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## HEALTHY VIEWING FOR HEALTHY EATING PARENT INFORMATION SESSION

The session plan that follows is intended for use by health and welfare professionals who work with parents of under seven year old children.

It is intended that the session plan be flexible enough for use as a presentation tool with colleagues, parent groups or individual parents. It is a guide only, and for maximum benefit the presenter will tailor the content, language, examples and discussion points to most effectively target the level of knowledge and special interests of participants.

As a preamble to the session plan itself, this document also includes:

- Length of Information Session
- Session Aim
- Equipment and materials needed to conduct information session.

There is an appendix at the end of the session plan with four YMA Fact Sheets that give more detail about this issue, and include further references. The Fact Sheets and references can be used as background reading for the presenter, or to hand out to participants where deemed appropriate

### **Length of Information Session**

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Variable depending on audience and time constraints. Minimum 20 minutes, could run for one hour, if extensive time for discussion allowed.

### **Information Session Aims**

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The aims of the Information session are to:

- raise awareness of that television food advertising is an important factor in determining children's eating preferences
- provide strategies for parents.

### **Equipment and materials needed**

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#### **Equipment**

DVD player and TV

**Trainer materials**

DVD and booklet package *Healthy Viewing for Healthy Eating*

*Healthy Viewing for Healthy Eating* PowerPoint presentation, or same information on overhead transparency (OHT)

Background reading (set of YMA Fact Sheets including references):

- *Television food advertising and childhood obesity / overweight* (Keep your children out of the firing line series)
- *Strategies for parents to counter television food advertising* (Keep your children out of the firing line series)
- *Food advertising*
- *Advertising—an overview.*

**Materials**

You will also need for each participant:

- A *Healthy Viewing for Healthy Eating* booklet
- Set of handouts—PowerPoint presentation printed in handout format
- Set of YMA Fact Sheets (if desired)

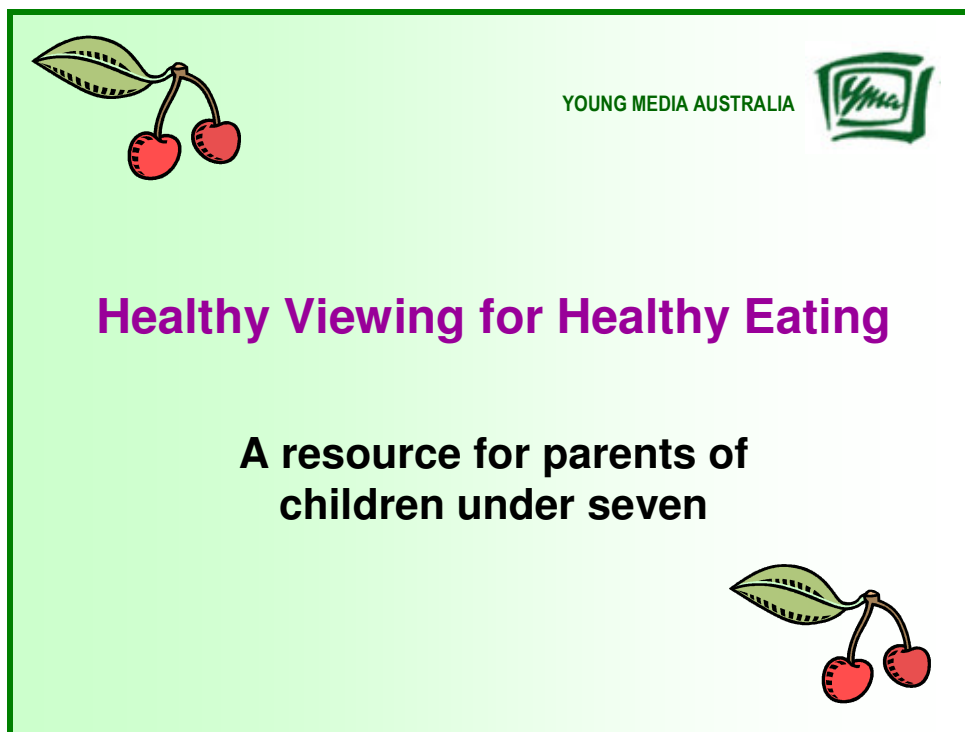
## Session Plan— *Healthy Viewing for Healthy Eating*

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### Introduction

*Note for presenter*

Slide 1—General *Healthy Viewing for Healthy Eating* slide



Introduce self and have trainees introduce themselves

*Note for presenter*

Tailor according to size of group and how well participants know each other, if at all. If a parent group suggest they include something about themselves, plus how many children they have, their gender and ages. If a professional group, organisation they are from, their role within the organisation and their interest in this topic.

- Program developed by community group Young Media Australia with funding from the Telstra Foundation.
- The package we will be looking at is designed to help parents of children under 7 years to avoid the unhealthy influence of television food advertising.

