



CANADIAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION DENTAIRE CANADIENNE

**Written Submission to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science
and Technology**

**RE: Bill C-252, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (prohibition of food and
beverage marketing directed at children)**

Submitted by the Canadian Dental Association

November 2024

The Canadian Dental Association (CDA) is the national voice for dentistry, dedicated to the promotion of optimal oral health – an essential component of general health – and to the advancement and leadership of a unified profession. CDA is a federation of Canada’s provincial and territorial dental associations, representing over 21,000 practicing dentists from coast to coast to coast. On behalf of our members, the CDA appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the committee’s study of Bill C-252, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (prohibition of food and beverage marketing directed at children). **CDA is fully supportive of Bill C-252 and urges senators to pass the bill into law.**

Poor nutrition and unhealthy habits can affect the development and integrity of the oral cavity and the progression of oral diseases for children.¹ Unhealthy eating habits can also lead to a deficiency in essential nutrients that are crucial for maintaining strong teeth and gums. Frequent intake of sugary and acidic foods and beverages significantly increases the risk of tooth decay and erosion. In fact, tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease in Canada, and excessive sugar intake is a key driver of this issue. According to the most recent Canadian Health Measures Survey (CHMS), 57% of children aged 6 to 11 have experienced dental caries (cavities).² In 2015, the average daily total sugars intake from food and beverages among all children aged 2 to 8 was 101 grams,³ which is more than double the recommended sugar intake per day.⁴ Soda, in particular, contains high levels of sugar and acids that can erode tooth enamel, making teeth more susceptible to cavities.

The connection between unhealthy eating habits and children's oral health underscores the importance of legislative measures that aim to restrict unhealthy food and beverage marketing to children. Studies have suggested that the marketing of unhealthy food and beverages influences food choice and food intake, leading many children to consume more cariogenic and unhealthy foods⁵. By curbing aggressive marketing tactics that target children with advertisements for sugary and unhealthy products, Bill C-252 aims to reduce their appeal. Progressing forward will not only help safeguard children from marketing tactics, but also assist parents in making healthier food choices for their children.

Internationally, many countries, like the United Kingdom, have brought restrictions on the advertisement and marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages as a key strategy to help reduce sugar consumption among children. In 2007, the UK restricted the advertising and product placement of foods high in sugar and salt during children's TV programs, expanding restrictions to digital and print media in 2017 and further planning to tighten them in 2025, with a

¹ Pflipsen, M., & Zenchenko, Y. (2017). Nutrition for oral health and oral manifestations of poor nutrition and unhealthy habits. *General Dentistry*.

² https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2010/sc-hc/H34-221-2010-eng.pdf

³ Langlois, K., Garriguet, D., Gonzalez, A., Sinclair, S., & Colapinto, C. K. (2019). Change in total sugars consumption among Canadian children and adults. *Health Reports*, 30(1), 10–19.

⁴ Sugar & Diabetes Position Statement . DiabetesCanadaWebsite. (n.d.). Retrieved July 8, 2022, from <https://www.diabetes.ca/advocacy---policies/our-policy-positions/sugar---diabetes>

⁵ Mc Carthy, Catherine M et al. “The influence of unhealthy food and beverage marketing through social media and advergaming on diet-related outcomes in children-A systematic review.” *obesity reviews : an official journal of the International Association for the Study of Obesity* vol. 23,6 (2022): e13441. doi:10.1111/obr.13441

9 pm TV watershed and restricting online advertisement.⁶ Research shows that just two years after the first set of restrictions, children's exposure to unhealthy ads were reduced by 37%.⁷

Not only will Bill C-252 help improve the oral health outcomes for children, but it also has the potential to ease financial strain on Canada's healthcare system by addressing diet-related health issues from an early age and setting Canadian youth up for healthier lives. By restricting the marketing of unhealthy foods to children, this bill supports healthier eating habits that can help reduce the prevalence of conditions like obesity, diabetes, and tooth decay. Preventing these conditions in childhood is critical because diet-related issues often lead to chronic health complications that may require lifelong management and costly treatments. Encouraging better dietary habits from a young age could translate into fewer hospital visits, reduced medication needs, and overall lower healthcare spending. In the long run, promoting healthier lifestyles for Canadian youth not only improves public health, but also decreases the burden on the healthcare system.

Children deserve to be protected from marketing and harmful industry tactics that negatively influence their food preferences. By limiting the marketing of sugary, high-fat, and high-salt foods targeted at children, this bill not only promotes better dietary choices but also supports long-term health benefits that extend well beyond childhood. CDA urges senators to champion this important initiative and pass Bill C-252, making health and wellness a national priority for Canadian children.

For more information, please contact:

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⁶ UK Government. *Introducing further advertising restrictions on TV and online for products high in fat, salt or sugar: Government response to consultation on secondary legislation*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/introducing-further-advertising-restrictions-on-tv-and-online-for-products-high-in-fat-salt-or-sugar-secondary-legislation/outcome/introducing-further-advertising-restrictions-on-tv-and-online-for-products-high-in-fat-salt-or-sugar-government-response-to-consultation-on-secondar>

⁷ World Health Organization (WHO). *Protecting children from the harmful effects of food and drink marketing*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/protecting-children-from-the-harmful-effects-of-food-and-drink-marketing>