



Wellness Wakeup Call Newsletter for K-5

Month #9: Media Literacy & Food Politics

Welcome to Wellness Wakeup Call! This newsletter contains messages to be read each morning in school over the loud speaker for morning announcements. This program is an easy way to help fulfill the requirements of nutrition education goals for the federally mandated Local Wellness Policies. If there are more messages than school days in the month, please combine a few so that you will be able to read them all. The program is intended to be used in chronological order, so start with month 1, and continue from there. We encourage you to photocopy this newsletter double sided to send home with students so parents can learn, too, and have a healthy recipe to try. In addition, we encourage you to notify parents about this program through the district or PTA/PTO newsletters or on your website. This document is available as a PDF file at www.healthyschoolfood.org and you are welcome to post these files on the district website. Learn more about healthy school food at www.healthyschoolfood.org.

- Each day, start the message with: **"Good morning, this is your Wellness Wakeup Call!"**
- Then read the message for the day. End each message with: **"Enjoy your day, the healthy way!"**

Note: wherever the word soda is used, replace it with "pop" or "soda pop" to reflect the common usage in your area if necessary. We have underlined the word so you will see where it occurs.

1. How often have you asked someone else to buy a food for you (or even bought it yourself) because you've seen a commercial or an ad for it? How much do you think ads make you decide which foods to eat?
2. Companies that make foods spend a lot of money on ads to make people want to buy their foods. You probably know that there are ads on TV and billboards and in magazines and newspapers. See if you can count how many ads for foods you see in just one day.
3. Did you know that many websites are created to sell products? Ask your parent to show you a kid's website and see if you can figure out what they are selling. (Parents and teachers, check out www.kraftbrands.com/crex/ for an example.)
4. Did you know that some companies give teachers materials to use in their classes that look educational but that are designed to make you want to buy or eat certain foods? (Teachers, see this website for some examples from the beef industry: www.iabeef.org/Content/educators.aspx)
5. Most people know that commercials are made in order to get people to buy things. Did you know that companies pay to have their products appear in movies, TV shows, and video games as a way to make people want their products? For example, soda and tobacco companies pay movie makers to put their products in the movies. See how many products you can recognize when you are watching movies, TV shows, or playing video games. Of course, we should all spend less time in front of the screen.
6. Every year kids in the US watch more than 20,000 TV commercials for junk food like soda, candy, sugary breakfast cereals, and fast food. That means kids watch one of those ads every 5 minutes the TV is on. Some kids watch more than 3 hours of junk food ads every week.
7. Sometimes it's hard to tell the difference between a TV show and a commercial. If you're not sure whether something is a commercial or not, ask your parents or an older brother or sister. Commercials do not always tell the truth, or at least they may not tell the **WHOLE** truth.
8. Have you ever seen an ad or a commercial that shows you exactly what's in fast food or junk food or how it's made? Of course not! Companies would rather you didn't know how unhealthy their products are. And the companies make using their product look like so much fun, that kids will want it.
9. Have you ever seen a commercial for broccoli? Wonder why not? Advertisers make more money from selling processed foods like breakfast cereals, fast foods, and sodas than they make from fruits and vegetables. Some people say that's why we don't know about how important it is to eat fruits and vegetables and why we eat so much of the junky food we hear about so often on TV.
10. Advertisers want kids to turn into salespeople and nag their parents to buy them the newest or most popular foods. Are you working for the food companies? Why should you do their advertising for them and not even get paid?

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This information and more can be found at www.healthyschoolfood.org.



Wellness Wakeup Call

Newsletter for 6-12

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~ Continued ~

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11. Fast food companies give away toys and have playgrounds so that kids will tell their parents that they want to eat there. It's just one way that these companies trick kids. A lot of the money that people pay is spent on toys and play areas instead of healthy ingredients for the foods served.
12. Some companies will give away clothes with advertisements on them. If you wear them, you're like a walking billboard advertising their product. Are they paying you to do this? Is that fair?
13. Some companies give away cheap toys or prizes in packages of their food. That might make you want to buy the food whether or not it's a healthy food. This is how companies trick children into buying their food. Do you like being tricked?
14. Food companies make sure that supermarkets put candy, sugary cereals, cookies, and other foods you don't need on the lower shelves and near the cash registers so kids like you will see them and bug their parents to buy them.
15. Some food companies hire people to follow groups of kids in public places and listen to their conversations. That way they know how to make ads that will make you want to buy more of their products.
16. Eating right and exercising are two very important things we can do to stay healthy. Sometimes food companies tell us that, but then how can we do that if we are eating their unhealthy food?
17. Did you know that food companies try to change laws about food? For instance, some places want laws that require fast food restaurants to let people know how many calories are in their food. Fast food restaurants don't want people to find out how fattening their food can be and stop eating it. It's too bad they're more interested in making money than in keeping people healthy.
18. Companies that make soda also work very hard to make sure that schools for older kids keep selling soda. They ignore issues like the connection between soda and being overweight in order to sell their product.
19. Some people think that there should be extra money called sales tax on junk food to help pay for doctors. What do you think? Do you think companies that make junk food would want this kind of a tax?
20. Do you think there should be warning labels on unhealthy foods just like there are warning labels on cigarette packages? The tobacco industry didn't want to put warning labels on cigarette packages. Do you think the food industry would like to have warning labels on unhealthy foods?
21. Getting active doesn't just mean exercising more (although that is important). Getting active can also mean writing a letter to important people like your senator or the president and letting them know how you feel about things like food advertising, junk food, and soda in schools. Encourage other people to write letters too.
22. When it comes to food, it's important to think for yourself, and not believe what the food companies tell you. They just want to sell their products and make money. They are usually very good at tricking you. You can be different. Thinking for yourself means that you tricked them instead!

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Recipe of the Month

Happy Burgers

Children can help with this recipe by peeling the sweet potato with a potato peeler, mashing the beans and the sweet potato, combining the ingredients, and forming the patties into desired shapes.

You will need:

- 3 cups cooked black beans (make sure they are well cooked)
- 1 sweet potato, peeled
- 1/2 cup quick cooking oats
- 1/2 cup walnuts, finely chopped
- 2 Tablespoons onion powder
- 1 Tablespoon maple syrup
- 1 Tablespoon dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt



What to do:

Bake or steam sweet potato until soft. If baking, skin can be left on and insides scooped out. If steaming, peel first.

Mash black beans into sweet potatoes. Add all of the rest of ingredients, and mix well. Form into 12 patties using a heaping 1/4 cup of the mix for each.

Heat an oven to 350F Place patties on a nonstick baking sheet, or a lightly oiled baking sheet. Bake until brown on one side (8-10 minutes). Flip, and bake on the other side for the same amount of time.

Makes 6 servings.

Recipe by Allison Memmo Geiger.

PLEASE SEE EXTRA RESOURCES ON THE NEXT PAGE...



Additional Resources:

Month #9: Media Literacy & Food Politics

Parents - Want to learn more about advertising and food politics?

Here are some recommended books, websites, DVDs, and videos.

- ***Appetite for Profit: How the Food Industry Undermines Our Health and How to Fight Back***
a book by Michele Simon: www.informedeating.org

- ***Chew on This*** a book by Eric Schlosser and Charles Wilson, for 9 - 14 year olds:
www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/readers_guides/schlosser_chew.shtml

- ***Disease-Proof Your Child: Feeding Kids Right***
a book by Joel Fuhrman, MD: www.drfuhrman.com

- ***Fast Food Nation***
a book by Eric Schlosser: www.harpercollins.com then search for "Fast Food Nation"