

MAY 2012

# RUDD REPORT



## TRENDS IN TELEVISION FOOD ADVERTISING TO YOUNG PEOPLE

2011 Update

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YALE RUDD CENTER  
FOR FOOD POLICY & OBESITY

# TRENDS IN TELEVISION FOOD ADVERTISING TO YOUNG PEOPLE: 2011 UPDATE

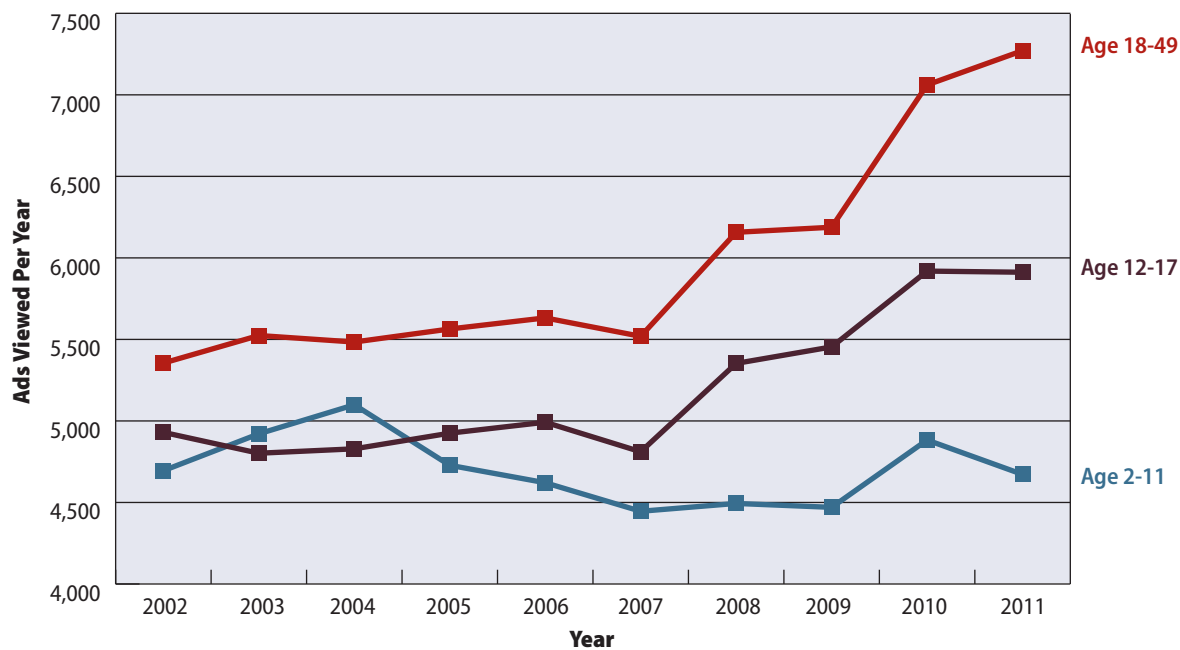
## Background

The objective of this annual report is to track changes in child and adolescent exposure to food and beverage advertising on television and compare youth to adult exposure. Gross ratings points (GRPs) data were obtained from Nielsen ([www.nielsen.com](http://www.nielsen.com)) from 2002 through 2011 to provide average number of ads seen by children (ages 2-11), adolescents (ages 12-17) and adults (ages 18-49) in total and for major food and beverage categories. For more information about the methods or specific products included in each category, please see the original report, "Trends in television food advertising: Progress in reducing unhealthy food marketing to young people" ([www.yaleruddcenter.org/resources/upload/docs/what/reports/RuddReport\\_TV-FoodAdvertising\\_2.10.pdf](http://www.yaleruddcenter.org/resources/upload/docs/what/reports/RuddReport_TV-FoodAdvertising_2.10.pdf)).

