



Nickelodeon

Nickelodeon, part of the global media company Viacom, is a multimedia entertainment brand directed to kids. Nickelodeon, or Nick, is the most-watched children's television station¹ in the United States and its programs are extremely popular – 47 of the top 50 children's programs are shown on the Nickelodeon cable channel.² Its core target audience is 2- to 11-year-olds. Nickelodeon produces movies, books, magazines, records, toys, web sites, live tours, and more.

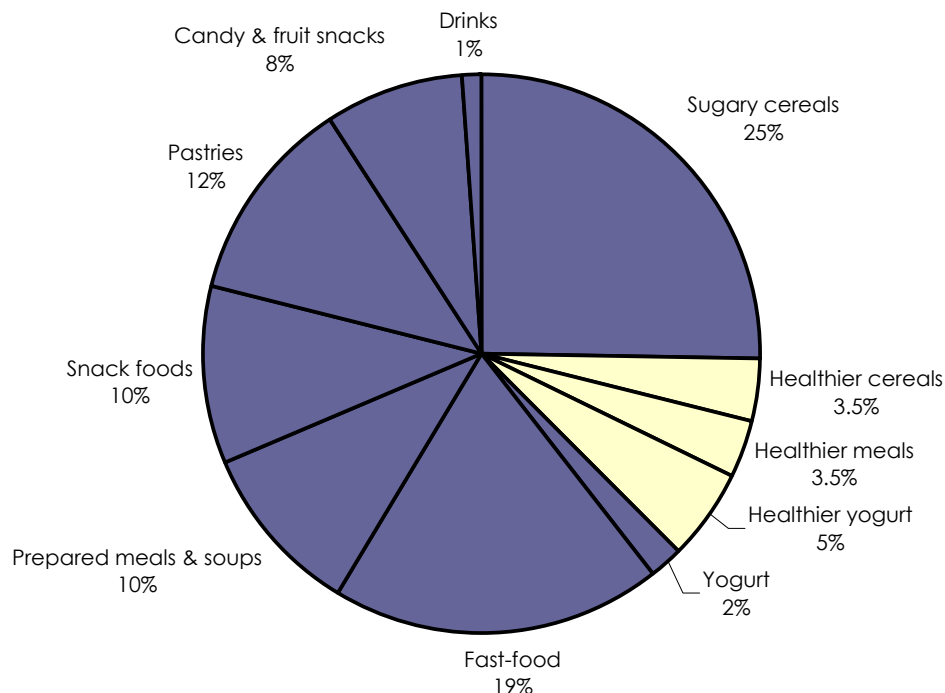
Nickelodeon claims to use its enormous influence on children to promote healthy lifestyles, including its *Let's Just Play* physical activity campaign and licensing SpongeBob SquarePants, Dora the Explorer, and other Nick characters on a few healthy foods. However, these steps are dwarfed by the vast array of junk food peddled on the Nickelodeon channel and by Nick spokes-characters.

In the fall 2005, CSPI took a snapshot of Nickelodeon food marketing, examining the nutritional quality of foods:

- shown in ads during 28 hours of Nickelodeon (NICK1) television
- shown in ads in the September and October issues of *Nickelodeon* magazine
- with on-package marketing featuring Nick characters
- from restaurants offering Nickelodeon-licensed characters as toy collectibles

The picture isn't good.

Television Food Marketing



Of the 168 food ads on Nickelodeon, 88% were for foods of poor nutritional quality (in blue). Sugary cereals and fast foods were advertised more than any other foods.



Magazine Advertising

All 7 of the ads for food in the September and October 2005 issues of *Nickelodeon* magazine featured foods of poor nutritional quality.

On-Package Marketing & Fast-Food Restaurants

We found fifteen foods with Nickelodeon-related marketing on the packaging; 9 out of the 15 products (60%) are of poor nutritional quality. Nickelodeon had agreements with Burger King (Danny Phantom collectibles and Honbatz designs), and McDonald's restaurants (Tak 3 collectibles) during fall 2005. Of the 24 possible Burger King kids' meal combinations, 23 (96%) are of poor nutritional quality. Of the 24 possible McDonald's Happy Meals combinations, 22 (92%) are of poor nutritional quality.



Foods of poor nutritional quality advertised on Nickelodeon

King of Cross-Promotions, Leader in Licensing

Nickelodeon has relationships with more than 500 licensees worldwide. In 2003, Nickelodeon's most popular cartoon character, SpongeBob SquarePants, brought in \$1.5 billion in revenues from licensing on products from toys to food.³ While SpongeBob calls out to kids from packages of some healthy foods, like baby carrots and yogurt, he far more often peddles packages of cookies, ice cream, sugary cereals, Pop-Tarts, Rice Krispies treats, candies, and other foods of poor nutritional quality.

The bottom line is that the vast majority of foods marketed to children through Nickelodeon media and with Nickelodeon characters are of poor nutritional quality.



Healthier foods advertised on Nickelodeon

For more information see www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy.



¹ Nielsen's data. Reported on Viacom's web site. Accessed at http://www.viacom.com/view_brand.jhtml?inID=6§ionid=2 on Nov. 29, 2005.

² Advertising Age. "For Kids TV, Every Day Is Saturday." February 21, 2005, p. S-10.

³ Gisquet V, Rose L. "Top-Earning Fictional Characters: Top Characters Gross \$25B" *Forbes*, October 14, 2004. Accessed at <http://www.forbes.com/lists/2004/10/20/cz_vq_lr_1020fictionalintro.html> on November 29, 2005.