

National interim guide to reduce children’s exposure to unhealthy food and drink promotion

The promotion of unhealthy food and drinks is a known risk factor for childhood overweight and obesity. The following guide was endorsed by the COAG Health Council on 2 August 2018 for voluntary use by governments in their settings. The interim status of this guideline reflects the need to consider the latest available evidence from the next review of the *Australian Dietary Guidelines* and maintain responsiveness to community expectations around the promotion of unhealthy food and drinks to children.

Key Principles

The following key principles were used to develop the guide.

- i. Consistency with the *Australian Dietary Guidelines* and the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*, in particular the need to limit the intake of discretionary food and drinks.
- ii. The need to improve the current diet of Australian children by reducing exposure to the particular discretionary food and drinks that are frequently over-consumed.
- iii. The need to redress the current imbalance in the food and drink marketing landscape by reducing the discretionary food and drink categories most commonly promoted.
- iv. The importance of responding to community expectations to protect children from the influence of unhealthy food marketing.
- v. Ensuring ease of use for the end-user of the scheme.

The food and drink categories listed below are not recommended for promotion. All other food and drink categories are considered suitable for promotion.

FOOD/DRINK CATEGORY NOT RECOMMENDED FOR PROMOTION	SOME EXAMPLES
Sugar-sweetened drinks¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft drinks and flavoured mineral waters, energy and sports drinks, cordials, fruit/vegetable drinks with added sugar, slushies
Confectionery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lollies, dried fruits with added sugar such as fruit leathers/ roll ups, chocolate, fruit covered in confectionery e.g. toffee apples • Foods with added confectionery e.g. bread with choc bits, iced buns
Savoury snacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savoury and/or flavoured crisps (potato/corn/grain/vegetable)
Sweet snacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muesli/snack bars • Cakes and slices, sweet biscuits, waffles, muffins, tarts, cheesecake • Doughnuts, churros and pastries

¹ ‘Sugar-sweetened drinks’ includes any drink to which sugar has been added. Added sugar includes sucrose (commonly called sugar), fructose, glucose, honey, fruit juice concentrate, fruit sugar syrup and deionised fruit juice (Source: Food Standards Code)

FOOD/DRINK CATEGORY NOT RECOMMENDED FOR PROMOTION	SOME EXAMPLES
Desserts, ice creams, ice confections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice creams/confections, frozen yoghurt, gelato, sorbet • Cream-based desserts, e.g. mousse, custards • Fruit ice blocks, jelly desserts, ice crushes • Drink flavourings, powders or syrups
Unhealthy Meals² – packaged or sold in Quick Service Restaurants³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuggets, spring/chiko rolls, battered saveloys, dim sims • Crumbed/coated/fried/battered meat, chicken, fish or seafood • Burgers, pizza, nachos, hot chips, wedges, hash browns or any meals served with these items • Nachos, taco and tortilla-based dishes, kebabs, hot dogs • Processed meats such as sausages and frankfurts, bacon, salami or meals that contain these items • Savoury pastries, including pies and sausage rolls • Milkshakes, thick shakes
Optional: Artificially sweetened drinks**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diet soft drinks

***The relevance of including diet drinks as ‘not recommended for promotion’ varies per application and is therefore optional; to be decided by each jurisdiction, depending on the setting and proposed use of the guide in that setting.*

Master branding

The guide stipulates that the master brand should not be the predominant feature of the advertisement, and can only be used in combination with the image of a healthy food or drink.

Master branding is a specific overarching corporate brand name that serves as the main anchoring point on which all underlying product brands are based. Master branding attempts to create a strong association between a company's products and what the brand represents. When food and drink companies promote their products, the master or company brand is almost always included. Children are vulnerable to, and largely unaware of the persuasive and aspirational intent of brands.

² Unhealthy meals refers to meals that are described as discretionary as part of the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* and considered to be unhealthy by a reasonable person.

³ Quick Service Restaurants (QSR), are a specific type of restaurant that serves fast food cuisine and has minimal table service. The food served is typically offered from a limited menu, cooked in bulk in advance and kept hot, finished and packaged to order, and usually available for take away. QSR are typically part of a franchise operation that provisions standardized ingredients and/or partially prepared foods and supplies to each restaurant through controlled supply channels.