## Total Exposure to Food and Beverage Advertising on TV

Children viewed 5% fewer food and beverage advertisements in 2011 compared with 2010, while adolescent exposure remained flat and adult exposure increased by 4% (see **Figure 1**). The average 2- to 11-year-old saw 12.8 food and beverage ads per day in 2011 compared with 13.4 ads in 2010 and 14.0 ads in 2004 (the peak of children's food advertising exposure). This 2011 reduction somewhat reversed the dramatic upward trend recorded in 2010, but exceeded children's average annual ad exposure from 2006 to 2009. Adolescents, on average, viewed 16.2 food and beverage ads per day in 2011 and 2010. Although 2011 was the first year since 2007 that adolescent exposure to food and beverage advertising did not increase, adolescents viewed 23% more ads in 2011 than they had viewed in 2007.

**Figure 1.** Total television food and beverage advertising exposure by age: 2002 to 2011



Adult exposure to food and beverage advertising continued the dramatic increase begun in 2008. In 2011, adults averaged 19.9 food and beverage ads per day, an increase of 32% over 2007 and the highest level seen in the past decade.

## Exposure by Food Category

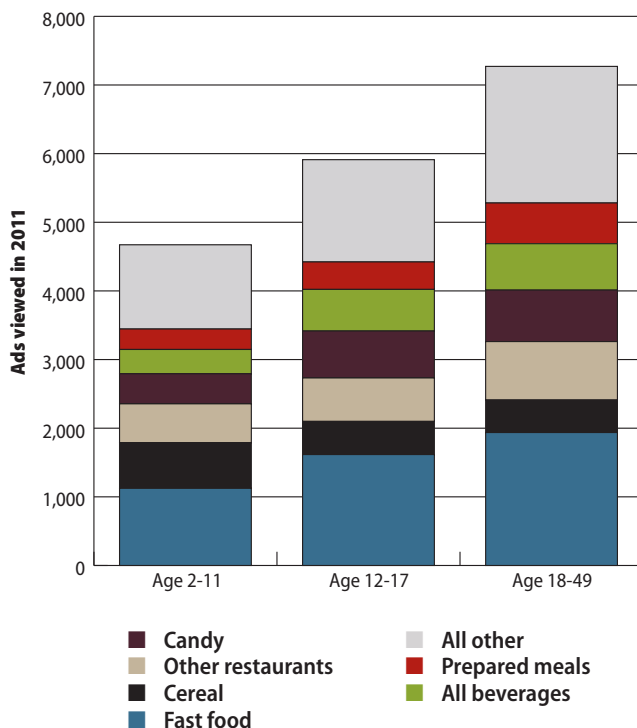
Fast food restaurants maintained the highest category share of food and beverage advertising exposure across all age groups: 24% of ads viewed by 2- to 11-year-olds and 27% for adolescents and adults (see **Figure 2**). For children, cereal was the second most frequently advertised category, representing 14% of their total food and beverage advertising exposure, followed by other restaurants (12% of total exposure) and candy (9%). For adolescents, candy was the second most frequently advertised category (12% of total exposure), followed by other restaurants (11%) and cereal (8%). For adults, however, ads for other restaurants were viewed second most frequently (12% of

total exposure), followed by candy (10%), prepared meals (8%), and juice, fruit and sports drinks (7%). All beverages combined represented 8% to 10% of child, adolescent and adult exposure. Cereal and yogurt were the only food categories with higher advertising exposure for children versus adolescents or adults.