### **Context of the *Healthy Viewing for Healthy Eating* package and information session**

Australia now has one of the highest rates of childhood obesity in the world. There is growing evidence that exposure to TV advertising for foods, is shaping children's food choices and eating habits, and is a contributing factor to the problem of childhood obesity and overweight.

YMA acknowledges that childhood obesity and overweight is a complex problem, with many causes and requiring a range of solutions. We acknowledge the extremely valuable contributions being made by many other groups in the areas of increasing children's physical activity levels, providing parents with better information about nutrition, training in parenting skills and other strategies.

However, as Australia's peak body in the field of children and the media, our contribution to the obesity debate is primarily about the impact of the media, and in this instance, of television food advertising, in particular.

With this in mind, YMA applied for and received funding from the Telstra Foundation for a project to develop, evaluate and distribute a resource that encourages parents of under seven year olds to minimise the impact of television food advertising on their children.

A package was produced consisting of a DVD and a booklet.

YMA considers that the best way to get this message to parents is through children's health professionals. Thus, the accompanying session notes have been produced for use by nurses, GPs paediatricians etc. We are also interested in exploring the possibilities of peer education in some instances.

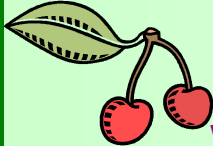
#### **Format of the session**

- Research and expert opinions
- The problem with television food advertising (includes playing first half of DVD)
- What can parents do? (includes playing remainder of DVD)
- Other ideas for taking charge of media in the household.


#### **Research and expert opinions**

*Note for presenter*

Slide 2—What research and medical experts tell us about television food advertising



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## What the research says

- **Hastings G, et al (2003)**  
“Food promotion is having an effect, particularly on children's food preferences, purchase behaviour and consumption.”
- **American Psychological Association (APA) (2004)**  
“...commercials for candy, snacks, and fast food .... It is well documented that such ads are typically effective in persuading children to like and request the product”
- **Kaiser Family Foundation (2004)**  
“... children's exposure to billions of dollars worth of food advertising and marketing in the media may be a key mechanism through which media contributes to childhood obesity.”

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- **Hastings G, et al (2003) reporting for the UK Food Standards Agency** reviewed more than 50 studies and concluded: “Food promotion is having an effect, particularly on children's food preferences, purchase behaviour and consumption. This effect is independent of other factors and operates at both a brand and category level.”
- **American Psychological Association (APA) (2004)** “...commercials for candy, snacks, and fast food are mainstays of the advertising targeting children. It is well documented that such ads are typically effective in persuading children to like and request the product”
- **Kaiser Family Foundation (2004)** reviewed more than 40 studies. Contrary to common assumptions, most research reviewed for the Kaiser report did not find that children's media use displaces more vigorous physical activities. “...there may be other factors that are contributing to weight gain. In particular, children's exposure to billions of dollars worth of food advertising and marketing in the media may be a key mechanism through which media contributes to childhood obesity.”

Major health organisations which find this evidence convincing, are members of CFAC, and as such support a ban on food advertising to children:

*Note for presenter*

Slide 3—Australian health organisations who support a ban on TV food advertising

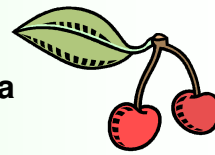


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## Australian health organisations who support a ban on food advertising

- Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) Paediatric Branch
- Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)
- Australasian Society for the Study of Obesity (ASSO)
- Cancer Council of Victoria
- Australian Consumers Association
- Public Health Association of Australia
- Nutrition Australia



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### What is the problem with television food advertising?

#### *Note for presenter*

Use discussion questions to draw out participants' experience of situations where they have noticed food requests being linked to foods that have been advertised.

#### *Discussion questions could include (but not limited to):*

- What sort of snacks do your children prefer?
- Do your children ask you to buy junk food for them?
- Have you noticed any particular food ads lately that you think are quite cleverly done?
- Do your children ask to buy items in the supermarket because of there is a celebrity on the packaging?

#### *Note for presenter*

Show first 2 mins 34 secs of DVD, from beginning of DVD to the end of where Meredith tries to talk to David about 'Captain Gobblebomb' Stop DVD after David says "Can I watch TV?."

Use discussion questions to draw out from participants further thoughts on the problem with food advertising.

#### *Discussion questions could include (but not limited to):*

- What are some of the problems with television food advertising that were identified in the DVD?
- Does anyone remember how many ads per year the average Australian child sees?

