When my child wants a new toy that he doesn't really need, I:

- Usually find a way to get one for him.
- Tell him if he wants it he has to buy it with his own money.
- Ask him how it will be different from the toys he already has and tell him he can ask for it for his birthday or a holiday.

The results are in!

If you chose mostly A's....

You may not even know how much advertising is targeted to reach your child. These ads have a large influence on how your child behaves. In fact, most of these ads are for foods and drinks that are not good for your child. Studies show that these ads increase how much children eat and drink these types of foods, which has led to a rise in obesity. Pay attention to what ads and where your child sees them every day. You will be surprised at just how many of them there are.

If you chose mostly B's....

It can be hard to keep up with everything your children are seeing on TV., computers, or in things they read. But being aware of them helps you to know what your child is exposed to. Advertisers target ads to influence children of this age. It is important that you are aware of these and help your child be informed. The more time you spend with your child, the more you will know what they are exposed to.

If you chose mostly C's....

You are tuned in to your child. You know that they are influenced by the ads they see. Watching TV. with them is a good start to helping them become aware of what the ads are doing. If you don't already, try talking to them about the ads. Use the information in this issue to help get you started.

To cite this publication:

L. Gatai, C. Sutter, J. Linnell, T. Spezzano, C. Lamp, D. Smith, D. Carrasquilla, R. Scherr, & S. Zidenberg-Cherr (2013).

"Team Up for Families" A set of newsletters distributed to families. UC-ANR, 9 issues.

Support provided by UC ANR Grant 11-1018 "A multi-component school-based approach to supporting regional agriculture, promoting healthy behaviors, and reducing obesity."



What's growin' on?

Your child is growing up and becoming a “tween.” Both their bodies and their brains are developing rapidly. They need a variety of nutrients and vitamins to support this growth. Physical activity is important to their health and their ability to learn. It is recommended that they get 60 minutes of physical activity each day at this age.



They are also beginning to make more of their own food choices. It is important that you help them learn how to make good decisions about what they are eating so they get what they need. While they may act like they can do it all on their own, your guidance is still very important. They have the skills they need to plan, make decisions, and solve problems, but they need help learning how to use them.

What you can do

- Talk about the food choices they are making at school. Ask them how they decide what they eat.
- Encourage them to base their food choices on how it makes their bodies and minds feel and perform. Ask them, “Does it help you play (soccer, baseball, dance, basketball) better?” “Do you have energy at the end of the day when you eat that for lunch?”
- Help them learn how to plan ahead. Ask them how much time they need in the morning to eat breakfast and get a bottle of water ready before they go to school. Then they can decide how early to wake up so they have the time they need.
- Help them understand that if they take the time to eat what they need to feel full at each meal, they will be less likely to eat poorly between meals.
- When there is a situation where your child faces a hard problem, encourage her to solve it on her own. You can help by teaching her how to think it through. Help her break the problem down into separate parts. Then have her think through each part one at a time. In the end, she will come up with a solution based on how she thinks it through.
- Honor your child's decisions and thoughts. They will make mistakes, but when the mistakes come from their own decisions, they are more likely to learn.



School Connections

Lesson Connection

In *Lesson 7: Consumerism*, your child learned about how food companies persuade us to purchase their products using health claims, bright colors, catchy slogans, songs and phrases, free toys and prizes, celebrities and cartoon characters, and sale prices. The students explored cereal boxes with different types of advertising on them, and then used what they learned to make their own advertisements. In the garden, the students investigated how plants "advertise" in order to attract pollinators like bees, beetles, and butterflies.

Kitchen Connection

Here's a recipe that you can try at home!

Cannellini Bean Dip (serves 4-6)

- 1 15-oz can of Cannellini beans
- 6 cloves garlic
- 1 cup fresh spinach leaves
- 2 tablespoons Tahini (sesame seed paste)
- 2 tablespoons Lemon Juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt

Dunkers, cut into bite size pieces:

- Carrots
- Asparagus
- Broccoli
- Whole grain crackers
- Radishes
- Cauliflower
- Whole wheat pita bread

Directions:

1. For the dip, add beans, garlic, spinach, tahini, lemon juice olive oil and salt to a blender or food processor. Blend until smooth.
2. Serve dip with dunkers, and enjoy!

Discussion: Here are some things you can discuss with your child when you make and eat this snack: What do you think are the different nutrients that are found in this dip? How many MyPlate categories of vegetables do you think there are there in this snack?

Family Activity

- Make an advertisement for your family's favorite food or meal to try to persuade other people to make or eat this food.
- Talk with your child about the things you used to try to convince people to make this food or meal. Are they the same ways that stores and advertisers try to get you to buy or eat their food?





Is your child a target?



While your children may seem young to you, they are targets for advertisers. As they become tweens, there are even more ads that are aimed at getting their attention. You may not even notice many of these ads because they are not designed to get your attention. But the ads are everywhere: t.v., billboards, magazines, computers, and phones. They don't even need to see the ads themselves sometimes - friends are also a big influence at this age. You don't need to protect them, but you do need to arm them with the skills they need to make good decisions.

- Put all the screens your child sees in a family area. Keep televisions, computers, and phones out of children's bedrooms.
- When commercials come on, talk to your child about what commercials are trying to do. Ask them, "Who do you think this commercial is for?", "What is this commercial trying to sell?", "How are they trying to sell this product to us?"
- When they want a new product (toy, game, food, drink), ask them why. Have them explain to you how it is different from what they already have. Ask them whether it will replace something else they have and what they plan to do with the old item.
- Get to know what their friends are into. This will help you know what your children are interested in - or will be into soon.

What's growin' on?

(Continued from Pg 2)

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“Mom/Dad, I want that!”

How often do you hear this? With all the ads children see, they can seem to have an unlimited number of wants. It seems like there is a new product released every day that they have to have. In fact, it is estimated that as much as \$1.6 billion are spent advertising to kids each year, mostly for soda, fast food, and cereal. But you don't have to always say yes or no. At this age, your child has the skills he needs to start making his own decisions on what he wants and needs. But decision making needs to be taught. You can help him learn how to use these skills by letting him make choices on whether or not he gets something new.



- If your children want something but don't need it, have them make a plan for buying it. They can save up their own money, work for points, or wait and ask for it as a birthday or holiday gift.
- When you are at the grocery store and your child brings something to the cart that is not on the list, have her read the nutrition label and explain how it is better than the item you had planned to buy.
- If your child wants to buy something not on the shopping list, have him explain why he needs it. If he doesn't need it, explain that he has to have a plan for buying it on his own.

Check it out

- If your children watch t.v., sit down with them and watch together. Use the tips from this issue to start a conversation about the ads that are playing during the shows.
- Ask your children about what they eat when they are with their friends. Have a conversation about how they make decisions about food when they are outside of the house.
- Have your children go through the decision making steps talked about in this issue for one item they would like you to buy for them this week.

Healthy Family Challenge

- Have each person in the family select one advertisement (from t.v., magazine, billboard, etc.) for a product they don't have but would like. Have each person answer the following questions for their ad:
 - Who is type of person the ad targeting and how do you know?
 - What is the ad trying to sell?
 - How is the ad trying to convince you to buy it?
 - Are the things the ad uses to sell you the product things that really happen?