Changes in child and adolescent exposure to food and beverage advertising by category revealed some positive developments (see **Tables 1 and 2**). For the first time since 2002, both child and adolescent exposure to fast food ads decreased from the previous year (by 5% and 4%, respectively); adult exposure decreased by 1% (see **Table 3**). In addition, there was a substantial decline in the number of cereal ads viewed by 2- to 11-year-olds; at 1.8 cereal ads per day, children saw 12% fewer of these ads in 2011 compared with 2010, the lowest number recorded in a decade. By comparison, adolescent exposure to cereal ads decreased by just 2%, and adults viewed 8% more versus 2010. Additionally, the number of carbonated beverage ads viewed in 2011 declined by 19% among children, 23% among adolescents and 18% among adults compared with one year earlier. For all age groups, carbonated beverages represented just 1% to 2% of all food and beverage advertising exposure in 2011. In contrast, bottled water ad exposure increased dramatically across all age groups (127% to 180%); although the average individual in all age groups viewed fewer than 55 bottled water ads per year (approximately one per week). Ads for other non-carbonated beverages (juice, fruit and sports drinks) declined by 7% for children only. Adolescent and adult exposure to these ads increased by 6% to 7%. Of note, prepared meal ads viewed by 2- to 11-year-olds decreased considerably (22%) in 2011 versus 2010, while category declines for adolescents and adults were more modest at 9% and 4%, respectively.

On the other hand, trends in exposure to ads for other food categories raise public health concerns. Exposure to candy advertising continued the upward trend reported one year ago: children viewed 6% more candy ads in 2011 versus 2010, adolescents viewed 11% more and adults viewed 17% more; although these increases were more modest than the 46% to 116% increases observed from 2009 to 2010. Advertising exposure for the sweet snacks category also grew slightly (5%) in 2011 for children and adults, and by 1% for adolescents. The number of crackers and savory snacks ads viewed by adolescents and adults grew more notably (16% and 14%, respectively); whereas

**Figure 2.** Total food and beverage advertising exposure in 2011 by age and category



**Table 1: Change in average number of ads viewed by category for children (ages 2-11)**

Category	Ads viewed per year				Change in ads viewed: 2011 vs.		
	2004	2007	2010	2011	2004	2007	2010
<b>Food and beverage products*</b>	<b>3,847</b>	<b>3,036</b>	<b>3,145</b>	<b>2,983</b>	<b>-22.5%</b>	<b>-1.7%</b>	<b>-5.2%</b>
Cereal	973	772	754	666	-31.6%	-13.7%	-11.7%
Candy	397	266	413	438	10.3%	64.7%	6.1%
Prepared meals	306	420	384	298	-2.6%	-29.0%	-22.4%
Sweet snacks	637	431	282	297	-53.4%	-31.1%	5.3%
Yogurt	204	178	251	271	32.8%	52.2%	8.0%
Juice, fruit drinks, sports drinks	316	189	282	261	-17.4%	38.1%	-7.4%
Crackers and savory snacks	147	121	104	105	-28.6%	-13.2%	1.0%
Other dairy	72	43	77	70	-2.8%	62.8%	-9.1%
Carbonated beverages	141	57	80	65	-53.9%	14.0%	-18.8%
Fruits and vegetables	4	22	38	34	750.0%	54.5%	-10.5%
Bottled water	17	55	10	28	64.7%	-49.1%	180.0%
<b>Restaurants</b>	<b>1,252</b>	<b>1,410</b>	<b>1,738</b>	<b>1,689</b>	<b>34.9%</b>	<b>19.8%</b>	<b>-2.8%</b>
Fast food	911	973	1,178	1,124	23.4%	15.5%	-4.6%
Other restaurants	341	437	560	565	65.7%	29.3%	0.9%
<b>Total food, beverage and restaurants</b>	<b>5,099</b>	<b>4,446</b>	<b>4,883</b>	<b>4,672</b>	<b>-8.4%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>-4.3%</b>