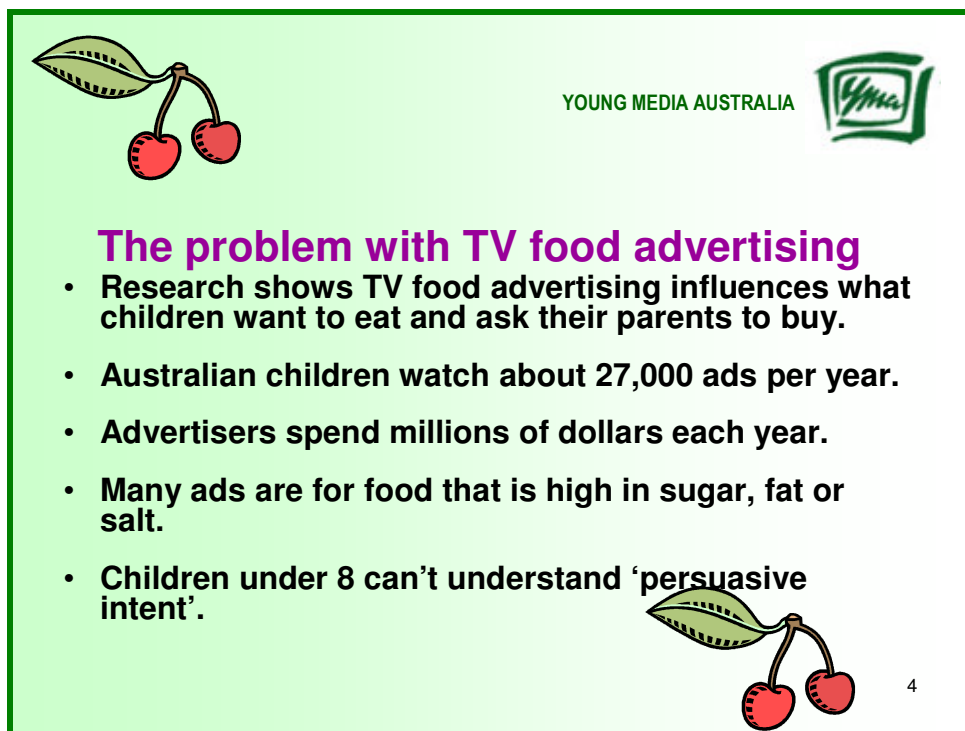
- Why do you think ads are such a problem for very young children

*Note for presenter*

Try to draw out the main points covered in the booklet “Healthy viewing for healthy eating”, and summarised in Slide 4. When discussion winding up, display slide and use as a summary.

*Note for presenter*

Slide 4—The problem with television food advertising



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**The problem with TV food advertising**

- **Research shows TV food advertising influences what children want to eat and ask their parents to buy.**
- **Australian children watch about 27,000 ads per year.**
- **Advertisers spend millions of dollars each year.**
- **Many ads are for food that is high in sugar, fat or salt.**
- **Children under 8 can't understand 'persuasive intent'.**

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### What can parents do?

*Note for presenter*

Use discussion questions to draw out from participants thoughts they have had or actions they have taken about avoiding food ads, or dealing with them.

*Discussion questions could include (but not limited to):*

- Has anyone tried to do anything to limit food ads or weaken their impact?
- If you want to let your kids watch TV, but don't want them to see food ads, what can you do?
- If kids ask for things they have seen advertised, what do you do?

*Note for presenter*

Play the remainder of the DVD.

Use discussion questions to draw out from participants further thoughts on strategies, both for avoiding food ads, and dealing with them, as covered in the section “*What can you do about it?*” of the booklet

“Healthy viewing for healthy eating”, and summarised in Slide 5. When discussion winding up, display Slide 5 and use as a summary

*Discussion questions could include (but not limited to):*

- What are some of the strategies the family used to avoid food ads?

*Note for presenter*

Slide 5—What can you do about it?



**What can you do about it?**

- **It's ok to be in charge and set some rules**
- **Limit your child's exposure to ads**
- **Don't buy foods just because they've seen them advertised**
- **Watch food ads with them. Talk about them.**
- **Build your child's self esteem**
- **Teach your kids about what are 'everyday' foods and 'sometimes' foods.**

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### **Other ideas for taking charge of media in the household**

*Note for presenter*

Use discussion questions to draw out from participants thoughts other ideas from the DVD about managing the media, as covered in the section “*Creating a family friendly media zone*” of the booklet “Healthy viewing for healthy eating”, and summarised in Slide 6. When discussion winding up, display Slide 6 and use as a summary

*Discussion questions could include (but not limited to):*

- What other tips did you notice for dealing with media in the household?
- What ideas seemed most useful to you?
- Which strategies do you think would work best?

*Note for presenter*

Slide 6—*Creating a family friendly media zone*



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## Creating a family friendly media zone

- **Seize the day and the remote**
- **Choose carefully (YMA can help)**
- **Relocate—Take the TV out of your child's bedroom**
- **Participate—Make TV viewing one of many activities that you do as a family**

... continued next page 6

*Note for presenter*

Slide 7—*Creating a family friendly media zone (cont.)*



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## Creating a family friendly media zone

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- **Educate—Teach children how to plan their own TV viewing**
- **Debate—Talk about programs and ads seen on TV**
- **Communicate—Help to shape your media environment**

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### Conclusion

- Encourage to think carefully about impact of television food advertising
- There are many good non-commercial media products made for under seven year olds that don't have lots of food ads in them.

- Keep media viewing in balance with other activities
- And make sure what they do watch is good for them