

AUSTRALIAN CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION ALLIANCE



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 6 December

Protect our children - chronic disease groups support calls to restrict junk food advertising

Junk food advertising to children urgently needs to be better regulated. That's a recommendation from the Senate report on obesity, released last night, and a message that the Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance strongly supports.

Chair of the Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance Sharon McGowan said limiting unhealthy food marketing would reduce children's exposure to unhealthy food and its subsequent consumption.

"Unhealthy weight is a major risk factor for cancer, diabetes, heart disease, stroke and kidney disease. Preventing obesity in children is particularly important, as it is difficult to reverse weight gain once established," Ms McGowan said.

Ms McGowan said one in four children are already overweight or obese, and more likely to grow into adults who are overweight or obese with greater risk of chronic disease.

"While there are multiple factors influencing unhealthy weight gain, this is not an excuse for inaction," she said.

"Food companies are spending big money targeting our kids, unhealthy food advertising fills our television screens, our smartphones and digital media channels.

"Currently, self-regulation by industry is limited and there are almost no restrictions for advertising unhealthy foods online – this has to stop.

"We need to act now to stem this tide of obesity and preventable chronic disease, or we risk being the first generation to leave our children with a shorter life expectancy than our own."

The Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance also welcomed the Report's recommendations for the establishment of a National Obesity Taskforce, improvements to the Health Star Rating food labelling system, development a National Physical Activity Strategy and introduction of a sugary drinks levy.

"We support the recent Government commitment to develop a national approach to obesity and urge the government to incorporate the recommendations from the Senate report for a well-rounded approach to tackle obesity in Australia," Ms McGowan said.

ENDS

For media enquiries please contact:

Emily Granland media@strokefoundation.org.au

m)0408 000 409 p)(03)9670 1000 w)www.acdpa.org.au

The Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance (ACDPA) is an alliance of Cancer Council Australia; Diabetes Australia; National Heart Foundation of Australia; Kidney Health Australia; and Stroke Foundation. Members work together in the primary prevention of chronic disease, with emphasis on changes to the food and physical environments.