Source: Nielsen 2012

\* Includes all packaged food and beverage product categories

**Table 2: Change in average number of ads viewed by category for adolescents (ages 12-17)**

Category	Ads viewed per year				Change in ads viewed: 2011 vs.		
	2004	2007	2010	2011	2004	2007	2010
<b>Food and beverage products*</b>	<b>3,200</b>	<b>2,883</b>	<b>3,641</b>	<b>3,663</b>	<b>14.5%</b>	<b>27.1%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>
Cereal	464	443	493	483	4.1%	9.0%	-2.0%
Candy	400	311	618	684	71.0%	119.9%	10.7%
Prepared meals	266	478	441	400	50.4%	-16.3%	-9.3%
Sweet snacks	356	310	320	322	-9.6%	3.9%	0.6%
Yogurt	105	129	188	200	90.5%	55.0%	6.4%
Juice, fruit drinks, sports drinks	318	235	402	426	34.0%	81.3%	6.0%
Crackers and savory snacks	147	118	114	132	-10.2%	11.9%	15.8%
Other dairy	96	61	101	93	-3.1%	52.5%	-7.9%
Carbonated beverages	295	124	169	130	-55.9%	4.8%	-23.1%
Fruits and vegetables	6	22	50	42	600.0%	90.9%	-16.0%
Bottled water	33	70	22	50	51.5%	-28.6%	127.3%
<b>Restaurants</b>	<b>1,629</b>	<b>1,928</b>	<b>2,279</b>	<b>2,249</b>	<b>38.1%</b>	<b>16.6%</b>	<b>-1.3%</b>
Fast food	1,260	1,437	1,687	1,616	28.3%	12.5%	-4.2%
Other restaurants	369	492	592	633	71.5%	28.7%	6.9%
<b>Total food, beverage and restaurants</b>	<b>4,829</b>	<b>4,811</b>	<b>5,919</b>	<b>5,912</b>	<b>22.4%</b>	<b>22.9%</b>	<b>-0.1%</b>

Source: Nielsen 2012

\* Includes all packaged food and beverage product categories



**Table 3: Change in average number of ads viewed by category for adults (ages 18-49)**

Category	Ads viewed per year				Change in ads viewed: 2011 vs.		
	2004	2007	2010	2011	2004	2007	2010
<b>Food and beverage products*</b>	<b>3,453</b>	<b>3,221</b>	<b>4,316</b>	<b>4,483</b>	<b>29.8%</b>	<b>39.2%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>
Cereal	375	378	439	474	26.4%	25.4%	8.0%
Candy	342	287	642	750	119.3%	161.3%	16.8%
Prepared meals	380	554	618	593	56.1%	7.0%	-4.0%
Sweet snacks	328	301	373	393	19.8%	30.6%	5.4%
Yogurt	93	148	245	227	144.1%	53.4%	-7.3%
Juice, fruit drinks, sports drinks	346	273	449	481	39.0%	76.2%	7.1%
Crackers and savory snacks	154	128	150	171	11.0%	33.6%	14.0%
Other dairy	143	112	154	154	7.7%	37.5%	0.0%
Carbonated beverages	269	129	174	142	-47.2%	10.1%	-18.4%
Fruits and vegetables	14	43	83	75	435.7%	74.4%	-9.6%
Bottled water	42	72	22	53	26.2%	-26.4%	140.9%
<b>Restaurants</b>	<b>2,031</b>	<b>2,298</b>	<b>2,745</b>	<b>2,788</b>	<b>37.3%</b>	<b>21.3%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>
Fast food	1,496	1,628	1,951	1,937	29.5%	19.0%	-0.7%
Other restaurants	536	670	794	851	58.8%	27.0%	7.2%
<b>Total food, beverage and restaurants</b>	<b>5,484</b>	<b>5,519</b>	<b>7,061</b>	<b>7,271</b>	<b>32.6%</b>	<b>31.7%</b>	<b>3.0%</b>

Source: Nielsen 2012

\*Includes all packaged food and beverage product categories

advertising to children in this category was comparable to one year ago (1% increase). However, exposure to ads for fruits and vegetables and other dairy products (i.e., the most nutritious categories) declined by 11% and 9% for children and by 16% and 8% for adolescents. Exposure to ads for fruits and vegetables also declined by 10% for adults, but their exposure to other dairy ads did not change.

