

# WHO guideline on policies to protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing

(Forthcoming)

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# Outline

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- Global calls to action to restrict food marketing -> limited global uptake
- Evidence on the impact of marketing foods that are high in fats, *trans*-fats, sugars and/or salt on children
- Evidence on the impact of policies to protect children
- Forthcoming guidance



# Action to protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing

- Numerous calls to action at global & regional levels
- Available tools (nutrient profile models) from all WHO regions
- Increased recognition of food marketing as a children's rights concern
- Increased advocacy to protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing

COUNTRY ACTION REMAINS INSUFFICIENT

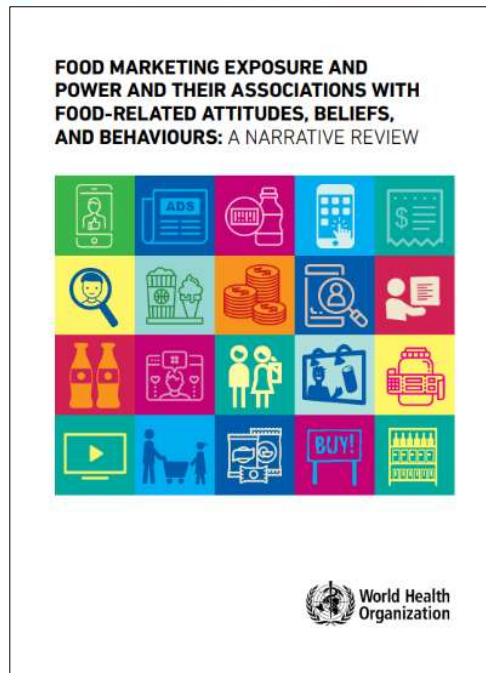


## Policy examples : policy elements

Policy example	Country example
Protect <i>all</i> children	Ireland, Republic of Korea, Turkey
Adopting a <i>broad definition</i> of marketing to children	Chile
Including a <i>broad set of</i> marketing communication <i>channels</i>	Quebec, Canada
Covering a <i>broad set</i> of persuasive <i>techniques</i> that appeal to children	Peru
Applying a <i>strict nutrient profile model</i>	Turkey, Chile
Adopting an effective enforcement mechanism	Quebec, Canada

Adapted from the forthcoming WHO/UNICEF implementation tool

# Extent, exposure and impact of food marketing



Narrative review (2022)  
Supplement other  
reviews



Systematic: review (2022)  
Evidence of impact on eating  
behaviours and health

Evidence that **food marketing**  
remains prevalent globally

Food marketing associated with  
significant increases in the:

**Intake, choice, preference for  
marketed foods**

# *Traditional* marketing remains a concern -> digital marketing amplifies messages

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- Direct engagement with children
- Encourages peer sharing of marketing content
- Rapid spread through peer networks and creation user-generated promotional content -> hashtags, likes, shares, tags
- Promotion of goods, services and brands through games
- Extraction of personal data for micro-targeted (data-driven) marketing

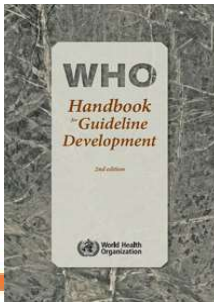




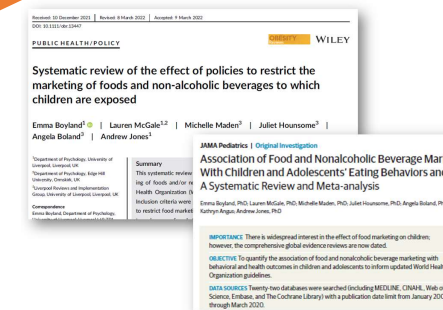
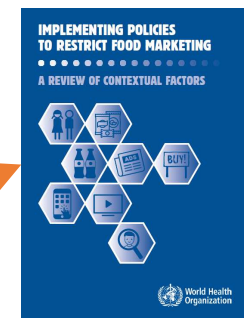


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## WHO guideline development process




- Scoping review
- Meeting of the NUGAG Subgroup on Policy Actions to review and finalize the scope of the guideline, formulate questions to guide the systematic review and define priority outcomes
- Conducting of literature reviews: review of contextual factors narrative and systematic reviews
- Meeting of the NUGAG Subgroup on Policy Actions to review the outcomes of the final evidence reviews and formulate the recommendations
- Peer review process
- Public consultation
- Finalization and review by the WHO Guideline Review Committee





# Emerging evidence on effective policy elements

## Systematic review of the effect of policies to restrict the marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to which children are exposed

