

**Michael Jacobson, PhD**  
Executive Editor

**Bonnie Liebman, MS**  
Director of Nutrition

**Stephen B. Schmidt**  
Editor-in-Chief

**Jayne Hurley, RD**  
**David Schardt**  
Senior Nutritionists

**Kate Sherwood**  
Culinary Director

**Danielle Hazard, BS**  
**Amy Ramsay, BA**  
Project Coordinators

**Melissa Pryputniewicz**  
Administrative Assistant

**Namita Davis, BSc**  
**Jennifer Libman, MHS**  
**Neera Chaudhary, RD, MHS**  
**Marsha Rosen, RD**  
Consultants (Toronto)

**Bill Jeffery, LLB**  
National Coordinator (Ottawa)

CIRCULATION MANAGEMENT  
**Dennis Bass**

Myriam Boucher	Debra Brink
Damon Dorsey	Louella Fennell
Greg Hildebrandt	James Nocera
Cecilia Saad	Chris Schmidt
Ken Waldmiller	

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD

**Monique Julien, MSc, DrPH**  
Université de Montréal  
Montréal, Quebec

**Mary McKenna, PhD, RD**  
University of New Brunswick  
Fredericton, New Brunswick

**Andrew Pipe, CM, MD, LLD, DSc**  
University of Ottawa Heart Institute  
Ottawa, Ontario

**Kim Raine, PhD, RD**  
University of Alberta  
Edmonton, Alberta

**Frank Sacks, MD**  
Harvard Medical School  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

**Jeremiah Stamler, MD**  
Northwestern University Medical School  
Chicago, Illinois

**Norman Temple, PhD**  
Athabasca University  
Athabasca, Alberta

**Regina G. Ziegler, PhD, MPH**  
U.S. National Cancer Institute  
Bethesda, Maryland

*Nutrition Action Healthletter* (ISSN 0885-7792) is published 10 times a year (monthly except bi-monthly in Jan./Feb. and Jul./Aug.).

SUBSCRIBER SERVICES

**The cost for a one-year subscription or gift** (10 issues) is \$36; two years are \$66 (GST/HST included). Mail to P.O. Box 4252, Toronto Sta.A, Toronto, ON M5W 5S4. **For bulk subscriptions**, please write for details. **To change your address**, send us your subscriber number and your old and new addresses four weeks before you move. **If you don't want us to exchange your name**, send us your name and mailing-label information. **Fax:** (202) 265-4954. **E-mail:** circ@cspinet.org. **World Wide Web:** www.cspinet.org. **Expiry date** is in the upper centre of your mailing label. Your **subscriber number** precedes the expiry date. **GUARANTEE! We'll give you 2 FREE ISSUES if there's ever a problem with your subscription.**

**PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40017740**  
**RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO**  
**CENTRE FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST**  
**P.O. BOX 4252, POSTAL STATION A**  
**TORONTO, ONTARIO M5W 5S4**  
**e-mail: circ@cspinet.org**

MEMO FROM MFJ

# Stop the Junk Food Peddlers



When I was growing up in Chicago in the 1950s, food companies encouraged me to eat their products, but their methods were primitive by today's standards. The bells of the Good

Humor truck would have me hankering for a Creamsicle. Cracker Jack boxes provided that junky plastic toy. And I'd occasionally watch a cartoon show on our new black-and-white TV set (though my friends and I were usually outside playing).

Fast-forward 25 years. By the 1970s, food companies were bombarding young children with sophisticated TV ads for sugary cereals, candies, pop, and the like. In 1977, our little U.S. Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), in parallel with Action for Children's Television, called on the U.S. Federal Trade Commission to protect kids from those ads.

The U.S. FTC concluded that *any* advertising aimed at young children was unfair, because kids don't even understand the *intent* of advertising. When the FTC boldly questioned whether there should be any advertising to kids, *The Washington Post* derisively dubbed it the "National Nanny" and the U.S. Congress, buckling under industry pressure, stripped the agency of its authority to regulate advertising directed to children.

In Canada, the Quebec National Assembly picked up where the U.S. FTC got knocked down. In April 1980, the province's Consumer Protection Act banned all ads targeted at children under age 13. For nearly a decade, Parti Québécois and Liberal governments defended their law against a litigious toy company, drawing support from the U.S. FTC staff report. Ultimately, the Supreme Court of Canada

upheld the law, agreeing that advertising to children is "per se manipulative" and that "such advertising aims to promote products by convincing those who will always believe."

Fast-forward to 2010. TV has been joined by Internet advergames, product placements in movies, ads on cell phones, free toys at burger joints, vending machines in schools, and other means of cajoling kids to buy or demand packaged and restaurant foods. In Canada, federal laws protect adults from misleading or decep-

tive ads for foods (or for anything else, for that matter). But kids, who lack the defenses to interpret commercial marketing, don't get special protection (outside Quebec). And companies are beginning to exploit loopholes in Quebec's law.

In May, CSPI joined 20 organizations—including the Canadian Teachers' Federation, UNICEF Canada, and the Canadian Stroke Network—in urging the federal Minister of Health to enact tough laws to protect children from commercial marketing.

Kids should be playing hockey, riding their bikes, and eating foods served at home and school by people who care about them. They

shouldn't be pressured to purchase (or pester) by profit-hungry companies that see them as easy targets for products that keep them snacking.

I'm afraid to fast-forward another 25 years. I just hope that my grandchildren (should I be so lucky) and other youngsters won't still be having to fend off the junk-food peddlers.

Stay tuned.

Michael F. Jacobson, PhD  
Executive Director  
Centre for Science in the Public Interest



"Small hands hold surprisingly big bucks." That's how marketers see our kids.

The Centre for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) is the non-profit health-advocacy group that publishes *Nutrition Action Healthletter*. CSPI mounts educational programs and presses for changes in government and corporate policies.

The use of information from *Nutrition Action Healthletter* for commercial purposes is prohibited without written permission from CSPI.

© 2010 by Centre for Science in the Public Interest.

The contents of NAH are not intended to provide medical advice, which should be obtained from a qualified health professional. Design and production by The Page Group (www.pagegroup.com).