## Implications for the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI)

In 2006, the Council of Better Business Bureaus launched the CFBAI to improve food advertising targeted to children, and most participating companies implemented their pledges in 2008 ([www.bbb.org/us/childrens-food-and-beverage-advertising-initiative/](http://www.bbb.org/us/childrens-food-and-beverage-advertising-initiative/)). The present analysis reveals decidedly mixed impact from the CFBAI. Compared with 2004 (the year with the highest child exposure to food ads in this analysis), children now view 8% fewer food and beverage ads overall. In addition, the majority of primarily unhealthy food categories (including carbonated bev-

erages, sweet snacks, and crackers and savory snacks) reduced advertising to children from 2004 to 2011. However, compared with 2007 (the year prior to implementation of the CFBAI), children now view 5% *more* food and beverage ads in total. The beverage categories, in particular, appear to have increased advertising to children following implementation of the CFBAI. In addition, three of the least nutritious product categories (fast food, candy and other restaurant food) now advertise significantly more to children than they did in 2004 and 2007. On the other hand, a few categories (notably cereal and sweet snacks) have shown consistent declines in advertising to children. Primarily healthy categories (including fruits and vegetables and bottled water) also have substantially increased advertising to children since 2004, although children continue to view less than one ad per week for these categories and they represent just 1% of all food and beverage ads viewed by children.

The CFBAI does not address food advertising to children or teens 12 years or older, and this analysis reveals another unfortunate potential consequence of this limitation. Although adolescent exposure to food and beverage advertising remained flat from 2004 to 2007, following implementation of the CFBAI in 2007, adolescent exposure increased by 23%. This increase occurred



in all categories except bottled water and prepared meals and mirrors increases in food and beverage advertising to adults. Of note, adolescent exposure to candy advertising increased by 120% and advertising for juice, fruit drinks and sports drinks increased by 81%. It is encouraging that adolescent exposure leveled off in 2011, while adult exposure continued to increase. In 2011, the Interagency Working Group on Food Marketed to Children proposed voluntary industry guidelines on food advertising to adolescents, as well as children (<http://www.ftc.gov/opa/2011/04/foodmarket.shtm>).

## Summary

Total food and beverage advertising seen by children declined 5% in 2011 compared with the previous year. However, children continued to view approximately 13 ads per day that almost exclusively promoted categories of products with little or no nutritional value. Increases in child exposure since 2007 demonstrate

that the CFBAI has had limited effect on this unhealthy food advertising landscape. For adolescents, the dramatic increase in exposure to food and beverage advertising that began in 2008, leveled off in 2011. However, adolescents viewed 1,100 more food and beverage ads in 2011 versus 2007. Although advertising for some of the least nutritious food categories declined in 2011 (including fast food, cereal, carbonated beverages, and juice, fruit and sports drinks), increases of 55% to 70% in youth exposure to candy advertising from 2009 to 2011 raise significant public health concerns.

## Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by Cathryn Dembek, MBA, Jennifer L. Harris, PhD, MBA, and Marlene B. Schwartz, PhD. This research was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Rudd Foundation.

### **Previous reports are available at [www.yaleruddcenter.org](http://www.yaleruddcenter.org):**

*"Trends in television food advertising: Progress in reducing unhealthy food marketing to young people"*

(available at [http://www.yaleruddcenter.org/resources/upload/docs/what/reports/RuddReport\\_TVFoodAdvertising\\_2.10.pdf](http://www.yaleruddcenter.org/resources/upload/docs/what/reports/RuddReport_TVFoodAdvertising_2.10.pdf))

*"Trends in television food advertising to young people: 2010 update"*

(available at [http://yaleruddcenter.org/resources/upload/docs/what/reports/RuddReport\\_TVFoodAdvertising\\_6.11.pdf](http://yaleruddcenter.org/resources/upload/docs/what/reports/RuddReport_TVFoodAdvertising_6.11.pdf))

