

Wiley Health

Friday, October 9, 1992

Children-targeted television food ads miss the mark on fairness & nutrition

Dear Dr. Meinig:

I don't suppose you have ever watched children's television shows on a Saturday morning but they are playing havoc with our attempts to properly feed our children. It is criminal how children's minds are being manipulated in order for these companies to turn kids into moneymaking money machines just to make these men wealthy. When I think how easy it is for them to overcome all the good we are trying to do to get our kids to stay away from junk food, I become livid and end up mad at the world. What can parents and grandparents do to stop this rape of our children's minds

B.W.

Dear B.W.:

Thanks for jarring me out of my complacent submission to what has been going on with these children's programs. It is not that I am unaware but when you have fought the Industrial Food Complex and its advertising of junk foods for as long as I have, you will understand why it became easy to ignore watching what is happening on Saturday morning television.

It will interest you that we aren't alone in our disgust and fears. The National PTA's Director of Government Relations Arnold Fege supports not only the elimination of food advertisements but all ads directed at children.

Michael Jacobsen, director for the Center for Science in the



Dr. George

By George Meinig, D.D.S.

public interest, reminds officials of these food companies and the public that, "You're pitting the best minds on Madison Avenue against the most vulnerable minds in our society" and I would add that means against little kids. Just look at what they have been able to do to the food and beverage habits of adults.

We also have the support of the American Academy of Pediatrics that called for an outright ban on food ads on children's television programs saying "the commercialization of children's television exploits them and that parents, rather than kids, should determine what children should eat."

What can we do about it? I'm happy your question included grandparents, as many times

they have more clout than the parents of three and nine year olds. May I suggest you encourage them and your friends to join in writing to Congressmen, Senators and state officials? Alert our lawmakers about how the atrocious highly sweetened and salted, fat laden foods, they sucker kids into wanting are ruining children's lives and the future of the country.

I have written numbers of articles about how these foods lead to deficiencies of magnesium and other important minerals and nutrients, and how their loss causes erratic, anti-social, criminal behavior. Studies of young prisoners in our jails show their consumption

of sugar-laden foods averages 300 to 400 pounds per person per year. That is over twice the already high amounts most adults consume.

When you write to government officials, it doesn't have to be a fancy letter. Tell your views and if you like, enclose a copy of this article.

I can tell you what one smart mother and father do. They say to their child, "I promise to let you watch television if you promise you won't pester me to buy that junk they are advertising?"