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### Summary

This systematic review examined the effectiveness of policies restricting the marketing of foods and/or non-alcoholic beverages to children to inform updated World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines. Databases were searched to March 2020. Inclusion criteria were primary studies of any design assessing implemented policies to restrict food marketing to children (0–19 years). Critical outcomes were exposure to and power of marketing, dietary intake, choice, preference, and purchasing. Important outcomes were purchase requests, dental caries, body weight, diet-related non-

# Evaluated policies

Policy name	Jurisdiction (date implemented)	Policy type	Definition of a child
Australian Children's Television Standards	Australia (1984)	Mandatory	6–13 years
Australian Food and Grocery Council's Responsible Marketing to Children Initiative	Australia (January 2009)	Voluntary	<12 years
Australian Food and Grocery Council's Australian Quick Service Restaurant Industry Initiative	Australia (August 2009)	Voluntary	<14 years
Canadian Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative	Canada (introduced 2007, fully implemented by 2008)	Voluntary	<12 years
Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative	USA (introduced 2007, fully implemented by 2009)	Voluntary	<12 years
Chile Food Labelling and Advertising Regulation ("Super 8 Law")	Chile (2016, updated 2018)	Mandatory	<14 years
EU Pledge	European Union (EU; introduced 2007, uniform nutrition criteria adopted 2014)	Voluntary	<12 years
European and Spanish public health laws	Spain (July 2011)	Mandatory	<15 years
Mexican self-regulation (Código de Autorregulación de Publicidad de Alimentos y Bebidas No Alcohólicas dirigida al Público Infantil)	Mexico (2009)	Voluntary	<12 years
Quebec Consumer Protection Act	Quebec, Canada (1980)	Mandatory	<13 years
San Francisco Healthy Food Incentives Ordinance	San Francisco, USA (December 2011)	Mandatory	Not reported
Singapore Code of Advertising Practice	Singapore (January 2015)	Voluntary	<12 years
Special Act on Safety Management of Children's Dietary Life	Republic of Korea (September 2010)	Mandatory	4–18 years
UK content and scheduling (Ofcom) restrictions	UK (April 2007 – January 2009)	Mandatory	<16 years

Outcome and certainty of evidence	Clear effect favouring the intervention	Unclear effect potentially favouring the intervention	No difference	Unclear effect potentially favouring the control	Clear effect favouring the control
Critical outcomes					
Exposure ⊕○○○					
Power ⊕○○○					
Purchasing ⊕⊕○○					
Diet ⊕○○○					
Important outcomes					
Product change ⊕○○○					
Unintended consequences ⊕⊕○○					

Each bar represents one study; the number in each bar corresponds to the list of studies beneath the plot. Green indicates comparison of mandatory policy with no policy; orange indicates comparison of voluntary policy with no policy; blue indicates comparison of mandatory policy with voluntary policy; red indicates comparison of implemented mandatory policy with partially implemented mandatory policy; dark shading indicates a high-quality study.

# Guideline objectives

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Complementing global and regional guidance on restricting food marketing, and recognizing that there is a large body of evidence on the impacts of marketing and marketing restrictions outside the food context, the objectives of this guideline are to:

- provide Member States with recommendations and implementation considerations on policies to protect all children from the harmful impact of food marketing, based on evidence specific to children and specific to the context of food marketing;
- enable evidence-informed advocacy to advance policy action to restrict food marketing;
- guide future research to further strengthen the evidence base for policy action to restrict food marketing; and
- contribute to the creation of food environments that enable healthy dietary practices among children.

# Good practice statement and recommendations

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## Good practice statement:

- Children of all ages should be protected from the harmful impact of marketing of foods that are high in saturated fats, *trans*-fatty acids, free sugars and/or salt.

## Recommendation 1:

- WHO suggests implementation of policies to restrict marketing of foods high in saturated fats, *trans*-fatty acids, free sugars and/or salt to which children of all ages are exposed.

**Recommendation 2** (policy design elements to maximize effectiveness of policies to restrict food marketing)



# Forthcoming implementation guidance

Joint WHO/UNICEF publication: “Taking action to protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing: a child rights-based approach”

- Part 1: Update on the evidence and new challenges
- Part 2: Food marketing is a child rights concern
- Part 3: Restricting food marketing using a child rights approach
  - Four stages: preparation, development, implementation, monitoring & evaluation

# Key messages

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- Marketing of foods that contribute to unhealthy diets remains pervasive and persuasive
- Marketing messages are being amplified through engaging digital marketing techniques
- Country action is insufficient to protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing
- Build on the past, galvanize on a renewed global momentum to tackle the negative impact of commercial determinants of health
  - WHO/UNICEF Lancet series: A future for the world's children
  - Forthcoming WHO guidelines, available guidance (incl from EURO)
  - Joint UNICEF/WHO efforts to “tackle” food marketing





Thank you