Media Impact on Food Consumption

Media and ethical issues related to advertising practices on food consumption such as; the promotion of ‘health’ foods and ‘fast’ foods.
### Influences on nutritional status

- health and the role of diet in the development of conditions, including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, food sensitivity/intolerance/allergies
- lifestyle and the effect of cultural and social practices on nutritional status
- media and ethical issues related to advertising practices on food consumption such as the promotion of ‘health’ foods and ‘fast’ foods

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<td>describe the relationship between nutrient intake and dietary disorders</td>
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<td>discuss ethical issues related to the responsible advertising of food products</td>
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**Words to Define:**

*Media:* The main means of mass communication, such as; TV, radio and newspapers.

*Ethical:* Relates to what is ‘right’ and what is ‘wrong’.
The food industry uses the media for several purposes:

- To increase awareness of a brand or individual food product.
- To shape the consumer’s perception of his or her own needs and desires.
- To guide the consumer’s product choices and buying patterns.
The Food Industry and Media
There is continual debate about the impact on junk food advertising on childhood and adult obesity.

The greatest concern is the effect it has on children, as children are less prepared and equipped to make wise individual food choices.

Children are more susceptible to the messages being delivered to them through advertising, which now surrounds us everyday on TV, radio and billboards, in films and at sporting events.

The focus is not on the issue of health as children are unaware of the value of nutritional content.
Advertisers make use of…?

- Fun Characters
- Fun, Happiness and Play
- Bright Colours
- Short Story Plots

Ethical Issues and Responsible Advertising
These advertisements are usually run during children’s programs to maximise the number of children they will reach.

Messages are also embedded for the parents’ benefit. For example; The catch phrase ‘high in calcium’ is used in an advertisement for ice-cream, which also happens to be high in sugars and saturated fats.

McDonald’s promotes healthy eating by offering an apple with Happy meals, while purposely not highlighting the fact that the meal contains the standard burger, which is high in fats, sugars and salt.
Ethical Issues and Responsible Advertising
The Advertising Standards Board (ASB) is an Australian organisation in place to monitor to and respond to inappropriate advertising. On August 1st, 2009, they launched a new initiatives that established stricter rules for fast-food advertising.

Fast food companies;

- Can no longer advertise free toy offers.
- Can no longer use their licensed characters unless the meal they were advertising met specific nutrition criteria.
Ethical Issues and Responsible Advertising
There has been a notable drop in junk food advertising in recent years. This has meant that fast-food and junk-food companies have had to become more creative.

A common trend now is to use other advertising techniques such as cross-promotions and product placement.

**Cross-Promotion:** A company will advertise a product through association with another non-food-related product, such as; TV show, film sporting event.

- This sparks the interest of a large number of consumers.
Product Placement: Food advertising can be strategically placed in TV shows and films, promoting the product simply by its presence and association with the show. For example; a character might be drinking a clearly branded soft drink or eating chocolate from a familiar purple Cadbury wrapper.
Ultimately it is up to the individual - or, in the case of a young child, their parent or guardian - to make sensible choices concerning their food and diet.

Advertisers have the responsibility to be honest about the product, and to be clear about the nutritional advantages and disadvantages of a product.

It is unethical for advertisers to lie, which is why advertisements will often highlight the positive points about a product and avoid addressing the negatives.
Companies used fortified foods as a way of making their products more competitive.

Today, many companies are creating line extensions in the form of functional foods to meet the nutritional demands of consumers.

Defining ‘health food’ is difficult because there are no legal requirements on the use of the word ‘health’, ‘healthy’ or ‘natural’ in food labelling. Consumers are left to interpret these terms in their own way.

FSANZ also permits food companies to include statements about their nutritional value of their products. However, cannot make any reference to how the product can cure or prevent disease. For example; a company claim that their bottle of milk contains calcium, however, cannot say it will prevent osteoporosis.
Promotion of Health Foods
Promotion of Fast Foods

Australians eat, on average, 4 meals per week that have been prepared outside the home. Many of these meals consist of fast foods. The major multinational fast food companies devote a large part of their huge annual promotional budget to advertising in the mass media.

In Australia, McDonald’s spends $55 million dollars on advertising a year!
Promotion of Fast Foods
A diet food company uses celebrities to promote their products. Photographs of celebrities are digitally modified to make them look slimmer before publication on the company's website.

What type of issue is involved in this practice?

(A) Ethical
(B) Legislative
(C) Cross-promotional
(D) Product positioning
‘Media and advertising have encouraged poor diets, leading to increased obesity levels in Australia’.

Critically discuss this statement in relation to the impact of advertising on food consumption patterns.

(15 Marks)
## Impact of Media on Health

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<th>Positive Impacts</th>
<th>Negative Impacts</th>
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<td>● The promotion of good health, e.g: low fat foods.</td>
<td>● The heavy advertising of fast foods and energy-dense foods in comparison to healthy nutritious foods.</td>
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<td>● The promotion of health programs, e.g: the <em>Australian Dietary Guidelines</em></td>
<td>● The use of slim models can lead to body image and self-esteem issues.</td>
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<td>● An increased knowledge about health issues.</td>
<td>● Reliance on self-diagnosis rather than on professional medical advice, e.g: fad diets.</td>
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<td>● The promotion of snack foods is leading to a grazing lifestyle.</td>
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<td>● Energy-dense food companies can spend more on advertising and promotion than can the less-processed nutrient-dense food producers.</td>
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Impact of Media on Health